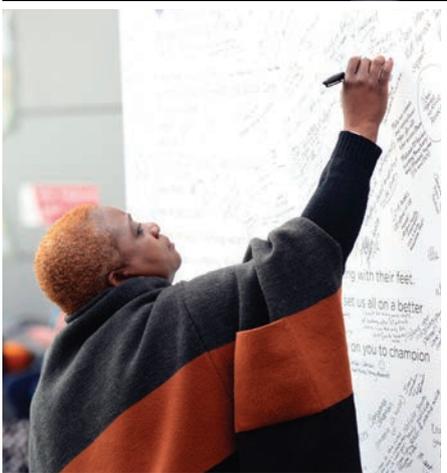


# Activate

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News, views and support for RCN activists



**Thousands of you came to Liverpool last month to attend the RCN's flagship annual event and have your say on issues that matter to you**

Congress 2019 kicked off with a passionate speech by RCN President Anne Marie Rafferty. She urged members to shape the future of nursing and get involved in the RCN's campaign to ensure safe staffing in all UK health care settings. "We need to mobilise as never before," she said. "We need to show our collective strength and power as an unstoppable force for social good."

Safe staffing stayed in the spotlight with members signing giant letters to Health Secretary Matt Hancock asking him to champion a law in England, following in the footsteps of Wales and Scotland.

Student members were also out in force, flying the flag for their #FundOurFuture campaign, which calls for investment in nursing higher education in England. They arranged a flash

mob to take over the main stage and screened a film of a rousing poem calling for action.

Other highlights included London Fire Commissioner Dany Cotton's inspiring speech at the John Goodlad lecture. Dany told members she sees mental health in the workplace as a health and safety issue and received a standing ovation after sharing her experience of supporting firefighters following the Grenfell Tower fire.

Keynote speaker Tom Ray also moved delegates with his story of surviving sepsis. He urged members to consider sepsis when treating deteriorating patients and shared his vision for standardised mandatory training in the condition. Read more at [rcn.org.uk/magazines/congress](http://rcn.org.uk/magazines/congress)

Following a week of lively debates and stimulating fringe events, Congress came to a close, with members set to return to Liverpool next year. You can watch all the debates from this year online at [rcn.org.uk/congress](http://rcn.org.uk/congress)

## No Grey area

RCN President Anne Marie Rafferty outlined the powerful evidence behind the RCN's campaign for safe staffing laws across the UK when she delivered the Mona Grey lecture at Congress.

During her address, named in honour of Northern Ireland's first chief nursing officer, Anne Marie highlighted the remarkable journeys that have led to safe staffing legislation in Wales and Scotland, and issued a call to arms for campaigners elsewhere.

As professor of nursing policy at King's College London, Anne Marie's academic research is supporting the case for staffing that delivers safe, effective care.

Read about the RCN campaign for safe staffing at [rcn.org.uk/safestaffing](http://rcn.org.uk/safestaffing)



## Congress 2020

Got the Congress bug? You can register your interest for next year's event now and be among the first to know when booking opens. RCN Congress 2020 is taking place at the ACC in Liverpool from 7 to 11 June. Visit [rcn.org.uk/congress](http://rcn.org.uk/congress)

## 'I will fight for what is right'



### Health visiting sparked my activism, Dame Donna tells Congress

In her first speech as RCN Chief Executive & General Secretary, Dame Donna Kinnair said she was proud to be taking on the "best job in nursing" and pledged to "speak truth to power and friends alike".

Describing her route to nursing leadership, she said her activism had grown out of her background as a health visitor. During that time she supported impoverished and vulnerable families, including young mothers made homeless after a fire in their tower block and victims of loan sharks.

She also spoke of her role supporting nursing staff new to the UK who had been exploited by employers. And after one of her team died giving care to a gang member, Dame Donna

said she went to the courts to help keep staff safe. "I fought for what was right then and I will fight for what is right today," she said.

She acknowledged that the RCN had gone through a "pretty bumpy time" over the last 12 months but argued that we have grown and changed as a result.

"I believe we've rediscovered our voice," Dame Donna said. "That voice is the member voice. The RCN is each and every one of us. It is members and staff standing shoulder to shoulder, mobilising and enriching one another with our expertise and passion."

She also condemned the government's failure to tackle nursing shortages, warning: "Underestimate us at your peril."

Read more online at [tinyurl.com/congress-donna](http://tinyurl.com/congress-donna)

## Social problems high on Congress agenda

Social issues featured strongly at this year's Congress, with homelessness, prostitution and period poverty all debated.

Proposing a resolution on child poverty, Rhian Wright, of Cardiff and the Vale branch, said more than four million children in the UK were affected by poverty, with rates highest in Wales. Council will now lobby all UK governments to provide adequate resources to deal with rising levels of child poverty.

Members also supported a proposal calling for a national strategy for loneliness that would help nursing staff recognise its potentially harmful effects on health. Data suggest lack of social contact can increase the likelihood of early death by 26%, Congress heard.

An emergency debate on climate change highlighted World Health Organisation evidence indicating that the climate crisis is the biggest threat to global health in the 21st century.

## New name agreed for membership category



Dennis Greer and Lindsay Cardwell of the renamed RCN Nursing Support Workers Committee

### Name change will better reflect members' role, AGM vote decides

Members agreed that the name of the Health Practitioner membership category should be changed to Nursing Support Worker following a vote at the RCN Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Liverpool.

It was also agreed that the RCN Health Practitioners Committee will become the RCN Nursing Support Workers Committee. Members of the committee supported the resolution and said the new name reflected more accurately the members they represent.

After a lengthy discussion, members rejected a second special resolution calling for a change to the Standing Orders relating to the terms of office of RCN Council members. This means that members elected to Council in the current elections will all be elected for four years.

The return to a staggered election cycle from 2024 – with half the members of Council standing down every two years – will be debated at a future AGM.

The meeting also offered members an opportunity to reflect on RCN activities over the past year and to ask questions about how the College is run, including its finances.

Addressing her first and only AGM as Chair of Council, Sue Warner said she was determined to ensure the RCN is engaging effectively with all members. She ended with a call to action in support of the RCN's campaign for safe staffing across all four countries of the UK. "Fellow members, it's time to tell those in power, who are ignoring our calls for action, that we demand that they listen to us. We will be heard."

**Read more about RCN Council elections on page 8.**

### EGM minutes

Members have until 1 July to submit comments on the accuracy of the minutes from last September's RCN Extraordinary General Meeting. The minutes have been available online since November. For more information and to read the minutes, visit [tinyurl.com/rcn-egm](https://tinyurl.com/rcn-egm)

## Branches and boards review



How can the RCN encourage members to engage more with their local branches and boards?

That was the focus of a Congress resolution that called on Council to look again at the function and structures of local member networks to maximise their effectiveness.

Proposer Carmel O'Boyle (pictured), chair of the Greater Liverpool and Knowsley branch, said: "I love my RCN family and the wealth of expertise I am surrounded by is awesome. But how can I make others see this? How do we get members to speak out and get involved?"

What does member engagement look like, Carmel asked. "Is it opening emails or marching on parliament? Coming to Congress or waving a placard?"

Critical care nurse Michael Lawton, of Greater Bristol branch, said smarter use of digital technology would improve member engagement, while Students Committee member Craig Davidson called for greater effort to attract students to branch meetings. "I've often been the only student member at branches and it's deeply saddening," he said.

Watch the debate at [tinyurl.com/congress-branch](https://tinyurl.com/congress-branch)

## Have your say on the future of RCN membership

### Members are invited to share their views on the College's membership categories and subscription plans

Members are being asked for their ideas on what the future membership of the RCN should look like. Our aim is to reflect the changing entry routes into nursing across the UK, support equality and inclusion and ensure long-term financial sustainability for the organisation.

Members can share their views and suggest changes to the current membership categories and subscription plans by responding to a consultation that opened at RCN Congress.



For more information and to have your say on how the RCN can best meet the changing needs of members, visit [tinyurl.com/rcn-member-categories](https://tinyurl.com/rcn-member-categories) by 31 July.

## Members question whether the time is right to re-join the International Council of Nurses



At the 2013 RCN Annual General Meeting, members voted to leave the International Council of Nurses (ICN) after concerns were raised about its strategy, effectiveness and membership model. This year at Congress, delegates debated whether the time was right to re-join.

Presenting the matter for discussion, Jeni Watts, from the Devon branch, said the debate was not challenging a democratic decision taken by members. "What we are doing, as nurses must, is acknowledging that things change. We must

review the latest evidence and, where indicated, not be afraid to alter our position."

Membership of the ICN would cost the RCN nearly £615,000 a year or £1.42 per member, she said.

Andy McGovern, RCN Treasurer at the time of the 2013 vote, said leaving had been the right decision. The RCN's contribution to the ICN was the second largest, with only Japan paying more.

"Yet there are countries equally developed as we are who are contributing a pittance by comparison," he said. "The model has to change for the RCN to go back."

Others were clear that nursing globally shared similar challenges that had to be faced together. John Gilmore, from the East Kent branch, said: "If we want to learn about how nursing can be done differently, more effectively, more efficiently, we need to be part of these discussions in an international forum."

Watch the debate: [tinyurl.com/congress-icn](http://tinyurl.com/congress-icn)

## Congress rejects motion to introduce an elected general secretary for the RCN

**Members voted against a resolution calling on RCN Council to review the role of the joint chief executive and general secretary**

Greater Liverpool and Knowsley branch member Mike Travis, who proposed the resolution, said it was time to start thinking about how the RCN might be modernised. "Over recent years, we've reviewed branches, boards, forums and Council. But we've never looked at our management structure, how the RCN operates," he said.

"What we need to do in this debate is look at best practice in the trade union movement and start to look at the future of the RCN."

Danielle Tiplady from the North East London Inner branch said it was wrong that the RCN's

leader was decided by "half a dozen people in a room". She said: "If we are truly a member-led organisation, we need a general secretary directly, transparently and democratically elected by the whole membership."

But Lindsey Scott of the Nurses in Management and Leadership Forum argued that an elected general secretary was not the way forward. "Our forum's stance is based on a vast amount of evidence on effective governance, both in trade unions and membership organisations," she said. "The chief executive and general secretary requires very specific skills, knowledge and experience, which you could not ensure are in place through an election process."

The resolution was lost by 388 votes to 205, with 38 abstentions. Watch the debate: [tinyurl.com/congress-gensec](http://tinyurl.com/congress-gensec)

## Sexual harassment 'brushed aside'

RCN Congress called on Council to ensure employers have systems in place to protect health care staff from sexual harassment by patients, their families and friends. Proposer Zeba Arif said current legislation outlawed sexual harassment in workplaces but health care employers often failed to support staff when incidents occurred, with harassment by patients commonly brushed aside. She called for robust policies to give workers the confidence to report sexual harassment.

While other speakers shared their own experiences and voiced support for the motion, the Emergency Care Association's Linda Bailey spoke against. She argued the resolution proposed measures that were of less value than existing legislation and questioned why the resolution didn't cover harassment on other grounds such as race.

But summing up, Zeba (pictured) argued that while the law offered protection, it did not guarantee support for victims of sexual harassment: "Employers don't know how to deal with this and a lot of nurses are too embarrassed to speak up about it."

Read more at [tinyurl.com/congress-harass](http://tinyurl.com/congress-harass)



## Preventing workplace bullying



READ  
MORE  
ONLINE

[rcn.org.uk/  
magazines/  
congress](http://rcn.org.uk/magazines/congress)

### Nursing staff call for a law to help stop the harmful effects of bullying

Maggy Heaton, who led an RCN Congress debate on bullying, says that in her role as a steward she has seen colleagues turned into emotional wrecks as a result of bullying: “It absolutely destroys them. I’ve seen people leave nursing completely because of it.”

A recent RCN employment survey confirmed that bullying, across both the NHS and independent sector, is widespread. A third of respondents said they had experienced bullying or harassment in the last 12 months, with the figure rising among Black African, Caribbean and disabled staff.

The Congress resolution, which received overwhelming support, condemned UK governments for their failure to introduce laws to prevent workplace bullying and called on RCN Council to insist new laws are introduced.

Several speakers in the debate recounted their own experiences and the impact of bullying on their professional and personal lives. Graham Revie described the dread he once felt at the sound of the alarm clock signalling another shift, and waking up with “stress, fear and apprehension”.

Stuart Crawford, who has a disability, spoke of the bullying he had experienced since his school

*“Bullying can destroy people. I’ve seen some leave nursing because of it”*

### Support for members

The RCN offers advice and support to members who have been bullied at work and to those accused of bullying. Visit [tinyurl.com/rcn-bullying-help](http://tinyurl.com/rcn-bullying-help) or call RCN Direct on 0345 772 6100.

If you’re supporting a member who’s experiencing bullying, advise them to keep a diary of each incident. Find information about this including an example diary at [tinyurl.com/rcn-bullying-advice](http://tinyurl.com/rcn-bullying-advice)

days. He said: “And on the wards, if a service-user was abusive, the response was: ‘Just get on with it’.”

Bullying at work is a complicated issue to unravel. It often has multiple causes, at individual, group and organisational levels. Evidence suggests it is more common at times of change, where there are rigid hierarchies, where leadership is poor and where bullying is unchecked by disciplinary action against those responsible. Pressure may also be a factor. If resources are tight and staff numbers limited, the circumstances are right for bullying to breed, Maggy suggests.

And when bullying becomes embedded in an organisation, it can be difficult to shift. “Really it’s about tackling the culture,” she says. “If we can get to that culture and make someone – the chief executive – responsible for tackling bullying in their organisation that would be a start.”

### Support to speak out

But reporting bullying behaviour can be extremely difficult, both for victims and those who witness it. Disciplining the perpetrator depends on evidence and by its nature bullying can make both targets and bystanders reluctant to speak out. “And those people who are brave enough to put forward a claim of bullying often don’t have the back-up they need to prove it’s actually happening,” says Maggy.

The cycle therefore continues, with serious consequences for victims but also for colleagues and even patients. Bullying can result in a negative working environment, which in turn can lead to poorer patient care. Even witnessing bullying has been associated with negative outcomes, producing high levels of distress, increased job dissatisfaction and increased intention for staff to resign from their posts.

Maggy hopes the Congress resolution will mean a change in legislation and, ultimately, a shift in workplace culture that will bring an end to bullying behaviour.

Change is long overdue, she says. “It’s amazing that bullying still continues. But then if nobody speaks up, the powers-that-be will say it doesn’t happen.”

# AWARDS

Each year at RCN Congress, activists who have shown outstanding commitment are acknowledged with prestigious awards that reflect their achievements. Find out more about the winners and what they've achieved

## RCN Reps and SIO of the Year

### Steward of the Year Ceri Dolan

Ceri is a nurse manager at the University Hospital of Wales in Cardiff and is regarded by colleagues as a talented and diligent steward.

She received five nominations for this award, with members describing her as “a source of strength”, “a role model” and “one in a million”.



“It was a great honour just to be nominated and make the shortlist,” Ceri said. “To win fills me with a great sense of gratitude to the members who nominated me and said such moving and wonderful things about me. It’s truly humbling and I am very proud of members for going through some of the processes they have been subjected to and, with my help, surviving.”

### Learning Representative of the Year Darren Blake



Colleagues say Darren is totally committed to improving learning opportunities and creating a strong culture of professional development and critical questioning. He has developed a range of online resources to support workplace learning, including a website that has been praised by the Care Quality Commission.

Darren said winning the award has had an immediate impact. “The news has been shared throughout my trust and by the local paper, and now more and more people know about learning reps. Winning the award has given me more inspiration to help educate and promote learning for nursing staff. It inspires others to get involved.”

### Safety Representative of the Year Claire Fisher



Claire became a safety rep because she wanted to speak up on behalf of colleagues. She focuses on creating the very best working environment for all staff and she has gone to great lengths to raise awareness of the RCN through newsletters, posters and when walking the wards.

Claire is described by members as “a listening ear” and “a shoulder to lean on”. She has supported them to become active in RCN projects and campaigns, including the #FundOurFuture campaign in England, led by the Students Committee. Since becoming a rep, Claire has also developed a real rapport with senior management at her trust who listen to and respect her views.

### Student Information Officer of the Year Aimie Morgan

Aimie has an infectious enthusiasm for nursing and has engaged large numbers of members in the West Midlands region. A determined activist, she has played a key role in the RCN #FundOurFuture campaign. By meeting with her MP, Aimie has opened the door for discussions on nursing issues.



After receiving her award, Aimie said: “The moment they announced the other two contenders were highly commended, the penny dropped and I started to shake and cry. I hadn’t realised how much I’d done over the last 12 months until Dame Donna Kinnair started to read all the things I’d been nominated for.”

# Awards of Merit

This is the highest honour the RCN can give for service. Awards of Merit go to individuals who have contributed in ways that are exceptional even by the high standards set by every RCN activist.

## Karen Dutton

Karen has shown an unwavering commitment to lifelong learning, helping to create countless opportunities for others to increase their knowledge and skills.

For eight years, she was the Northern region's representative on the UK Learning Reps Committee, including two years as vice-chair, and helped develop policies on workplace learning and career development.

She served on the regional board, where she helped ensure lifelong learning remains high on the region's agenda.

Karen has also made a significant impact in her local Cumbria branch.



## Pauline McIntyre



Tenacity, dedication, integrity – the words chosen by colleagues to describe Pauline's commitment to her work as an RCN steward.

As deputy director of care at Erskine, which provides support to veterans, Pauline navigates a dual role as senior manager and rep.

Regularly going above and beyond, Pauline is a true credit to the RCN. She is skilful and knowledgeable, and always takes time to consider the needs of staff and residents.

Both her chief executive and director of care nominated her, reflecting her drive to improve outcomes for all.

## Kathleen Hawksworth



RCN steward Kathy recently completed eight years as secretary of the Jersey branch and has shown passion and commitment in ensuring RCN members on the island are treated fairly.

In 2014, Kathy was a member of the group that secured a much-needed pay increase for Jersey members and she has continued to be active in negotiations, in a mediator role.

During a difficult period in Jersey's industrial relations, Kathy has proved professional and selfless, always putting members first.

## Alison Upton

A senior emergency nurse practitioner, Alison is chair of her local branch, an RCN South East board member and has represented the region on the UK Safety Reps Committee since 2013.



She's a true champion of patient and staff safety, and her Congress item on assaults on clinical staff set in motion an extension to the scope of the Assaults on Emergency Workers Bill, given Royal Assent last year.

One of the most respected RCN reps, Alison has even found time to raise funds for the RCN Foundation.

## Anne Marie Marley

Respiratory nurse consultant Anne Marie is a former Northern Ireland Nurse of the Year and a member of the RCN Northern Ireland Board. She played an active role in the RCN Respiratory Forum for many years and her commitment to promoting the work of the College has never wavered.



Described by peers as "a highly skilled operator", she is equally comfortable influencing others in the political environment and working in partnership with fellow health professionals. She was awarded an MBE in 2012 for services to health care.

## Dianne Yarwood



Dianne has played a pivotal role in helping the RCN explore and record its history. She has been an active member of the RCN History of Nursing Society since its inception and during her time on its committee, the society has seen its membership triple. She has also overseen the transformation of the society's newsletter into the bi-annual *Nursing History Now* magazine.

Currently leading the *Nursing Oral History* project, Dianne has worked closely with RCN archivists and librarians on other projects, including the award-winning *World War One Scrapbooks*.

# NOTICEBOARD

## Influence change

### New faces on the RCN Congress Agenda Committee are getting ready for next year's event following elections in Liverpool

Vicky Keir, Phil Noyes and Colleen White were elected to the committee alongside Samantha Spence who was re-elected.

The Agenda Committee develops the agenda for RCN Congress and is a sub-committee of RCN Council.

If you're keen to represent your nursing colleagues and have your say on how nursing policy is implemented, why not consider putting yourself forward to sit on an RCN committee? You can directly influence change and have an impact on nursing practice in your specialty, country, region and even nationally.

We're also looking for nominations for the RCN Trade Union and Professional Nursing Committees, which influence issues like nursing pay and conditions and lead on professional issues, respectively.

Applications are open for the RCN Forum Steering Committees too. These influence different nursing specialties and lead on guidance in those specialties.

Nominations now open include those for the RCN UK Students Committee and the National Pensioners Convention.

Visit [rcn.org.uk/elections](https://rcn.org.uk/elections)

## RCN Council elections now open

### Be part of the change and stand for election to RCN Council

Members have until 4.30pm on Friday 19 July to put themselves forward for election to 13 seats on RCN Council. Seats are available for the following constituencies: Eastern, East Midlands, London, Northern, Northern Ireland, North West, Nursing Support Workers, Scotland, South East, South West, Wales, West Midlands and Yorkshire & the Humber.

Dame Donna Kinnair, RCN Chief Executive & General Secretary, said: "Electing fellow members to Council is a key way to ensure we're truly member-led.

"Whether standing for election or voting, members will be part of the change happening in our College."

Those wishing to stand for election must have been an RCN member for three consecutive years immediately prior to the closing date for nominations. Voting will be conducted by postal ballot from 2-30 September 2019. Elected candidates will take up their post on 1 January 2020 and stay in the role for four years until 31 December 2023.

To complete an online nomination form or for more information, visit: [tinyurl.com/rcn-council-2019](https://tinyurl.com/rcn-council-2019). If you require a nomination form in any other format, email [elections@rcn.org.uk](mailto:elections@rcn.org.uk)



## Proud to be supporting Pride

### Join celebrations at this summer's events

Pride events are taking place all over the UK during the summer and active members can play an important part by highlighting the RCN's work in promoting equality for LGBT staff and patients. Edinburgh Pride is on 22 June, and in July there

are events in Bristol, London, Derby, Southend, Llandudno, Hull, Norwich, Liverpool and Sheffield, with other cities celebrating in August and September.

Contact your regional office for details of Pride events local to you or visit [rcn.org.uk/proud](https://rcn.org.uk/proud)

## Tools of the trade



Research by the CIPD reveals that nearly 60% of women aged between 45 and 55 who are experiencing menopause symptoms say it has a negative impact on them at work. The CIPD has resources to help employers support female staff experiencing the menopause. Visit [tinyurl.com/cipd-menopause](https://tinyurl.com/cipd-menopause)

NHS Employers has compiled additional and updated resources on pay and conditions for year two of the pay deal. Access the resources, including a 2019-20 pay poster and pay journey tool for England employees, at [tinyurl.com/nhse-year2](https://tinyurl.com/nhse-year2)

NHS Employers has also updated its guide on retention for England and Wales. It includes key topics such as supporting new starters, staff engagement and flexible working. Download a copy at [tinyurl.com/nhse-retention](https://tinyurl.com/nhse-retention)

*Who Cares?*, a report from the Work Foundation, outlines the implications of the growing number of informal carers in the UK, the health and social care system's increasingly unsustainable reliance on them, and how the government and employers can respond. Read more at [tinyurl.com/wf-whocares](https://tinyurl.com/wf-whocares)