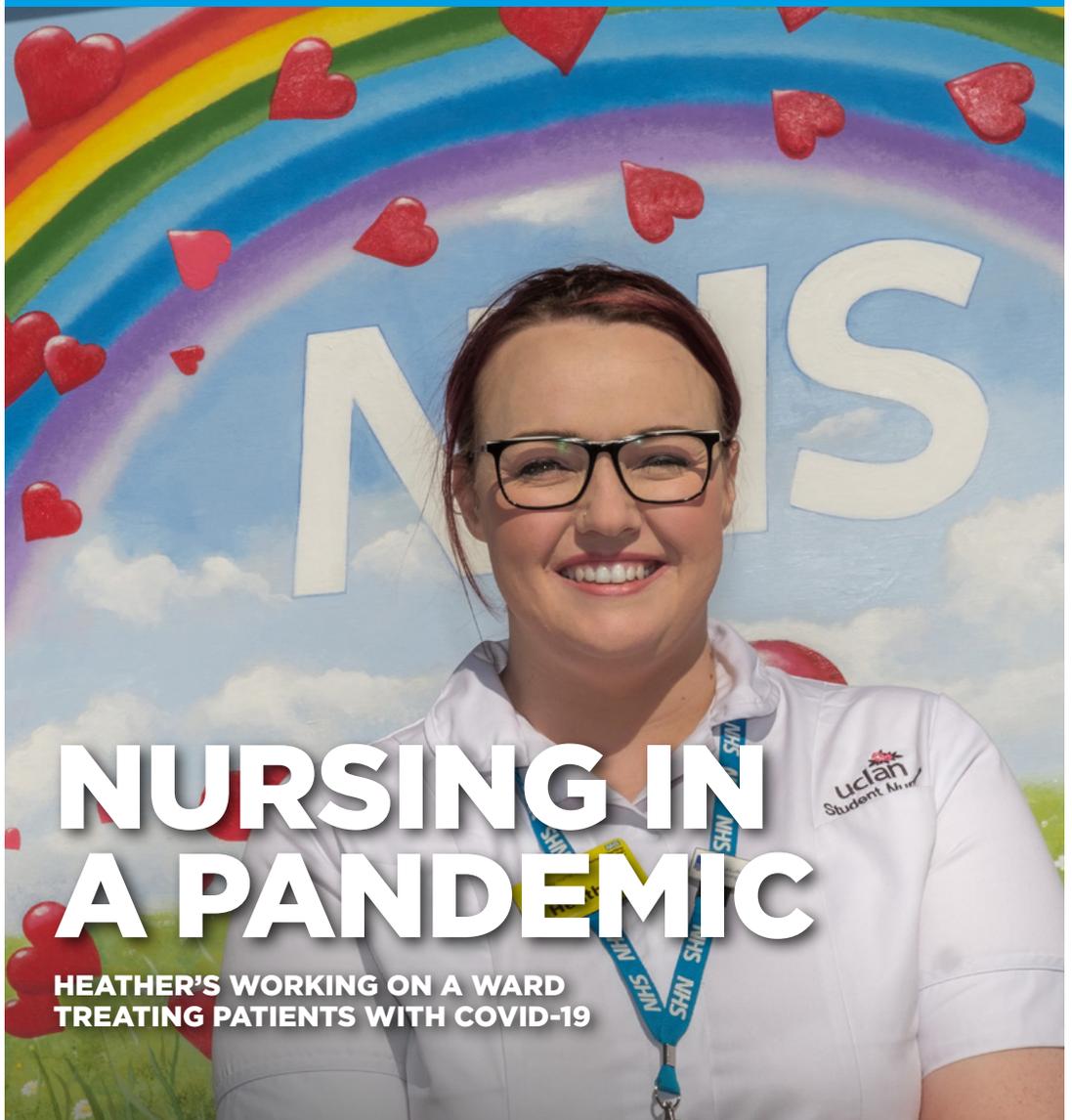




YOUR MENTAL WELLBEING	P8
PLACEMENTS: WHAT TO EXPECT	P13
ACCOUNTABILITY AND DELEGATION	P14
REMOTE LEARNING	P16

FOR NURSING STUDENTS ACROSS THE UK

SPRING 2020



# NURSING IN A PANDEMIC

HEATHER'S WORKING ON A WARD  
TREATING PATIENTS WITH COVID-19



Royal College  
of Nursing

# It's never been more important to be part of a union



**For just 84p a month, you can join the world's largest  
nursing trade union and professional body**

As a member of the Royal College of Nursing, you'll have access to:

- a network of trained workplace representatives as well as RCN student ambassadors
- online and telephone advice on a range of legal, financial and employment issues, as well as counselling services
- the largest nursing library in Europe
- exclusive discounts on essentials such as food shopping and phone bills
- a dedicated students committee (pictured above) representing you on the issues that matter.

**Join today at [rcn.org.uk/join](https://rcn.org.uk/join) or call 0345 772 6100**

 [rcn.org.uk](https://rcn.org.uk)  [rcnstudents](https://www.instagram.com/rcnstudents)  [@RCNStudents](https://twitter.com/RCNStudents)  [RCNStudents](https://www.facebook.com/RCNStudents)  0345 772 6100

SHARE THE BENEFITS OF RCN MEMBERSHIP BY PUTTING THIS POSTER UP FOR OTHER NURSING STUDENTS TO SEE





Like you, I'm still adjusting to all the changes that have happened over the last few weeks. Our programmes look different, our placements have changed, and some have had to take a step back from clinical practice to keep themselves or their loved ones safe.

Wherever you are and whatever your situation, as your student member of RCN Council I can assure you that the RCN and your committee are advocating for you every step of the way. Whether you're in your first year, have "opted in" or "opted out" – or find yourself in any other manner of circumstances – remember you are a vital part of the future of health care.

Look after yourselves as a top priority (see pages 8 and 9), enjoy your daily exercise and don't put too much pressure on yourself to be productive in your downtime. Remember the RCN has counselling services available, and please feel free to contact me or any of our students committee members (see page 19).

I hope you will find some useful stories and information in this magazine to help you through this difficult time. Thank you for everything you do.

**Amy Fancourt**

Student member of RCN Council

## Contents

Student update .....	4-5
Nursing in a pandemic .....	6-7
Your mental wellbeing .....	8-9
Supporting you .....	10-11
PPE .....	12
Placements.....	13
Accountability and delegation .....	14-15
Remote learning .....	16
Downtime .....	17
Your committee .....	18-19

## Story to tell?

If you've got a story to share, or there's a topic you'd like to see covered in a future issue, why not get in touch? Email [studentsmagazine@rcn.org.uk](mailto:studentsmagazine@rcn.org.uk)

Did you know *RCN Students* is online? Read unmissable student stories, advice and guidance on the go, anywhere, any time. Visit [rcn.org.uk/studentsmag](http://rcn.org.uk/studentsmag)

## RCN help and advice

Our online practical guides cover a whole range of issues, including incidents at work, indemnity, bullying and stress. Visit [rcn.org.uk/get-help](http://rcn.org.uk/get-help) or call **0345 772 6100** to speak to an RCN Direct adviser.

**Editor:** Sophie Goode

**Production:** Mark Kalaher

**Design:** Fern Bale

**Published by:** Royal College of Nursing  
20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN

**W:** [rcn.org.uk/studentsmag](http://rcn.org.uk/studentsmag)

**E:** [studentsmagazine@rcn.org.uk](mailto:studentsmagazine@rcn.org.uk)

**Publication code:** 009 248

**Cover image:** Ian Southerin

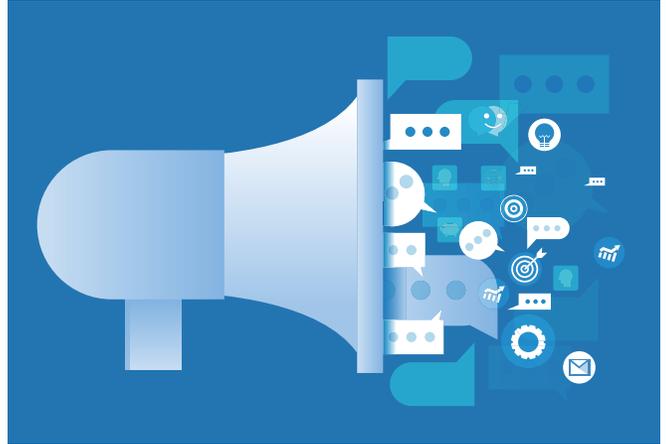
# 4 UPDATE

## Elections on the horizon

This autumn, student members will elect their representative on RCN Council for 2021-2022. This is an exciting opportunity to represent more than 40,000 student nurses at the highest level of RCN decision-making.

Elections will also take place to elect new members of the RCN Students Committee. Nominations for these elections will open in September, with voting opening in November. Look out for more information in the next few months.

Taking on an elected RCN role as a student will give you the chance to influence UK-wide nursing policy. You will develop your leadership and advocacy skills, build valuable and long-lasting nursing networks, and gain



access to events and experiences that will boost your career prospects.

If you're due to qualify after July 2021 and have what it takes to represent students on RCN Council or as a member of the RCN Students Committee, we look forward to receiving your nominations. Visit [rcn.org.uk/elections](https://rcn.org.uk/elections)

## Digital drop-ins and more

Due to COVID-19, all RCN physical library spaces are closed until further notice. But our library and archive service staff are still available to help you via webchat, email and phone during opening hours (Mon-Fri 9am-7pm and Sat 9am-5pm). Online resources remain available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Visit [rcn.org.uk/library](https://rcn.org.uk/library) and turn to page 16 for more on remote learning.



## Money matters



Taking on a paid placement during the COVID-19 pandemic could affect your benefits and entitlements. Find out how at [rcn.org.uk/student-funding](https://rcn.org.uk/student-funding), where you'll also find information on financial support as well as case studies involving tax credits and universal credits. If you're concerned about your personal finances and this is having an impact on your ability to make a decision about whether to take up a paid placement, contact the RCN welfare service: [welfare.service@rcn.org.uk](mailto:welfare.service@rcn.org.uk)

## Government urged to drop student debt



We've written to Health Secretary Matt Hancock demanding that he recognises the continued contribution of nursing students by dropping their debt and abolishing university tuition fees.

In a joint letter with other unions, we demand that the government:

- reimburses tuition fees or forgives existing debt
- abolishes student-funded tuition fees for those

starting in 2020/21 and beyond

- introduces universal living maintenance grants that reflect actual student need.

RCN Chief Executive & General Secretary Dame Donna Kinnair said: "Many student nurses have chosen to become an invaluable part of the workforce at a time when the country needs them most, but they're still paying tuition fees, and this is simply not right."

## Providing a dignified death

New RCN learning resources can help you provide compassionate end of life care during the pandemic. The bitesize resources allow you to learn flexibly and can be revisited for future reflection. They include podcasts by



experts who discuss how to recognise, communicate, support and plan effective palliative care.

They also promote self-care and coping strategies.

Visit [tiny.cc/endooflifelearning](https://tiny.cc/endooflifelearning)

### NMC: COVID-19 temp register won't open to students



The NMC has confirmed that it won't open a specific student part of its COVID-19 temporary register for those in the final six months of their degree. The regulator says it's made its decision after considering the needs of health and care services and listening to students' views.

In a statement, the NMC explains that the likely impact of COVID-19 has changed since it first said students might be asked to join the temporary register. It also says a high number of students have opted to do paid extended placements, which are working well.

The announcement comes after the RCN Students Committee wrote to the NMC seeking clarity on its intentions with regards the temporary register. Chair of the committee Jess Sainsbury said: "There will be mixed views about the announcement but also relief that we now know where we stand for the next few months. I'm pleased that the NMC has responded to our concerns and given us the opportunity to feed into their future work."

## 6 NURSING IN A PANDEMIC

# The right path for you

Opt in, opt out or no choice – three members share their perspectives of being nursing students during the COVID-19 pandemic



“ I’ve had no choice but to opt out of clinical practice during the pandemic, as severe asthma and chronic kidney disease mean I’ve been told to shield. I’ve already been in hospital with suspected COVID-19 –

fortunately, I was negative – but I have family members who’ve had it.

If I’d had the choice, I probably would have opted in. I’m a very practical person and I feel I can’t use the nursing skills I have at the moment.

I have good days and bad, when I feel like I’m beaten. Keeping in daily touch with other nursing students has been really useful. They remind me I’m doing my bit by staying at home. I’ve also had really good support from my university.

Looking ahead, I’m hoping to be able to qualify as scheduled, in September 2021. There is guidance about other ways of making up practice hours, with universities being asked to be flexible.

For those who either can’t opt in or have chosen not to, I would say it’s not the end of the world. When everyone else is tired, physically and emotionally, we will be there.

*Scott Doughty, second-year adult nursing student, University of Sunderland*



“ I was on a placement on an oncology ward when it changed to looking after COVID-19 patients. I had a choice about whether I continued or not. Initially I was anxious, but all the safeguards

were in place and the ward manager was really supportive, so I thought why not?

It's still been hard. I've had a couple of really tough days. Someone passed away and the family was unable to visit because they were self-isolating. I was with the patient, holding their hand and making sure they knew they weren't alone. That really got to me.

Now I've opted to do an extended clinical placement

on the ward. It was a difficult decision and I'm a little bit frightened. I live with my parents and even though they're not in the high-risk category, I still worry about bringing COVID-19 home. There are good moments though. At my trust, one patient in his 90s recovered and went home. Seeing something positive made my day.

*Heather Massie, third-year adult nursing student, Preston University*



“ My initial response was to opt out, but I was tempted financially and briefly changed my mind, before returning to my first instinct.

It was difficult and I felt a lot of pressure, including from social media. But it didn't feel right, ethically or morally, when I looked at the NMC Code and the original education standards. From the beginning, it felt unsafe to me. I was particularly concerned about our supernumerary status being taken away.

I've had to think about the bigger picture. I want to get my management placement under the original guidelines and standards, not the emergency ones.

Whether I will be able to qualify as scheduled this September is unknown at the moment. That was made very clear to me by my university.

My decision has thrown all my immediate plans up in the air. Although it feels like I've taken a step back, really, it's just a little bump in the road and it won't be forever.

*Rachel Cahoon, third-year adult nursing student, Ulster University*

## What are the options?

First-year students will continue with their degree, with clinical placements paused for now. They may volunteer or undertake paid work in a clinical setting in their spare time.

Most other nursing students have been invited to spend 80% of their time in paid clinical practice

and 20% of their time in academic study.

Third-year students in the last six months of their programme have been asked to choose whether they want to spend those six months on a paid clinical placement.

Visit [tinyurl.com/nmc-covid-students](https://tinyurl.com/nmc-covid-students) for more information.

# Air your anxieties

Feeling nervous and worried about COVID-19 is normal. You don't need to be in crisis to seek support



If you're finding life tough as a result of the unique challenges COVID-19 has brought, you're simply being human. Feeling stressed, anxious and extremely pressured are normal reactions to exceptional situations. But there are other psychological consequences of COVID-19 which may not be so immediately obvious.

An increase in cases of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among health care workers is likely once the pandemic is past. Catherine Gamble, RCN Professional

Lead for Mental Health, says PTSD can threaten anyone who has witnessed stressful, distressing or frightening events. "History suggests that we will be seeing it among nursing staff," she says.

Sarah Murphy, who co-ordinates the RCN counselling service, agrees. "We know that things like trauma and PTSD will come to us further down the line."

There is also the risk of so-called moral injury – psychological distress arising from a sense that, for whatever

reason, you feel prevented from doing your job properly and in line with your moral or ethical code. An example is having to tell family members not to visit a relative dying with COVID-19 because of the risk of cross-infection.

Moral injury is not a mental illness, but it can cause you to have negative thoughts about yourself – "I'm a terrible person" or "I feel so guilty". Doctors writing in the *British Medical Journal* say it's these symptoms that can give rise to mental health difficulties, including depression, PTSD, and even suicidal thoughts.

### Switching off

So, what can you do to help protect your mental health? A sensible first step is to make good use of your downtime. Try yoga, running, baking – anything that distracts you from work and helps you switch off. And focus on the basics of self-care, Sarah says, including sleep, hydration and healthy eating. Stay connected to friends and family, whether virtually or in person, she adds. "That's really important."

“

People think you have to be in a bad place to approach our counselling service, but that's certainly not the case

Small things matter too, says Catherine. “It’s about looking out for each other, being kind and courteous, and recognising what everybody at work brings to the table. There’s value in not being critical of each other and each one of us saying: ‘You’re doing the best you can in difficult circumstances.’”

Seeking out support now can help reduce the risk of problems later. “There’s something very powerful in talking about your vulnerabilities,” says Catherine. “Once we’ve aired our anxieties, we’re better able to move on.”

“You don’t need to be in crisis to reach out for support,” says Sarah. “People sometimes think with counselling that you have to be in a bad place to approach our service, but that’s certainly not the case.”

## What to expect from team leaders

Guidance from the World Health Organization (WHO) says that by protecting staff from chronic stress and poor mental health, managers can help ensure you’re better equipped to undertake your role. It says leaders should:

- ensure you’re given the latest information about the effects of the pandemic in your workplace
- partner junior team members with more experienced colleagues
- rotate staff from higher to lower-stress functions
- initiate, encourage and monitor breaks
- ensure staff have time to offer support to each other.

Visit [tinyurl.com/who-covid-19-mental-health](https://tinyurl.com/who-covid-19-mental-health) for more information.

**i** Read more about COVID-19 and your mental wellbeing: [tinyurl.com/rcn-mental-wellbeing](https://tinyurl.com/rcn-mental-wellbeing)

Access the RCN counselling service:  
[rcn.org.uk/counselling](https://rcn.org.uk/counselling)

## From the heart



### Victoria Cox

Newly qualified hospice nurse

John\* came in for management of his deteriorating COPD. He was funny and we got on really well.

He was managing alright but then started coughing so we had to isolate him while his swab was tested for COVID-19. We barrier nursed him and he got a bit down in the dumps. But the swab came back negative.

Then I was off with symptoms of COVID-19. While I was away, he was swabbed again and it was positive.

The day I went back, I was working on the other wing but I went to say hello and his face lit up. I said I’d go back after my shift.

But I didn’t. By my next shift, two days later, he had died.

I was in handover when I found out. I felt complete disbelief, but I just had to deal with it. I’m going to feel guilty about John for a long time – guilty because I didn’t go back and talk to him. I simply assumed I’d see him again. My heart was broken and I was full of shame. COVID-19 snuck in and stole my patient before I even knew he was deteriorating.

Read Victoria’s blog at <https://victoriairis84.wordpress.com/>

*John\* is a pseudonym*

# You're not alone

Hollie's online mental health support for nursing students has never been more needed

A Facebook group I set up as a student nurse has seen a huge surge in subscribers since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Right now, people are looking for ways to express, explore and educate each other about stress-related illness and burnout.

Everyone is so busy, you may feel you don't know what's going on, or you're a nuisance if you ask a question. But you're not alone and reaching out is essential.

Even before the pandemic took hold, many of us were simply not confident enough to come forward when affected by a situation at work or on placement.

Speaking up can feel like a big thing to do and some people feel scared of identifying they have a need. How we react to trauma differs from person to person so if you're struggling, it's important to speak to your colleagues, your university, the RCN, or take a look at the ProVent Facebook group I set up: [facebook.com/groups/ProVent](https://facebook.com/groups/ProVent)

It's a place to offload and discuss work-related issues around mental health and wellbeing. We also have an email address so you can contact us to ask that we post on your behalf or to request private advice and support based on our experience.

### Sharing coping strategies

We share positive stories and strategies for improving staff morale. When we come together it's clear that the way we all think, feel and question things is completely normal.

I understand the emotional impact of working in health care roles and the stress of being a student, which can sometimes feel overwhelming.

I'm now working on a trauma awareness app which will give students and staff the option of speedy access to anonymous support for trauma, and information on how best to cope with what you're facing. The current crisis has reinforced just how important this kind of work is.

🔗 The RCN has a full range of wellbeing resources. Go to [rcn.org.uk/healthy-you](https://rcn.org.uk/healthy-you)

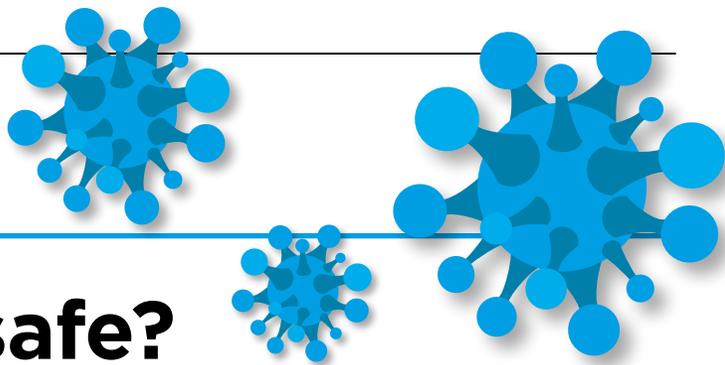
*Image by Warren Page*

Hollie's developing an app after winning £5,000 in funding in an Anglia Ruskin University competition. Part of its purpose is to provide educational, interactive and visual content around the mental health and wellbeing of staff and students, serving as a place to offload, reflect, debrief, ask questions, get information and receive support.

“

We share  
positive stories  
and strategies  
for improving  
morale





# Are you safe?

It's likely you'll need to wear some form of personal protective equipment (PPE) while on placement. Find out what you should be given, and what to do if you have concerns

## What PPE should I be given?

The UK government has outlined what PPE is recommended for use in different settings and scenarios. Check the guidance for your work area and role at [tinyurl.com/uk-gov-covid-pppe](https://tinyurl.com/uk-gov-covid-pppe)

## When should I escalate concerns about PPE?

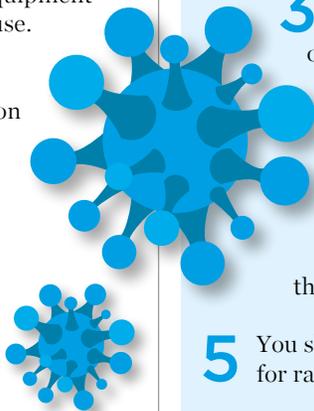
- If you don't have access to the right PPE as set out in the UK government guidance.
- If you have access to the right equipment but have had no training on its use.
- If you have concerns about its quality after checking guidance on PPE expiry dates and donations at [rcn.org.uk/covid-19-advice](https://rcn.org.uk/covid-19-advice)
- If you're required to wear a specialist FFP3 or 2 face mask but haven't had a fit test.

## What if my safety continues to be compromised?

We've published guidance on where you stand if this happens. It includes advice on refusal to treat and the potential legal consequences if you make such a decision and it is later criticised. Read it at [tinyurl.com/rcn-covid-19-refusal-to-treat](https://tinyurl.com/rcn-covid-19-refusal-to-treat)

## How should I escalate concerns?

- 1 Raise concerns with your manager or supervisor, in writing if you can, and if you have a local RCN safety rep, let them know.
- 2 Document your concerns using your organisation's reporting mechanisms, such as Datix and IR1 forms, through your line manager. Take photos of equipment you feel is of poor quality.
- 3 If there are dedicated staff available within your organisation, such as PPE safety officers, contact them for advice.
- 4 If your concerns for safety aren't resolved, escalate them to the board director responsible for health and safety in accordance with the local policy.
- 5 You should not be bullied or harassed for raising legitimate concerns.
- 6 Contact the RCN if you need support with any of these issues.
- 7 Please don't approach the media or post on social media before speaking to us for advice.



## What to expect

The NMC has published emergency education standards that apply on clinical placements. Find out what they mean for you

### Who will supervise and assess me?

The emergency standards allow any registered health or social care professional to supervise students while on clinical placement. They also allow the same person to fulfil the role of practice supervisor and practice assessor.

### Will I be supernumerary?

The NMC understands that it won't be possible for students on clinical placement to be supernumerary but expects students to be supervised and work within an appropriate delegated framework.

### What support will I get in practice?

Although supernumerary status will no longer be achievable, students should always receive supervision from a registered practitioner. You will retain your student status and the responsibility for you lies with your university. Induction to a new area of work will be required, to include health and safety and escalation of concerns.

### Will I be accountable?

Yes. You will remain accountable for the care you provide, while supervised and under an agreed delegation framework. It is essential that you only undertake care that you are assessed as competent and confident to carry out. See page 14 for more.

### What if I do something wrong or make a mistake?

You will be working under supervision and any mistakes will be addressed as part of the learning process and/or as part of normal university processes, depending on the severity of the mistake.

### Will I have cover for indemnity and from whom?

During the period of placement, indemnity cover for clinical negligence will be provided by state-backed schemes in the NHS and GP services or by employers in the independent sector.

### What will I be entitled to as an RCN member?

You'll have the full support of the world's largest nursing trade union and professional body. This includes access to our network of workplace reps, as well as free legal and employment advice.

### Induction checklist

- Do you know where to find important equipment, fire exits and emergency apparatus?
- Do you have access to all policies, procedures and guidelines?
- Do you know who to seek guidance from and how to raise concerns?
- Have you received training on IT systems, incident reporting, record keeping, telephone systems and alarms?
- Are you clear about what your role is and what level of care you're expected to give?
- Have you been given appropriate PPE and training to ensure you're able to use it correctly, including safe donning and doffing?

---

# 14 ACCOUNTABILITY

---

## Knowing when to say no

It's vital to speak up if you don't feel safe performing a task delegated to you on placement



It's always been important to understand what's expected of you when it comes to accountability and delegation on placement. This is especially true now with the added pressures you may be facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Accountability

As a student, you fall under the same duty of care as other practitioners, including HCAs and registered nurses. This applies whether you're undertaking a straightforward task, such

as bathing a patient, or something more complex.

If you feel you're unable to perform a task competently, it's vital you let your supervisor know. They may themselves be under a lot of pressure and will appreciate your honesty, especially if you're able to suggest solutions that might increase your confidence to perform the task competently later.

To be accountable, you must:

- have the ability to perform the activity or intervention

- accept responsibility for doing the activity
- have the authority to perform the activity, through delegation.

### Delegation

So, are you still accountable if a task has been delegated to you by a registered health and social care professional? Yes. While they will be in overall charge of the care provided, they need to be able to appropriately delegate to you and other colleagues.

To help keep you safe, we've written a checklist of questions to consider before accepting a task.

If you're unsure about something, always speak up. It might be helpful to observe a task before asking to do it under supervision, to make sure you have the required skills and knowledge.

However, sometimes refusing a delegated task is the only thing you can do to protect your patient, the organisation, yourself and your supervisor.

**If you feel uncertain about a delegated task, and it's difficult to resolve the issue locally, call RCN Direct for advice on 0345 772 6100.**

## Delegation checklist

Questions to consider before accepting a delegated activity

- 1 Do you have the knowledge and skills required to undertake the task?
- 2 Is it within the remit of your agreed placement role?
- 3 Are you confident about the communication and interpersonal skills required?
- 4 Is the activity too complex for you to accept?
- 5 Would you be compromising patient care by accepting it?
- 6 If you feel uncertain about undertaking the task, could you observe it first, then undertake it under supervision?
- 7 Does the person delegating have the authority to delegate the work?
- 8 Are you sure that accepting the work will not impact on your performance?
- 9 Are you confident the delegator has the appropriate clinical knowledge to delegate the activity to you?

For more detailed advice, download *Accountability and Delegation. A Guide for the Nursing Team* from [rcn.org.uk/publications](http://rcn.org.uk/publications) (code 006465)

## Roz's recommendations



**Roz Hooper**  
RCN Head of  
Legal (Regulatory)

While you're not yet on the NMC register, it's still important that you practise safely and in accordance with the NMC Code. Failing to do so could have ramifications for your future career.

If you don't feel competent to carry out a task, speaking up doesn't make you difficult or a troublemaker, it is the right and brave thing to do.

Your safety, and that of your patients, is the most important thing. Making it known when you don't feel confident to carry out a task is a safety issue. Nobody should criticise you for this. In fact, they should be thankful.

The less experience you have, the more the onus falls on your supervisor to consider your competence when delegating tasks. You can help them by being absolutely honest about what you know and don't know. If in doubt, always err on the side of caution.

## Virtual reality

How best to revise or study when everything has gone online has been a hot topic on social media. Here are some top tips shared on Twitter

### 1. Make visual aids

Develop mind maps summarising each topic and then use flashcards to test yourself.

### 2. Listen to music

Put an awesome playlist together that helps you to stay calm, focused or boosts your mood.

### 3. Divide up your space

Be a bit creative and find ways to make your study and chill-out areas different.

### 4. Mix it up

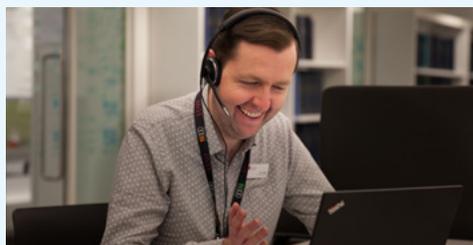
If you're able, print out some of your work to stop everything feeling too virtual.

### 5. Find a routine that works for you

Try using a blackboard as a weekly planner and break it up by lectures – sticking to your lecture timetable can help make sure you don't miss anything.



### Open 24 hours



**RCN Information Literacy Assistant Alan Chalkley says that even though the RCN's physical libraries are closed, there is a world of knowledge at your fingertips**

If you've never explored our website before, why not check it out at [rcn.org.uk/library?](https://rcn.org.uk/library?) This is your gateway to accessing around 25,000 e-books, more than 2,000 full text nursing journals, as well as video tutorials and key nursing and clinical databases.

We're here to help. If you have any trouble finding something or using any of our online resources, let us know. You can either instant message an RCN librarian via wechat on our webpages, or for more in-depth help, you can book an online 1:1 session at [bit.ly/2VnrX2j](https://bit.ly/2VnrX2j) or attend one of our digital drop-ins. These are online from 2-4pm every Wednesday and we'd love to see you there. Go to [bit.ly/2XOtB4X](https://bit.ly/2XOtB4X)

Finally, don't forget you can always call us on 0345 337 3368 or email [rcn.library@rcn.org.uk](mailto:rcn.library@rcn.org.uk)

# A book for every mood

A great book can help you escape and change how you're feeling. We've found five fab reads for five different moods



## Inspiration

*The Language of Kindness* by Christie Watson

A nurse for 20 years before authoring two novels, Christie Watson recently joined the COVID-19 temporary register as the pandemic began. This non-fiction account draws on her nursing experience, illustrating how small acts of kindness are essential to the profession, and reminding readers of the huge impact nurses have on the lives of those they care for.



## Reflection

*The Art of the Body* by Alex Allison

In his debut novel, Alex Allison presents the complex relationship between Sean, an art student with cerebral palsy, and his carer Janet, herself an art school dropout. The novel explores the physical intimacy of caring, loneliness, loss, and what it means to be dependent.



## Laughter

*Queenie* by Candice Carty-Williams

Recently nominated for the Comedy Women in Print Prize 2020, *Queenie* is a



humour-laced chronicle of the romantic ups and downs of a 25-year-old Londoner trying to get her life on track. It's been favourably compared to *Bridget Jones's Diary* and tackles difficult relationships with plenty of warmth and wit.



## Tears

*Normal People* by Sally Rooney

Sometimes you need to get lost in someone else's story. Sometimes it's good to have a big old cry. Sally Rooney's second novel will help you do both. Charting four years of Marianne and Connell's lingering, hidden romance, the novel was longlisted for

the Man Booker Prize and multiple other awards. And there's now a 12-episode TV adaptation to break your heart all over again.



## Hope

*Notes on a Nervous Planet* by Matt Haig

Matt Haig is probably best known for his top-selling memoir *Reasons to Stay Alive*, where he talked openly about his mental health and offered hope to others struggling. This follow-up takes a broader look at the things that make us anxious – social media, news, work – and how we can change our habits to find moments of calm and happiness.

## What we're working on

Hi everyone, it's Jess here, Chair of the RCN Students Committee. We hope this COVID-19 special issue has been informative and highlighted the support available to you whatever your circumstances. We'd like to take this opportunity to update you on our activities and show you that, despite these unprecedented times, we're continuing to champion the student voice. Stay safe and well.

*Jess*

### Committee priorities 2020

Our priority, first and foremost, is to support student members in a way that is courageous and inclusive. We encourage all members to optimise their RCN membership and seek professional resources and support to complete their nursing education to the best of their ability.



would like to be actively involved in our calls to [#DropTheDebt](#) and [#FundOurFuture](#) please get in touch via your student committee representative at [students@rcn.org.uk](mailto:students@rcn.org.uk)

### Social media

We are working hard on utilising our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram channels with plans for webinars, Twitter chats and IG story takeovers. Make sure you like and follow our pages, detailed on the inside front cover.

### Public debate

On 3 March in Manchester, the RCN Students Committee hosted its annual debate with the controversial motion "This house believes that patients should not always come first". A vigorous debate was held, with the motion carried. You can view a recording of the debate by visiting RCN TV at [rcnevents.tv](http://rcnevents.tv). [#RCNDebates](#)

### Newly Qualified Nurse Network

We're conscious that the voice of our newly qualified members is seldom heard. We wish to give this group a stronger voice and sense of belonging within the RCN and are currently looking at how we can best do that. Watch this space.

### Campaigning

Despite the emergency situation we find ourselves in, now more than ever it is imperative that students from all four nations come together to demand parity for student funding and support. If you



# Your RCN Students Committee

## Representing you



**Jess Sainsbury (Chair)**  
South East



**Amy Fancourt**  
Student member of RCN Council



**Kendal Moran**  
Professional Nursing Committee



**Heather Massie**  
Trade Union Committee

## Country and regional representatives



**Francis Miller**  
Eastern



**Molly Kiltie  
(Vice Chair)**  
East Midlands



**Vanessa Anthony**  
London



**Scott Doughty**  
Northern



**Marie Cairns**  
Northern Ireland



**Lynsey McLaughlin**  
Northern Ireland



**Sam Turner**  
North West



**Dawn Keating**  
Scotland



**Ben Barclay**  
Scotland



**Leonora King**  
South West



**Duncan Warren**  
Wales



**George Cade**  
Wales



**Rajneet Kaur**  
West Midlands



**Olatunde George**  
Yorkshire &  
the Humber

## What does the committee do?



The RCN Students Committee is led by students for students, and makes the student voice heard on the issues that matter to you. The committee reports directly to RCN Council – the RCN's governing body, which provides leadership and direction for the organisation, helping to shape the future.



## Get in touch

Contact your student committee representative at [students@rcn.org.uk](mailto:students@rcn.org.uk)

**Return address**

RCN Direct, Copse Walk  
Cardiff Gate Business Park  
Cardiff, CF23 8XG

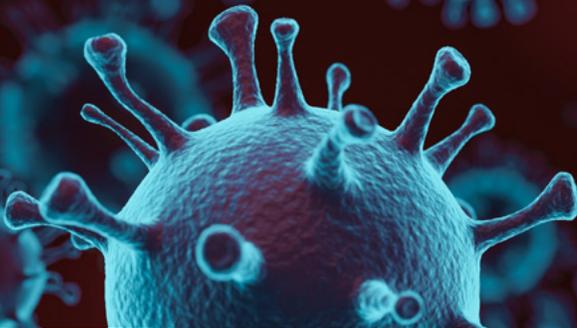
## Got a question about COVID-19 and how it affects you?

See our online advice guide for all our latest information on issues relating to the pandemic. It includes frequently asked questions on topics including:

- concerns about exposure
- personal protective equipment
- testing
- incident reporting
- mental health and self-care
- car parking and car sharing
- raising concerns
- RCN workplace support

Answers are provided by RCN advisers in public health, infection control and employment relations

Visit [rcn.org.uk/covid-19-advice](https://rcn.org.uk/covid-19-advice)



### Always here for you

Staff at RCN Direct can help provide the information you need at this crucial time. Our online advice guide is being continually updated in response to your queries and concerns. If you can't find what you're looking for, contact us online at [rcn.org.uk/get-help](https://rcn.org.uk/get-help) or call 0345 772 6100