RCN Forums: Review of 2018
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Introduction

The role of forums is vital in contributing to the professional voice of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN).

Forums are groups of RCN members who have a shared interest. There are more than 35 forums to choose from covering areas such as education, research, leadership, defence nursing, public health and women’s health. All RCN members can join any number of relevant forums. However, voting rights for Congress debates are allocated to the members’ first choice forum.

What do forums do?

• They lead the development of policies.
• They develop specialist guidance and standards for nurses, midwives and support workers.
• They lead and participate on research.
• They provide an expert clinical view to the RCN and to government and external stakeholders.
• They represent the RCN on specialist working groups.
• They contribute to consultations.
• They deliver specialist workshops, conferences and events.
Forum membership

Forum membership totals approximately 190,000.

Many members belong to multiple forums depending on their field(s) of practice. For example, a district nurse may belong to the District and Community Nursing Forum, the Older People’s Forum, the Pain and Palliative Care Forum and the Diabetes Forum.

Forum membership figures as at the 31 December 2018

- Advanced Nurse Practitioner Forum: 9,595
- Cancer and Breast Care Forum: 6,998
- Children and Young People (CYP): Acute Care Forum: 5,448
- CYP: Continuing and Community Care Forum: 3,267
- CYP: Professional Issues Forum: 4,070
- CYP: Specialist Care Forum: 3,407
- CYP: Staying Healthy Forum: 4,766
- Continence Care Forum: 3,087
- Critical Care and Flight Nursing Forum: 8,650
- Defence Nursing Forum: 1,045
- Diabetes Forum: 6,675
- District and Community Nursing Forum: 6,300
- Education Forum: 9,426
- eHealth Forum: 2,105
- Emergency Care Association: 8,370
- ENT - Maxillofacial Nursing Forum: 1,350
- Fertility Nursing Forum: 510
Any member can apply to represent their branch or forum as a voting member – based upon their first-choice forum. Voting members, as the name suggests, sit in the main hall during the Congress debates, listen to all the debates, and vote on the resolutions which then shape the work of the RCN.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forum</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gastrointestinal Nursing Forum</td>
<td>3,910</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Practice Nursing Forum</td>
<td>8,821</td>
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<tr>
<td>History of Nursing Society</td>
<td>1,846</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Disability Nursing Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental Health Forum</td>
<td>12,936</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midwifery Forum</td>
<td>483</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neuroscience Forum</td>
<td>2,607</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nurses in Management and Leadership Forum</td>
<td>11,325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing in Justice and Forensic Health Care Forum</td>
<td>3,440</td>
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<tr>
<td>Older People’s Forum</td>
<td>12,330</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ophthalmic Nursing Forum</td>
<td>1,520</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pain and Palliative Care Forum</td>
<td>12,418</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perioperative Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Health Forum</td>
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<td>Research Society</td>
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<td>Rheumatology Nursing Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Society of Orthopaedics and Trauma Nursing</td>
<td>3,918</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women’s Health Forum</td>
<td>4,796</td>
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How are the forums governed?

The Forums Governance Group (FGG) makes sure that good governance practice is observed by the RCN’s forums and that the work of the forums reflects RCN Council’s strategic priorities. FGG reports to RCN Council through the Professional Nursing Committee (PNC), ensuring that the voice of members working in specialisms is heard within the RCN’s decision-making process.

Role and main responsibilities of FGG

- To be the regulatory mechanism for UK forums.
- To ensure that the forums work within the new reporting and decision making framework agreed by Council and that the work of forums reflects the strategic objectives and priorities of the RCN.
- To ensure that forum members participate in the priority work streams (including those suggested by forums) commissioned by PNC and are invited to join the appropriate task and finish groups that PNC set up.
- To ensure that good governance, financial processes and practices are adhered to by the UK forums.
- To ensure that projects-allocated and external sponsorship RCN and RCN Foundation funds are delivered in accordance with the approved brief and to agreed timescales.
- To represent the views of forum members in the decision making process.

Main tasks

- To report to the PNC after every meeting, and ensure the priorities and concerns of forum members are reflected in the decision making process of the PNC.
- To conduct regular reviews of the effectiveness of forums governance and the working arrangements and to make recommendations to PNC where arrangements need strengthening or changing.
- To agree changes to forums which will develop new forums, and proposals to disband forums, to agree terms of reference for forums including project working and to issue guidance on the composition of Forum Steering Committees.
- To oversee the selection processes for Forum Steering Committees and Chairs, to ensure that role descriptors for the Chair, Steering Committee Members and support staff are maintained and to ensure that induction, training and development arrangements for all Steering Committee Members and staff supporting forums are in place.
• To monitor and evaluate the performance of individual forums to ensure they are complying with governance and financial stewardship guidance and delivering their annual work plans, and make recommendations to the PNC on any area within its remit where action or improvement is needed.

• To allocate RCN funds to forum projects and ensure that these projects are managed and delivered in accordance with the agreed brief and timescales.

• To recommend project bids to be submitted to the RCN Foundation for funding.

• To ensure that the right forums and the right members are represented on task and finish groups set up by the PNC to undertake specific time limited pieces of priority work.

• To advise on the organisation of agendas and programmes for meetings of the Forum Chairs Committee and Chairs Development days and to participate in the smooth running of these meetings

**Reporting**
The Forums Governance Group works with Chairs and will include this working relationship in reporting to the PNC. Equally, Forums Governance Group will report wider Council and NPPC decisions to Forum Chairs.

**Meetings**
The FGG meets at least three times a year.

**Membership**
Members of Council represent PNC. The Chair is an RCN Fellow.

One Chair of Chairs as elected by the Forum Chairs Committee.

Three Forum Chairs (who will abstain from decisions concerning their own forums).

Three representatives from other parts of the RCN.

This year 78 committee members have been recruited across 35 forums. All forums are currently quorate and there are 12 remaining vacancies across nine forums.

**Terms of Office**
All Members of the Group will serve for two years with the option to stand for one further term.

**Quorum**
The Quorum will be one Member of Council, one Forum Chair and one representative of other parts of the RCN.
Forum communications

This year FGG have reviewed the social media offer for members. Some forum committees had expressed concerns that they had difficulties moderating the groups as they had a mix of members and non-RCN members. It was decided that closed RCN Facebook groups would be a members offer and forums could choose between a reset of membership or keeping existing membership with all new members confirmed as RCN members.

From 1 November 2018 the RCN’s Nursing Department commenced checking membership using the membership database before accepting requests to join the closed Facebook groups. Forum committee members retain responsibility for moderation of the groups. A process has been initiated for escalation when inappropriate content is posted and guidance developed.

- The Fertility Forum now has 490 Facebook page members compared to 378 in 2017.
- Children and Young People Forums have 3,151 members of their Facebook page.

The majority of forums now have Twitter accounts and host Twitter chats. Some examples are:

- The Advanced Nursing Practice Forum held their second advanced practice week Twitter chat which had a reach of 153,847.
- The Mental Health Forum have doubled their Twitter followers to 1,176.
In 2018 six forum chairs were recognised for their contribution by being awarded RCN Fellowships and Merits.

Fellowship:
Jess Davidson, Chair of Nursing in Justice and Forensic Forum

Awards of Merit:
Claire Chatterton, Chair of History of Nursing Forum
Isobel Mason, Chair of Gastrointestinal Nursing Forum
Margaret Graham, History of Nursing Committee Member
Mary Shaw, former Chair, Ophthalmic Nursing Forum
Sheila Hardy, forum Mental Health Nursing Committee Member

Elected to Council:
Evan Keir – HP seat. Appointed to Mental Health Forum Committee in 2018

Nominated for President:
Sue Hill, District Nurses’ Forum Committee

Nominated for Vice President:
Sue Woodward, Chair, Neuroscience Forum
Exhibitions and education events
In 2018, two very successful exhibitions were held in both the London and Edinburgh offices, alongside UK-wide events programmes.

Pandemic! Nursing 100 years of infection – with the Public Health Forum and the History of Nursing Society

The Wandering Womb: Women’s health nursing, past and present – with the Women’s Health Forum and the History of Nursing Society
The forums have facilitated a number of conferences, workshops and events during 2018:

January
RCN Rheumatology Workshop, London: 84 delegates

February
The Learning Disability Forum hosted a launch event for Mencap’s Treat me well campaign. www.mencap.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-mencap/current-campaigns/treat-me-well

March
RCN Public Health Travel Health Roadshow, Wales: 34 delegates
History of Nursing Lecture, London: 211 delegates
RCN Fertility Conference: Contemporary Challenges in Fertility Nursing II - Supporting the Patient Journey, London: 79 delegates
RCN Women’s Health Conference, London: 61 delegates

April
RCN International Research Nursing Conference 2018, Birmingham: 308 delegates
RCN Looked after Children’s Nurses Networking Event 2018, London: 93 delegates

August
RCN School Nurses Conference and Exhibition 2018, London: 170 delegates

September
RCN Advanced Nurse Practitioners Conference, London: 111 delegates
RCN Mental Health Nursing Research (MHNRC) Conference, Manchester: 160 delegates

October
On Mental Health Day (Wednesday 10 October 2018) an event to showcase good practice was held focusing on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. This was a collaboration by the Mental Health Forum and CYP Staying Healthy Forum.

November
RCN Ophthalmic Nurses Conference, London: 96 delegates
RCN Orthopaedics Workshop, London: 100 delegates
Key Issues in Occupational Health Conference and Exhibition. Jointly hosted by the RCN and Society of Occupational Medicine, London: 156 delegates
A workshop called ‘Innovations in Orthopaedics and Fracture Trauma’ was organised by The Society of Orthopaedic and Trauma Nursing.
**Products and publications**

Forums have been involved in a range of publications in a range of formats and types, this year the FGG has introduced a preference for web publications phasing out routine printed publications.

**Some examples of 2018 publications are:**

The General Practice Nursing Forum launched a pocket guide resource on *Managing Childhood Immunisation Clinics* at the Best Practice Conference, 18 October, Birmingham.

The Public Health Forum updated *Competencies: Travel Health Nursing: Career and Competence Development*.

The Defence Nursing Forum launched *A Professional Resource for Nurses New to Defence*.

The CYP Children’s Community and Continuing Care Forum published *Meeting Health Needs in Educational and Other Community Settings: A Guide for Nurses Caring for CYP*.

The Women’s Health Forum launched the *Women’s Health Pocket Guides* which cover multiple women’s health topics including contraception, uterine fibroids and cervical cancer.
Several forums proposed or contributed to Congress resolutions or matters for discussion:

**Resolutions**
- Public Toilets – Submitted by the Continence, Gastrointestinal, Learning Disability and CYP forums.
- Mental Health Staffing – Submitted by the Mental Health Forum.
- Public Health Funding – Submitted by the Public Health Forum and CYP Staying Healthy Forum.
- Prison Nursing – Submitted by the Justice and Forensic Nursing Forum.

**Matters for Discussion**
- Diagnostic Overshadowing – Submitted by the Learning Disability Forum.
- Suicide – Submitted by the Mental Health Forum.
- Community Nursing – Submitted by the District Nursing Forum.

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**Forums at Congress**

Every year the forums play their part in showcasing the professional nursing agenda and Congress in Belfast 2018 was no different.

**Here are a small selection of the many Congress fringe events:**

An emotive film, *Bounce Back Boy*, and educational resources were launched by the Pain and Palliative Care Forum with joint FGG/RCN Foundation funding.

The CYP Staying Healthy Forum hosted three events, in collaboration with the NSPCC.

The Nursing in Justice and Forensic Health Care Forum launched the Time and Space project funded by the FGG that will produce two films in 2019 to assist nurses to prepare for work and then debrief afterwards.

The Gastrointestinal Forum held a successful fringe event: Drink wise, age well.

The Nurses in Leadership and Management Forum held an oversubscribed fringe on Leadership, energy, change and you! which also distributed a ‘top tips’ business card for attendees.
A total of 69 representation reports were received during 2018. These were submitted by more than 26 forums with many forums submitting multiple reports.

**Some examples are:**
- CYP Acute Care – Unicef’s The first 1,000 days of infancy launch.
- Older People’s Forum – Royal College of Physicians national clinic audit regarding fractures.
- CYP Specialist Care – ‘All Ireland Children’s Critical Care Nursing Symposium’ Steering Group.

Forums also influence policy and education, some examples are:

**Safer Staffing** – the Midwifery Forum has an FGG funded project to survey nurses working in Midwifery Units. Also the CYP Professional Issues regarding CYP nursing vacancies.

**#FundOurFuture** – Learning Disability Forum.

Multiple forums are contributing to developing a career pathway for nurses, for example the Rheumatology Forum.

**Winter Pressures** – District Nursing Forum ‘Beast from the East’ collection of photos of community nurses beating the adverse weather.

The RCN receives requests to comment on multiple consultations each year with the main being from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

As at December 2018, there were approximately 147 requests from NICE and a database of members, many of which are from forums were asked to contribute.

For this period, of the 147 requests from NICE, 84 were clinical guidelines, 43 quality standards and eight were public health and social care consultation requests with another 11 general consultations.

The RCN contributed to just over 73% of these consultations compared to 62% in 2017. The Valuing Forums Project has informed work to refine the consultation process and increase member participation, this has included a web resource and consultation section of the new forum webpages.

The fifth RCN Remembrance Ceremony was held at the RCN HQ. The Defence Nursing Forum played an integral part in the organisation and delivery of this event.
Financial summary

In the 2018 financial year the FGG had a budget of £78,900 to allocate to project activity. The projected spend for these 50 projects was £95,100. Sponsorship of £25,000 was secured by the RCN, leaving the FGG £8,800 under budget.

Figures are provisional as final budget data was not available at time of going to print.

Valuing Forums Project

In May 2017 a two-year project commenced ‘Valuing Forums’. There is similar project called ‘Valuing reps’. The project commenced with the launch of a forum focused area at congress as part of the new ‘Get involved’ stand, development of forum promotion resources and refining FGG process.

2018 achievements have been to introduce an updated FGG project bid application process, quality matrix for FGG, renewed representation form and briefing for members. Virtual induction resources are being developed for new forum committee members and will be launched in 2019.

One of the main achievements has been to update all of the forum web pages. They are now publicly available to showcase the work of the forums whilst retaining the ability to have outputs behind member walls. They are multi-layered and can link to a wide range of resources such as clinical pages and social media.

Board and Income Generation and Investment Committee will keep this under review. Another risk is the lack of clarity about the role and contribution of the Foundation within the nursing charity sector. The implementation of the Foundation’s new strategy has provided greater clarity about our vision, purpose and priorities. This has also been widely communicated.
Thank you to our sponsors for supporting forum projects and events that benefit our members, lead nursing and midwifery care and enhance patient experience.
Thank you to our forum members

During 2018 our forums worked hard to represent the professional side of the RCN and successfully promote their individual clinical specialisms.

We would like to thank all forum members for their ongoing support, enthusiasm and commitment to improving standards of care and developing nursing and midwifery within the College.

Jason Warriner
Chair of Forum Chairs

Tara Bentley FRCN
Chair of Forum

Committee
Governance Group