

RCN NI Independent Sector Update June 2026 Edition

Welcome to your six-monthly update from the RCN NI Independent Health and Social Care (IHSC) Lead Nurse.

This bulletin brings together key highlights from across the Independent Sector (IS) so far this year, along with upcoming events, important dates, and valuable resources. The second half of 2026 promises continued opportunities for learning, collaboration, and celebrating the outstanding work across the sector.

Network meetings: What's Ahead

Our network meetings continue to provide valuable spaces for peer support, professional discussion, and shared learning. We strongly encourage you to attend and engage.

ISNMN Network (Independent Sector Nurse Manager Network)

- Tuesday 21 July, 10am–12noon
- Tuesday 1 September, 10am–12noon
- Tuesday 20 October, 10am–12noon
- Tuesday 17 November, 10am–12noon

Network meetings: What's Ahead

IS Agency Nurse Manager Network

- Tuesday 28 July, 10am–12noon
- Tuesday 29 September, 10am–12noon
- Tuesday 24 November, 10am–12noon

ISN Network (Independent Sector Network)


- Monday 5 October, 3pm-4pm

Upcoming Independent Sector events 2026

Nursing Home Conference

“The Joy of Nursing in Nursing Homes”

 Craigavon Civic Centre


 Tuesday 13 October 2026

A celebration of the expertise and value of nursing within nursing homes. Expect:

- Inspiring speakers
- Interactive workshops
- Opportunities to connect with colleagues

Regulating Rita – Webinar screening

 Tuesday 10 November 2026

 2pm-4.30pm

An interactive webinar exploring an NMC regulatory hearing and the professional challenges faced in nursing practice.

Independent Sector podcasts 2026

Our podcast series continues to showcase innovation, leadership, and professional development across the Independent Sector.

- Your Career Pathway in Nursing Homes with NIPEC & RCN, Featuring Dr Steph Craig, Stacey Finlay and Gary Cousins
- Inside the Library in a Box - A behind-the-scenes look at how accessible information transformed practice in an independent hospital. Featuring Brenda Rushe, Claire McCartan, Sophie Cook and Jamie Gwyn
- Nursing Home NICE (NG28) & Necessary. Exploring new diabetes guidance for nursing home residents. Featuring Dr Steph Craig, Stacey Finlay and Callum Metcalfe O'Shea

 Listen here: [Independent Sector: RCN NI Independent Sector](#)

Independent Sector blogs 2026

This year's blogs have sparked important conversations and highlighted innovation and leadership:

- A First for Northern Ireland: Mapping the professional careers of nursing home nurses
- Why is the CIRCLE Guide Needed?
- Thinking Outside of the Box: How “Library in a Box” is Transforming Learning

Library in a Box – Growing across the sector

The Library in a Box initiative continues to expand, supporting learning across:

- Two nursing homes
- One hospice
- One independent hospital
- One primary care setting

These portable learning hubs are enabling teams to access evidence-based resources quickly and creatively.

👉 Learn more or register your [interest](#):

Current locations include:

- Kingsbridge – Kings Hall Site & Marie Curie Belfast
- Beaumont – Lisburn ICC Nursing Home
- Kingsbridge – Ballykelly Site
- Abbeycourt Surgery, Armagh





**International
Nurses' Day 12
May 2026**

Celebrating Excellence: Nurse of the Year 2026

Congratulations to our Independent Sector colleagues recognised this year:

- Emma Turner – Independent Sector Nursing Award Winner
- Caroline McIlvor (Foyle Hospice) – Runner-up
- Marie Donnelly (Marie Curie) – Palliative Care Award Winner
- Gary Mitchell & Kieran McCormick – Learning in Practice Winners
- Bernie Farrell (Evora Hospice Care) – Team Manager Award Runner-up

Your achievements continue to inspire the entire profession.



Emma Turner



Caroline McIlvor



Bernie Farrell



Kieran McCormick &
Gary Mitchell



Marie Donnelly

Ongoing RCN NI IHSC Lead Nurse Professional Representation

- RCN representation on the Department of Health Review of Care Home Standards
- RCN representation at PHA Care Home Lead Meetings
This work ensures that the voice of independent-sector nurses remains central to policy and practice development.

Stay connected

For more information, updates and resources, visit:
<https://www.rcn.org.uk/northernireland/Independent-Sector-in-Northern-Ireland>

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