



Royal College
of Nursing
Scotland

THE GLOVES ARE OFF

It's time to value
nursing properly



Influencing your prospective
parliamentary candidates

#RCNGlovesOff

How can I play a part in the RCN's Scottish election campaign?

On Thursday 7 May 2026, the people of Scotland will go to the polls to elect the next Scottish parliament.

This election, we're demanding action, not just more promises. Scotland's communities depend on nursing; it's the biggest health and care workforce in the country. But our health and care services have relied too heavily on the goodwill of nursing staff, without the recognition, support and investment you deserve.

We're campaigning to make sure the 129 newly elected MSPs and the next Scottish government know that it's time to value nursing properly – because Scotland's health depends on it.

#RCNGlovesOff

In our manifesto, we're calling for the next Scottish government to:

1. Value the nursing profession
2. Ensure staffing for safe and effective care
3. Invest in community services to deliver care closer to the individual
4. Support better health for everyone

In the build-up to the election, candidates will be campaigning for your vote so that they can win a seat in parliament. This provides us with the opportunity to make sure that the next cohort of MSPs are committed to nursing.

The RCN is apolitical. We work with all political parties to champion the cause of nursing and enact positive change.

We encourage you to engage with candidates from all the main political parties.

Remember to share your personal experiences so that candidates know how the decisions that Scottish government and parliament make affect you.

Share your experiences

Your stories are what will make our #RCNGlovesOff campaign stand out and help us to inform and influence candidates.

Add your voice to the campaign on your social media accounts and tell politicians why it's time for nursing to be valued properly, and how this can be achieved. Share our campaign messages, update your profile with our campaign social media materials and keep an eye out for new member actions as the campaign progresses.

Follow RCN Scotland on Instagram (@rcnscotland) and Facebook (RCN Scotland) and share our campaign posts.

Follow your local candidates on social media.

Tag your candidates in your posts and ask them questions.

Use the campaign hashtag #RCNGlovesOff in posts about the campaign.

“The pressure of waiting lists and taking on extra patients is becoming too much, staffing levels are not being increased to keep up with the extra demands. This puts patient safety at risk and also affects the quality of care that patients receive.”

Senior Charge Nurse member experience shared in our employment survey

✓ Email your candidate

Use our email template, which you can personalise, to contact your local candidates and tell them why nursing is standing up for what matters. Follow the link on our website to access the template, which includes the contacts for your local candidates.

✓ Join our hustings event on 31 March 2026

Join our hustings event, either online or in-person, at the RCN Scotland HQ in Edinburgh. This is your chance to ask questions and hear about the political parties' priorities ahead of polling day.

✓ Encourage friends and family to support the campaign

Talk to your friends and family about why this election is so important for nursing, and the future of health and care services, encouraging them to tell their candidates and share campaign messages on social media.

✓ Visit our website

Find out more about what we're calling for and read our briefings on these issues.

rcn.org.uk/glovesoff

Questions to ask candidates

Here are four questions about our priorities which you can pose:

1. What will you and your party do to ensure the nursing workforce is properly valued? What do you know about the unique contribution of our profession and our skills?

Some candidates may have a personal connection to nursing, but others will not be aware of the expertise you have or your pay, terms and conditions, and CPD or learning requirements.

2. How will you and your party resolve the workforce pressures that are currently putting a strain on staff and having a negative impact on patient care?

Nursing shortages are compromising the care of patients and care home residents, yet it is well established that the right number of staff, with the right skills, at the right time and in the right place is essential for safe and effective care.

3. How will you and your party support community health and care services to meet the needs of our local area?

Scotland needs sustainable health and care services across all our communities. Are your candidates and their parties ready to commit to the investment in the critical role of community nursing and the recruitment of more registered nurses in care homes to achieve that goal?

4. How will you and your party prioritise improving Scotland's public health and supporting good health and wellbeing?

As well as leading to better outcomes for individuals, this reduces the need for more costly care and support later and is important for reducing health inequalities. Yet initiatives to promote public health will continue to be severely limited by nursing workforce shortages.

IN OUR 2025 EMPLOYMENT SURVEY

60%



**OF MEMBERS SAID THEY
WERE TOO BUSY TO PROVIDE
THE LEVEL OF CARE THEY
WANTED TO**

Stay Informed Get Involved Be Active

Please follow us and share our message:

#RCNGlovesOff



For more information about our campaign and priorities for the next Scottish government, visit rcn.org.uk/glovesoff or scan the QR code below



Here you will find news and updates about the campaign, as well as our election manifesto and campaign materials, which can be downloaded and used to promote #RCNGlovesOff



#RCNGlovesOff

For more information about our priorities for the next Scottish government, as well as information on how you can support our campaign, please visit:

rcn.org.uk/glovesoff

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