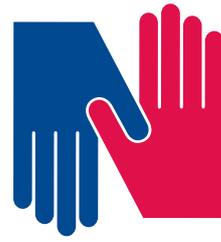


Improve  
Value  
Invest



Royal College  
of Nursing

# The RCN Manifesto

UK General  
Election 2017



# Improve Patient Care



Royal College  
of Nursing

## Safe and Effective Staffing

*We call for guaranteed safe and effective staffing levels in all health and care settings across the UK.*

### Why it's important

There is clear evidence that the right number of registered nurses caring for patients is linked to better outcomes for patients and safer care. We recognise that there is no fixed ratio – staffing levels need to change in response to the severity of a patient's illness. However, safe staffing levels in every health and care setting will ensure that people using services are safe and well cared for, wherever they are. That's why we are calling for guaranteed safe and effective staffing levels in each country in the UK. This must also be underpinned by a long term and robust approach to getting workforce planning right.

## Access to specialist nursing services

*We call for protection of specialist nurses so that people can access them when and where they need them across the UK.*

### Why it's important

Cutting specialist nurses is a false economy and the services they provide must be protected. Demand for these specialist nurses is unprecedented and in some areas of the UK there are major shortages, compromising the care people desperately need. This includes health visitors and school nurses, neo-natal nurses, district nurses, and nurses working in mental health, cancer and learning disability. People deserve access to specialist nurses, to provide the right quality care and treatment.

## Regulation of health care support workers

*We call for mandatory regulation of all health care support workers across the UK to ensure patient safety.*

### Why it's important

Health care support workers play an increasingly important role as part of a modern nursing service. In order to provide professional recognition and accountability, mandatory regulation must be introduced. The regulation of nursing is equally important for each country of the UK.

Have your say online at:  
[www.rcn.org.uk/nursingcounts](http://www.rcn.org.uk/nursingcounts)

# Value Nursing



Royal College  
of Nursing

## **Fair Pay**

*We call for nurses' and midwives' pay to keep pace with the cost of living and for protection of terms and conditions of employment across all sectors.*

## **Why it's important**

Pay is a critical factor in retaining and recruiting skilled health care staff. Nurses and midwives deserve fair pay for the work they do. Our members are exhausted and morale is low, with nursing staff under enormous strain, being asked to do more with less. More nursing staff than ever before are leaving the profession, piling the pressure on people who are already overstretched. This, coupled with increasing workloads, is affecting the quality of patient care. The 2017 decision to continue the 1% pay cap for NHS staff in England, Wales and Scotland represents another real-terms cut to pay. It means the gap between nurses' pay and the cost of living is getting even bigger. Nurses in Northern Ireland are the lowest paid in the UK. Because of the current absence of a Northern Ireland Executive, no pay award for 2017-2018 has yet been made.

## **Guaranteed right to remain for EU nursing staff**

*We call for the right of permanent residence for European Economic Area (EEA) nationals already working in the health and care sector in the UK, and a future immigration system that ensures the UK has rapid access to staff from the EEA and beyond when needed.*

## **Why it's important**

Health and care services across the UK have increasingly relied on international recruitment to care for patients due to a shortage of UK trained nurses. EEA nationals working across the health and care sector need a clear signal from the Government that they are wanted and welcome. Whilst the UK must invest in growing its domestic nursing and midwifery workforce, this will take time. The failure to guarantee the rights of EEA nationals to remain risks soaring numbers heading for the door. There are currently about 37,000 nurses from EEA countries on the UK Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) register. After the referendum, EU nurses joining the NMC register fell to fewer than 200 per month compared to nearly 800 per month for the same period in 2015.

Have your say online at:  
[www.rcn.org.uk/nursingcounts](http://www.rcn.org.uk/nursingcounts)

# Value Nursing



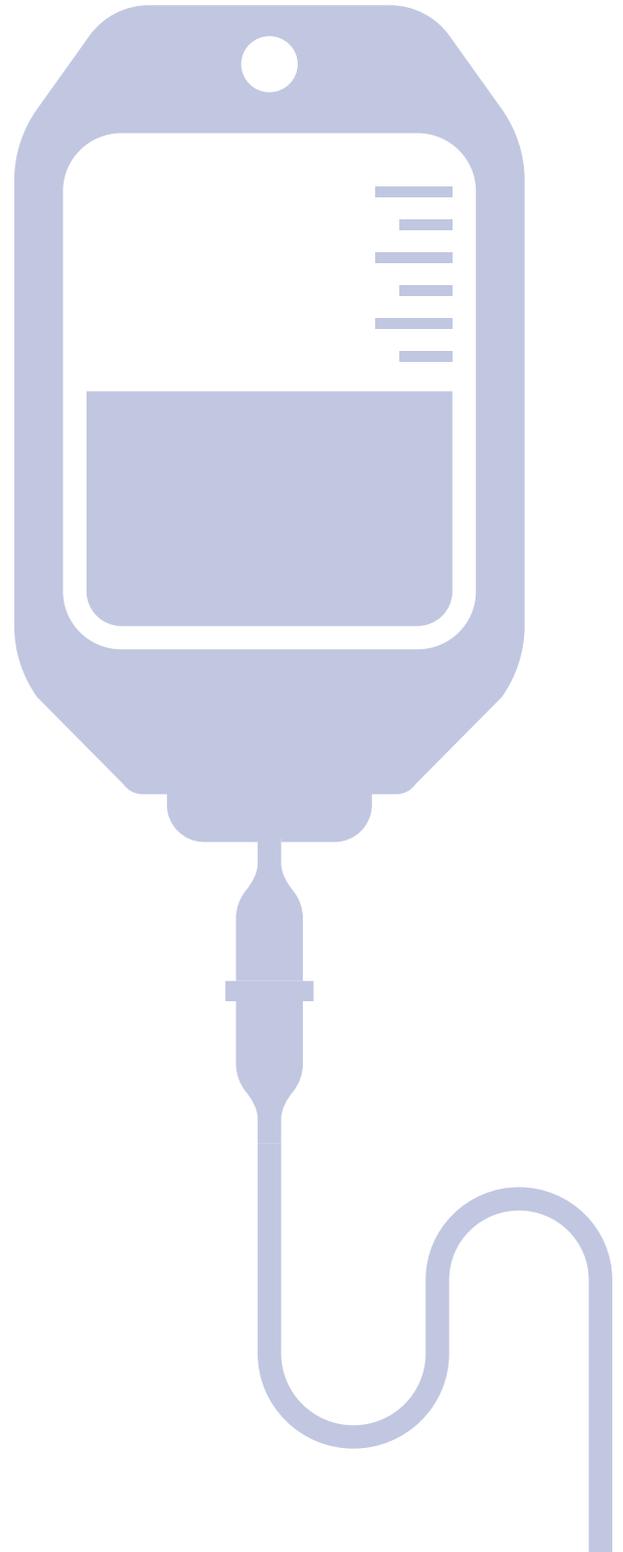
Royal College  
of Nursing

## Prevent downbanding and substitution

*We call for an end to the practice of downbanding of registered nurses and substitution with less qualified nursing staff.*

### Why it's important

We know both downbanding and substitution are being used as a way of controlling costs. Our members tell us it is now commonplace for unregistered staff to undertake care normally provided by registered nurses and requiring a higher level of skill and competence. The evidence base is clear that degree-educated nurses have a positive impact on reducing mortality rates. Good patient care depends on having a well-staffed, highly qualified workforce. Without experienced staff who provide complex care, the risk to outcomes is too great.



Have your say online at:  
[www.rcn.org.uk/nursingcounts](http://www.rcn.org.uk/nursingcounts)

# Invest in Health and Social Care



Royal College  
of Nursing

## Investment in services

*We call for more investment in health and care services across the UK, especially in community care, public health and wellbeing.*

### Why it's important

It is a political choice to increase investment in health and social care services. As part of this, we must equally value people's physical and mental health whilst working hard to address health inequalities that exist across the UK. We know that investing now can help prevent ill health from developing in the first place. This is better for people's quality of life and generates economic savings in the longer term. To support this, we need sustained investment in community and public health services, including supporting the growth of the nursing workforce such as district and community nurses, health visitors and school nurses.

## Put quality of care at the heart of health and care services

*We call for health and care service design and delivery for communities across the UK which value cooperation and collaboration over competition.*

## Why it's important

Commissioning and transaction costs should never divert critical investment away from frontline services. The use of management consultants to advise commissioners and providers to make cuts under the guise of service transformation should not be permitted. Re-designing services provides a real chance to change ways of working for the better, bringing together fragmented aspects of care and putting people first. But pushes for greater efficiency and pressure to generate savings must never compromise patient safety and quality care.

## Protect and grow the workforce

*We call for a sustained and strategic investment in education and training for the UK nursing and midwifery workforce.*

### Why it's important

Sustained and strategic investment in standards of training and education, including graduate and post-graduate education and continuous professional development, are essential to delivering first class care to patients and their families. We also need to value and invest in upskilling our existing nursing and midwifery workforce to retain knowledgeable staff and ensure that there is long term workforce planning.

Have your say online at:  
[www.rcn.org.uk/nursingcounts](http://www.rcn.org.uk/nursingcounts)