



Royal College
of Nursing
London

Nursing Together

FIGHTING FOR NURSING IN LONDON





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FIGHTING TOGETHER

FOR NURSING IN LONDON



Bernell Bussue
RCN London Regional Director



Cynthia Davis
Board Chair

The last few years have presented more challenges to the health service and its staff than arguably any other time in the past. Inadequate NHS and social care funding, pay restraint and inaccessible and expensive housing and transport all sit heavily on top of the pressures of providing high-quality care in what is an ever changing world.

Up to this point, RCN London has continued to battle for its members in the health and social care sector. Whether it be our opposition to the removal of bursaries for our London nursing students, our Scrap the Cap campaign on nurse pay, or our success in overturning an unfair agency work ban, we have always taken members' issues right to the heart of where the decisions are made. Going forwards, if we are to secure the change we want for our nursing staff and the wider health and care system, both in London and nationally, we will need our membership to continue battling with us.

With a membership in London of almost 60,000, we have the potential to not only make the voices of health care professionals and patients heard in the capital, but also the unique ability to demand change with the authority and authenticity that comes with being part of one of the most trusted professions in the country.

And so here at RCN London, we want this year to be the year where, as a region, we come closer together than we ever have before. There is no doubt that there are more challenges ahead, such as working to secure the fair pay nursing staff deserve, ensuring safe staffing is at the top of the agenda, and continuing to protect our colleagues from overseas, who feel more uncertain than ever post-EU referendum.

RCN London has a membership that is dynamic, skilful and passionate about the services they provide; by harnessing these qualities we can bring about progressive change for the services we all cherish and the health care staff that work in them.

This booklet will show you how you can help bring about that change, whether on your own, with colleagues or through supporting RCN London in its campaigns.

DIVERSITY

A GLOBAL WORKFORCE FOR A COSMOPOLITAN CITY

London has an incredibly diverse nursing workforce. We see this as one of its great strengths. Our health service has welcomed nursing staff from across the world, including many of our EU neighbours. This international make-up reflects the cosmopolitan community of people that we care for.

Diverse, but not equal

The latest Workforce Race Equality Standards Report found that London, despite being the most diverse region in the country, was the worst performing when it came to race equality.

- Black and minority ethnic (BME) staff are twice as likely to face disciplinary action than white colleagues.
- White colleagues are twice as likely to be appointed from a shortlist as those from BME backgrounds.
- London had the highest percentage of BME nursing staff experiencing harassment, bullying and abuse from both patients and colleagues.
- Only 11% of senior managers in the NHS in London are from BME backgrounds.

London's nursing workforce



88%
of RCN members
are female

1 in 5 undertook their training overseas

46% of RCN members in London are from BME backgrounds



28% of the London-registered nursing, midwifery & health visiting staff are from outside the UK

Most common EU countries of origin of nurses in London:

Poland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Ireland

Most common non-EU countries of origin of nurses in London:

Ghana, India, Nigeria, Philippines, Zimbabwe

RCN London on diversity

- The NHS and the wider health and social care sectors must take concrete steps to address systemic and institutional racism.
- Discrimination on the basis of age, disability or sexuality is unacceptable. Opportunities in the workplace should be open to all.
- In London through the Cultural Ambassador programme we will ensure that BME nursing staff are better represented in disciplinary proceedings by recruiting, training and assigning senior BME nursing staff to investigation teams and disciplinary panels.

BREXIT

A lack of clarity from the government on the right to remain for nursing staff from Europe is causing a great deal of uncertainty for our colleagues from across the EU and the services they work in. This in turn is creating concern within London's non-EU workforce who care for people in the capital.

New potential recruits from overseas are also facing more stringent requirements in International English Language Testing (IELTs) and Objective Structured Clinical Evaluations (OSCEs) by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). The sustained negative coverage about immigration in the media has also taken its toll on the profession.

In 2016, the government brought in a law that prevented non-EU workers from entering the country if they earn less than £35,000 per year. This would have had an extremely detrimental effect on an already overstretched workforce. The RCN was successful in ensuring that nursing was placed on the Shortage Occupation Lists, which made nursing staff from overseas exempt from the new law.

STATISTICS



7,390

There are 7,390 EU nurses working in London's health service, which is double the national average

BUT SINCE THE VOTE TO LEAVE THE EU



96%

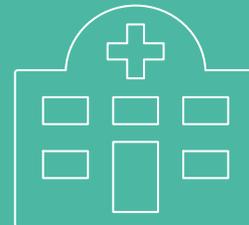
drop in the number of EU nurses coming to the UK

68%

increase in the number of EU nurses resigning from roles in the UK

EU NURSES ARE VITAL FOR SERVICES

Without the contribution of our European colleagues, it is unlikely that the health service would be able to function.



CASE STUDY

I qualified in Portugal in 2009 and moved to London in November of the same year, where I started working in one of the eight new hyper-acute stroke units in London.

Since the Brexit vote, my feelings towards the country and the people that live here have not changed because there are different reasons why people voted to leave the EU. It is important to accept and respect people's opinions and views even when we disagree.

The NHS in England was not coping before the Brexit vote. If we add the reduction in the number of nurses coming to work in the UK from non-European or European countries, then the result can only be catastrophic for staffing levels and an already under-resourced workforce.

The government needs to secure the right to remain for the EU health care professionals already working here, and develop a robust plan for those who want to move here.



Ismalia

Specialist Stroke Nurse

RCN position on Brexit

- Develop a coherent workforce strategy and preserve the rights of European Economic Area (EEA) nursing staff.
- Ensure appropriate education and professional regulation to safeguard patient safety.
- Address public health issues collaboratively.
- Safeguard decent working conditions, health and safety at work and employment rights.
- Maintain opportunities for partnership across borders.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

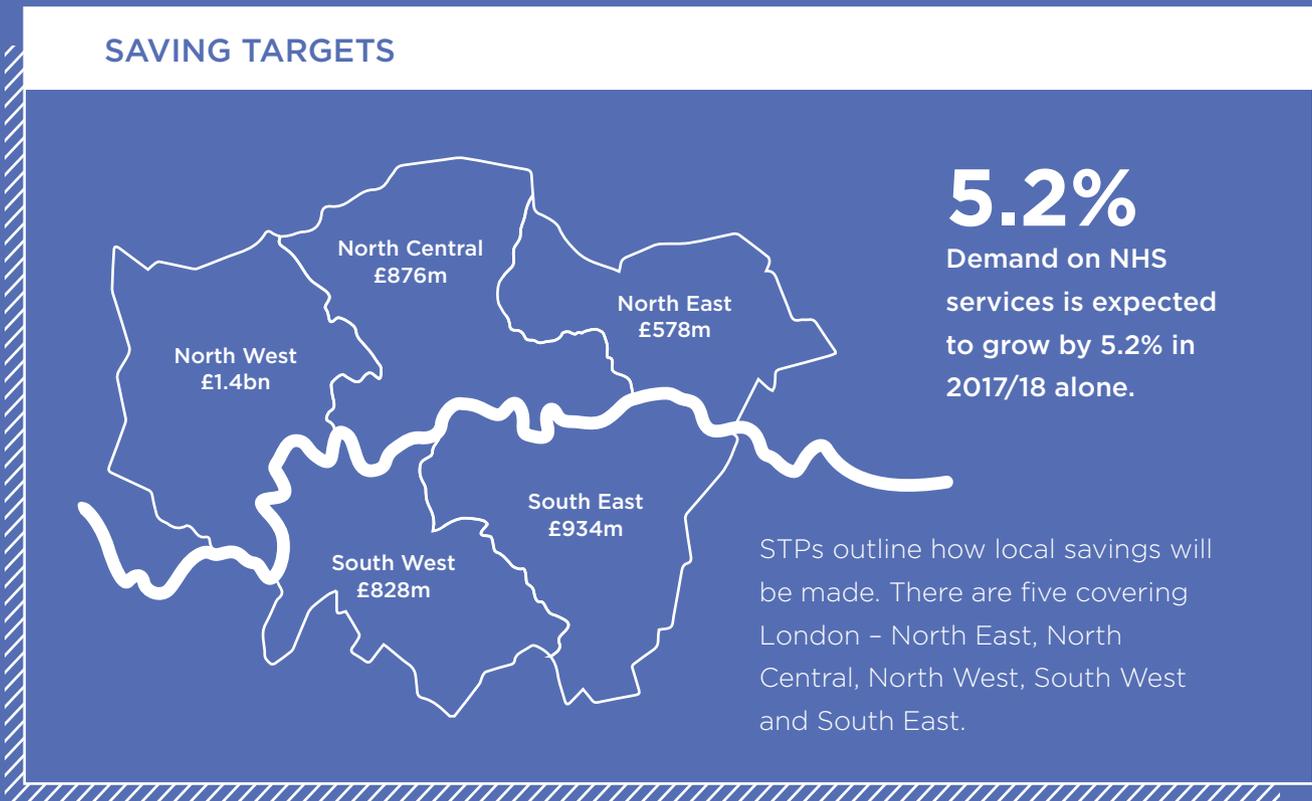
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STPs

WHAT THEY MIGHT MEAN FOR THE WORKFORCE

Sustainability and Transformation Plans

Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) are local responses to the NHS £30bn funding gap. This is the difference between funds needed to maintain current NHS services and what the government is proposing to spend by 2020/21.



Within each STP footprint, many key local bodies are involved, including NHS trusts, local councils and voluntary organisations. The STP is usually led by one of the Clinical Commissioning Groups. STPs outline changes to the way care is delivered across the country.

Common themes

- Move more care to local community and social care.
- More integration of health and social care.
- Review specialised services.
- Prevention, proactive care and personal responsibility.

In some cases this means closing hospitals and wards and consolidating services. There is a strong emphasis on moving care closer to home, and relying much more heavily on GPs, community teams and public health improvements.

RCN position on STPs

- Safe staffing levels must be sustained.
- Nurses and workforce are crucial to safe staffing.
- Saving money must not be the main driver.
- Essential community services and social care must be properly funded.
- Nursing staff must be consulted.
- Greater public consultation is required for each STP.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

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WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Get involved with your local RCN London branch

Each of the ten branches in London is a dedicated network of members from a specific geographical area.

Branches are run by volunteers and hold regular meetings and events which give members an opportunity to raise important health care and employment issues and get involved in RCN campaigns at a local level.

Find out the details of your local branch and any upcoming events by visiting:

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/london/get-involved/branches> or scanning



Get in touch with your local politicians

Applying pressure and asking questions of politicians and decision makers in your area is a way you can ensure that the voice of nursing is heard at a local level.

We want all your local representatives to know that there are RCN London members in their constituencies who are engaged and will challenge them on the issues that matter.

You can do this by writing a letter, attending surgeries and engagement events or by using social media to get in touch and air your views.

MPs: <https://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/>

London Assembly Members: <https://www.london.gov.uk/people/assembly>

Local Councillors: <https://www.directory.londoncouncils.gov.uk>

Social media

Twitter and Facebook are rich sources of information about what is going on in your area, who's involved, and what they think about particular issues.

Find out who is active and follow them, get involved with Facebook groups and link up with fellow RCN members. It's a good idea to follow your local trust, Healthwatch and local council.

Social media is also a great way to share what you know. You can update your own followers and friends, and post useful links and information to others who are campaigning in your area. You can also retweet and share helpful content from others, so that it reaches even more people. Always bear in mind you are speaking in public with anything you publish on social media, and you are accountable for it.

RCN London social media



[facebook.com/RCNLondon](https://www.facebook.com/RCNLondon)



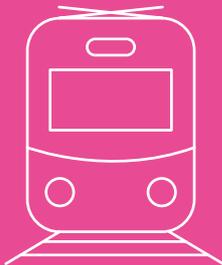
twitter.com/BernellRCN
[@BernellRCN](https://twitter.com/BernellRCN)

HOUSING & TRANSPORT

STATISTICS

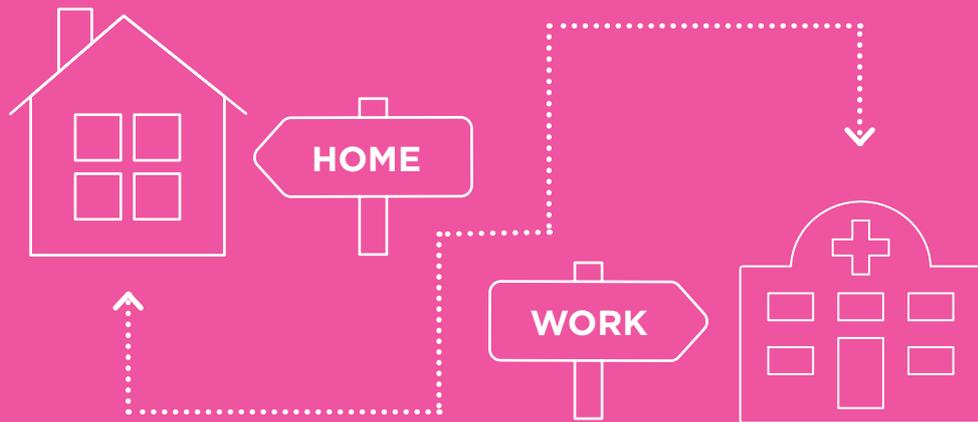
A key part of RCN London's work has been campaigning to ensure that London remains a place that nursing staff want to live and work.

Unfortunately, Amina's story (page 13) is not unusual. The rising cost of living, coupled with pay restraint, means more and more of our nursing colleagues are struggling to live close to where they work.



An RCN London survey of its members found that increasing numbers are leaving the capital and many who have not are considering doing so. More are now having to commute long distances to work and invest increasing proportions of their wage on transport costs.

This is all adding to a nursing recruitment and retention crisis that is threatening the very safety of our care settings. London accounts for one third of all unfilled nursing posts in England. Addressing the barriers that prevent nursing staff from living and working in London will be one step towards ensuring we maintain safe levels of patient care in the capital.



At RCN London, we believe nursing staff should not be driven out of their communities and forced to commute long distances due to a lack of affordable housing and support from government. We are also clear that the government's 1% NHS pay cap since 2010 has not helped.



Amina

Paediatric Nurse

CASE STUDY

I currently live in a one-bedroom flat with my husband and four young children. It is very cramped and there is a total lack of space to be social or to get a good night's sleep.

My husband and I sleep in the living room so my kids can have their own space. Sometimes when I get home from a long shift, there is nowhere to sleep at all. This has had a devastating effect on the emotional wellbeing of me and my family.

To put it simply, my wage does not come close to covering the cost of our daily requirements such as rent, gas and electricity.

As a nurse I look after people who come into my care, but it feels like no one is looking out for me. I search every day for a new place for my family to live, but there are not enough properties people like me can afford. There should be steps taken to ensure the basic needs of nurses are met, and that includes affordable housing.

RCN position on housing & transport

- Accommodation built on NHS land should be provided first and at discounted rates to NHS workers.
- The housing needs of Key Workers such as nurses should be incorporated into government house-building plans.
- RCN London will continue to engage with the Mayor of London's Office, the Department of Health and other stakeholders in raising the housing and transport issues affecting nursing staff in London.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

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PAY

FIGHTING FOR FAIR PAY

In March 2017, nursing staff were told they were going to face their 7th year of pay restraint. Placed in the context of a workforce overstretched like never before and an NHS starved of funding, nurses and other allied health professionals have more than earned a decent pay rise.

STATISTICS



The government's decision to continue capping pay increases at 1% has caused nursing staff to lose 14% of their pay in real terms since 2010. In the last year, the RCN has received more applications for hardship funding than ever before. The number of nurses visiting foodbanks has also increased.

Through Scrap the Cap, the RCN has been campaigning against the decisions on nursing pay and has continually urged the government to end pay restraint.



The cap on pay has not only left nursing colleagues struggling to make ends meet, It has also fuelled a recruitment and retention crisis, leaving wards understaffed and in some cases threatening patient care.



RCN London wants to see nursing staff rewarded for their hard work and given the pay rise they deserve. RCN members have forced the government to answer questions in Parliament and have marched through London to make themselves heard. But there is so much more we can do to finally bring about the change we need in nurses' and allied health professionals' terms and conditions.

RCN position on pay

- The government must scrap the cap and give staff a pay rise that keeps up with the rising cost of living.
- The government should return to the UK-wide pay scale for Agenda for Change staff.
- In a pay poll, RCN members made clear their anger at continued pay restraint, with 78% indicating they were willing to take strike action. The RCN has listened to the membership and will ballot after the end of summer 2017, should the government refuse to scrap the cap.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

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SAFE STAFFING

LONDON'S SAFE STAFFING PROBLEM

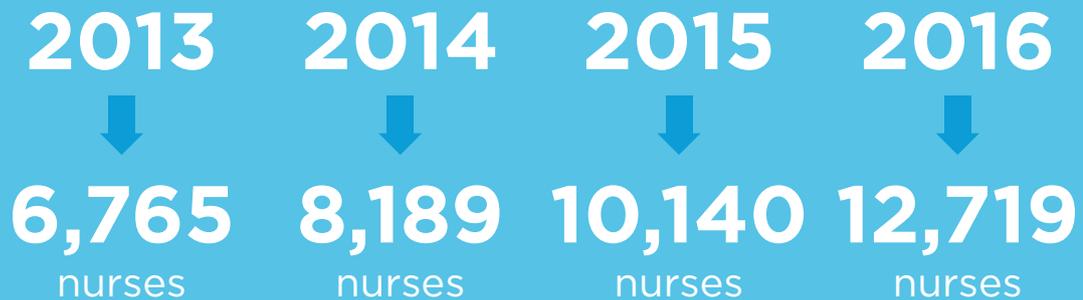
Ensuring services are staffed with the appropriate number and mix of clinical professionals is vital to the delivery of quality and safe care. This principle has always been at the heart of everything RCN London does. Unfortunately, our Safe Staffing Reports in 2013, 2014 and 2015 showed that London was suffering from increasing Registered Nurse vacancies, with unfilled posts in some trusts reaching over 20%. In 2016, four years since our first Safe Staffing report, the position had worsened further, with vacancies in 12,719 nursing posts.

RCN position on safe staffing

- Strategic long-term workforce planning is essential to delivering the safe staffing levels patients deserve.
- The government must end the pay cap, properly fund nurse training and give NHS providers the resources they need to employ the right number of nurses.
- The government must direct the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) to resume its review on safe staffing guidelines.
- RCN London is a partner in the Capital Nurse programme, which works hard to increase the recruitment and retention of nurses in London as well as explore opportunities for career progression.

STATISTICS

Nurse vacancy rate in London



Most of the highest vacancy rates
were in mental health trusts

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

See pages 12-13

RCN LONDON MEMBERS

RCN London members have the potential to bring about change, inspire colleagues and contribute authoritatively to the political discussions that shape the health services they work in. We are fortunate in London to have members that have been at the forefront of our campaigns as well as important interventions in health debates.

As a member-led organisation, we want members to continue to come forward, get involved and help RCN London push for the changes that our dedicated nursing staff and their patients deserve. If we are to do this, making the most of the skill, passion and knowledge of our membership is vital.



CAMPAIGNING

Danielle - Community Nurse

“Getting involved in campaigning seems pretty daunting but it’s so important because if we decide to just sit on our hands we won’t be able to influence the things that have an effect on our lives, our profession and the health service. I was angry and frustrated about the cap on nurse pay so I decided to start a petition calling on the government to scrap the cap and give Agenda for Change staff a decent pay rise. Before I knew it, the petition had reached 100,000 signatures and was being debated in Parliament. I’m just one person, but it really shows what you can do when you get involved.”



INSPIRING COLLEAGUES

Dann - Student Nurse

“With the help of RCN London and colleagues from university, I arranged a conference for hundreds of student nurses across the capital. I wanted to do something that reflected modern nursing and inspired people to aim as high as possible in their careers. Reflecting on what we achieved in the 8 weeks between the beginning of planning and the date of the conference, I am filled with pride. In the beginning, it seemed overwhelming to arrange a conference, but with the help and expertise of RCN London and the desire and enthusiasm of myself and my colleagues, we did it. It was an experience that taught me a lot about leadership, organisation and most of all, that if you get involved you can achieve whatever you put your mind to.”



ENGAGING IN POLITICS

Christina - Mental Health Nurse

“It is vital that nurses stay in touch with what is happening both locally and nationally in politics. Politics affects every area of nursing from clinical practice, to research, through to education. The policies that inform and govern our practices and the future of our workforce are essential to longer-term issues surrounding patient care and retention of good nurses. Having an active interest and involvement in local and national politics can offer a worthy space to promote the good work that is being done by nurses, whilst also being able to highlight where there may be gaps and needs within services.”

THE SUPPORT WE PROVIDE

RCN London works with tens of thousands of nurses, health care assistants, midwives and students of nursing across the capital. Last year, our membership grew again, bringing the RCN London community to almost 60,000 members.

Working across all 32 boroughs, RCN London offers support and advice to members and represents them in the workplace when they need us. We campaign on the issues that matter to nursing and health care, work hard to make sure that all nursing staff get the professional training opportunities they deserve, and support the Capital Nurse Programme to secure a sustainable nursing workforce for London.

YOUR RCN LONDON TEAM



84%

In 2016, RCN London resolved 84% of cases.

As well as RCN London staff, we have a network of accredited representatives and stewards who support members in the workplace on issues such as:

- Health
- Learning
- Development
- Safety
- Equality
- Inclusion

STATISTICS



1,496 new members
in 2016

59,297 members
in total



4,932
student members

YOUR RCN LONDON TEAM

- OUTER NW
- INNER NW
- OUTER NC
- INNER NC
- OUTER NE
- OUTER SE
- INNER SE
- OUTER SW
- INNER SW
- INNER NE



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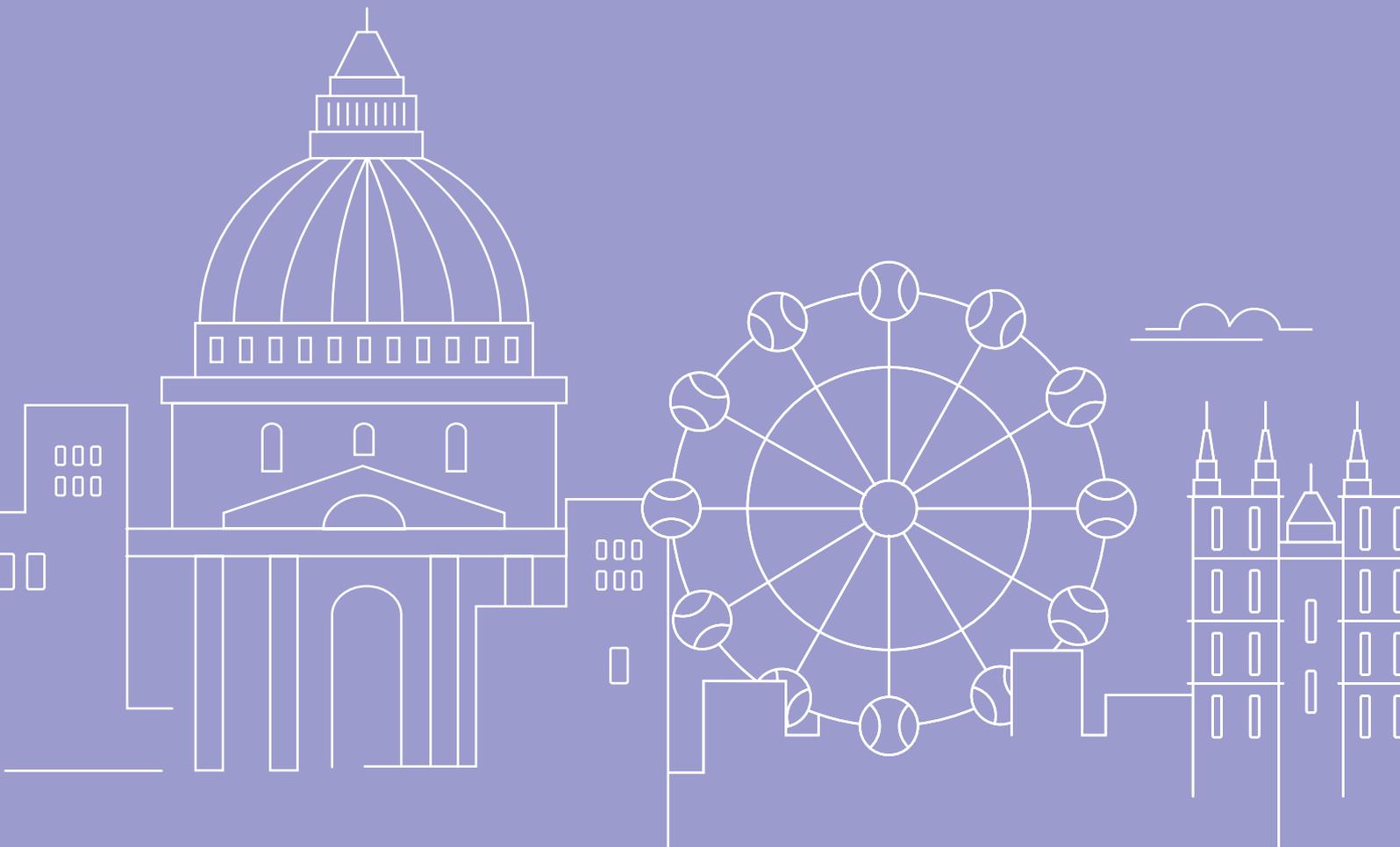
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