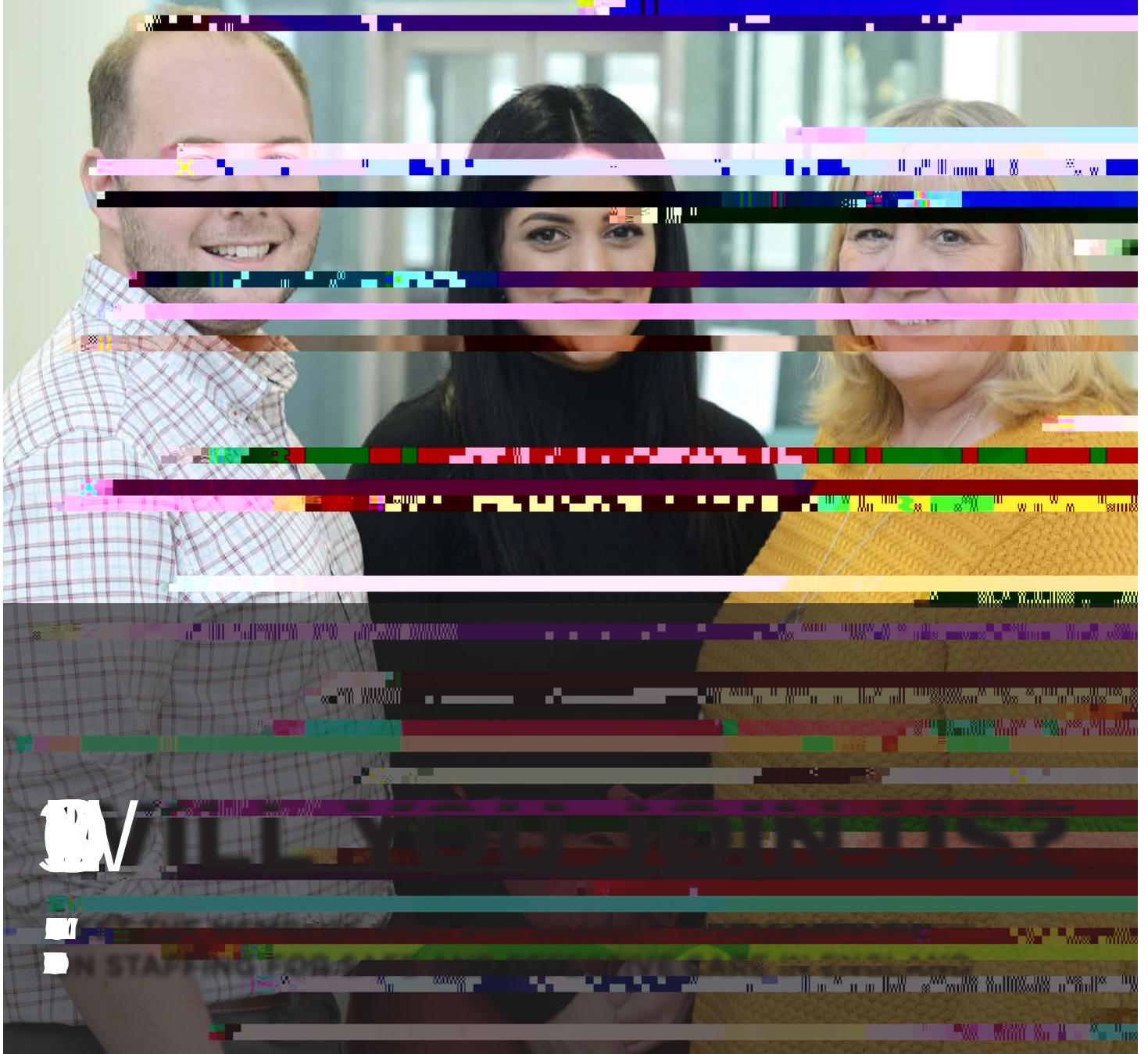




Royal College
of Nursing **RCN**



P4 GOOD NEWS



P7 OPINION

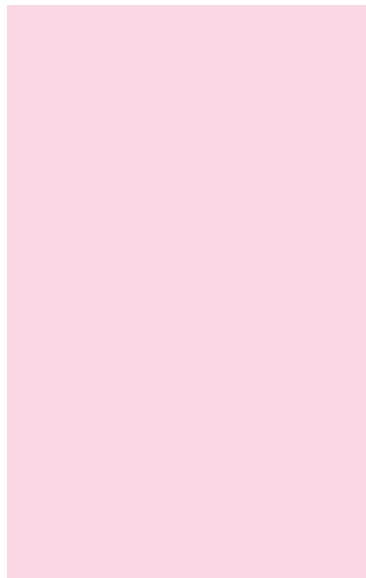


P10 FEATURE



P16 EVENTS







RCN warns NHS Long Term Plan won't succeed unless decline in student nurse applications is reversed

Figures released by UCAS in February show that despite a small increase on last year, the number of people applying to study nursing in England has fallen by more than 13,000 since 2016, the last year students received the bursary. The RCN is urging the Government to invest applica Co-10gelen bw L



Karen says the specialist advice she's received from assistant practitioner Ellan Corner has been invaluable in caring for her sister

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I truly believe the RCN's biggest strength is you, our members. Not many organisations can say they have such a large membership. The RCN represents the biggest group of nursing staff in the UK but I know that we can only be the real voice of nursing if we know what you're experiencing, what you're

Members Emma Matthews and Diana Green consider how nursing can become a more gender-balanced profession

It's not immediately obvious how the statement "our future depends on men" aligns with feminism. Yet for nursing, it's true and supports a feminist ideal.

Nursing is steeped in stereotype. Simply look at any snapshot of pop-culture featuring nurses and you'll see. The extent of our achievements – our life-saving, life-saving – and impacts our own self-portrayal. Gender in particular, and various tropes of femininity – sexy, surly, matronly – reinforce nursing as the professional extension of a "woman's place".

To improve the gender imbalance we see in nursing would not only hasten the

unravelling of our hackneyed image, but would subvert the toxic masculinity that demanding that a man must be stoic, ruthless and proud, without space for humanity, sensitivity and nuance. We can celebrate the women who founded nursing, those who uphold and certainly those who advance it, while empowering men to join without stigma or raised brows.

As we recognise the necessity of a more gender-balanced workforce, let's be active in reclaiming our image and making it appeal to the young boys and bright girls who were advised to aim higher at school. Let's banish terms such as "sister" and "matron".

We can't be what we can't see, so let's ask our brilliant nurses to broaden the

International Women's Day is celebrated each year on 8 March. The theme this year is #BalanceforBetter, with the aim of celebrating the achievements of women while creating a more gender-balanced world.

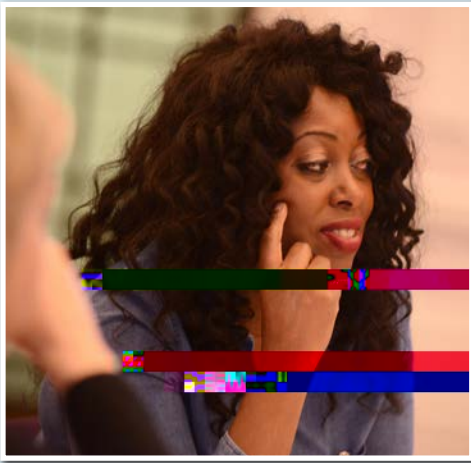
Visit internationalwomensday.com

“I’m not a good nurse, but because we’re under so much pressure due to lack of staff that mistakes could be made that have an impact on patient care.”

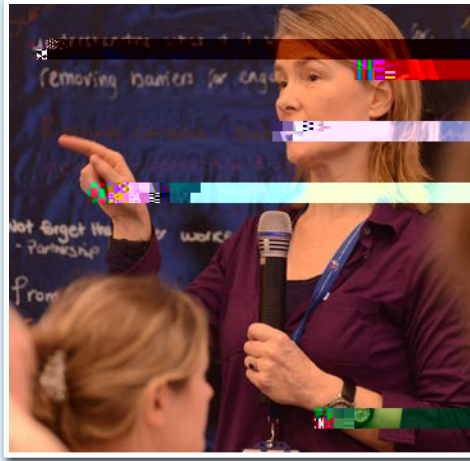
Natalie is already questioning her future in the unit where she works. “I leave every shift feeling that I could have given better care if we had more staff,” she says. Natalie’s not alone. When we surveyed members about their last shift at work, shockingly, more than half said they felt care had been compromised because there were fewer nurses on shift than there should have been.

RCN is working with the government to ensure that there are enough nurses on shift to provide the care that patients need.

We need legislation that defines what safe and



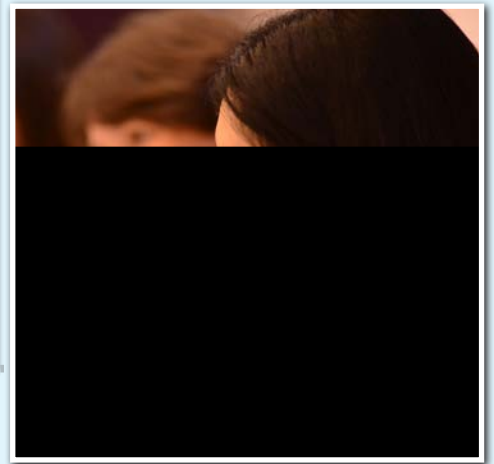
There's a fine line between being busy and working in an environment that's unsafe



Members need to feel empowered. We must tackle the attitude that nothing will improve



We need to campaign for somebody to be responsible for what's happening in terms of staying





It's never easy to raise concerns about a colleague. But if you witness care that poses a risk to patients, you have a duty to tackle it head on. As an RCN member you're not alone.



It's normal to
find it hard but
to do nothing is
not an option



RCN member Sally Young has been a registered nurse since 1988. She worked in the Territorial Army, worked in the Royal Army Medical Corps and is a nurse practitioner. She has seen and done much as a nurse

Even so, when she went to Cambodia last year as part of a group of volunteers helping to drive improvements in clinical practice she was shocked by some of what she saw, particularly the poverty among patients in the hospital where she spent a week.

Cambodia is a proud nation with a terrible recent history. In the 1970s, the murderous regime of communist leader Pol Pot instigated genocide that left an estimated two million Cambodians dead.

Transform Healthcare Cambodia, the UK charity that arranged Sally's

trip, offers education, training and clinical expertise, principally in Battambang Province in Cambodia's north west. One of the charity's directors, Sue Smith, is Executive Chief Nurse at University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust, where Sally is now a quality assurance matron.



Sally visited Battambang Hospital last November, part of a team of volunteer health professionals that included specialists in paediatrics, alcohol-liaison and emergency care. She was asked by the charity to undertake work around patient safety.

The experience was a "massive eye-opener", says Sally, a member of the RCN Professional Nursing Committee. "In Cambodia, they are no less caring than us, but it's a really challenging environment."

Hospitals, GP surgeries, opticians and dentists – many health care settings are frightening places when you don't understand what's going on. Needles hurt. Tests are confusing. Someone messing with your eyes is extremely unpleasant.

So my job is to support adults with learning disabilities to get the treatment they need, such as health checks. I help them understand what's available and why it's important to attend appointments and tests.

My role is all about talking to people and making sure they understand what's going on. We shouldn't be surprised if people are uncooperative when they haven't had what's happening explained to them in a way they can understand.

A lot of my work is about communicating information in a simple way and making sure reasonable adjustments are made. Providing relevant easy-to-read information is important and using pictures is a great way to help people understand what's going to happen.

For example, if someone needs a blood test for an underactive

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We mocked up a needle made of plastic that looked like the real thing





Making sure patients eat and drink well is essential for their recovery. Ahead of Nutrition and Hydration Week, Claire Campbell explains the important role of nursing sta

There'll be national conversations about the importance of food and drink from 11 to 17 March as SDUW RI WKH ζ IWK D Q Q Many Gastroenterology Patients and Hydration Week. Nutritional knowledge is relevant in all nursing roles, but because food and drink are everyday considerations, they can be overlooked.

"It is everyone's responsibility and yet nobody's responsibility," says Claire Campbell, Nutrition Support Nurse Specialist and a member of the RCN Gastrointestinal Nursing Forum.

"Nursing staff can look at the bigger picture – what's going on with each individual patient. Their underlying condition, mental health and access to food all have an impact on their ability to maintain a healthy nutritional status."

Claire started her career in gastroenterology and noticed its connection with nutrition. Many Gastroenterology Patients also have nutritional issues and patients undergoing gastro-related surgery often need enteral feeding tubes, followed by support to use the tube at home or switch back to oral food. Now Chair of the National Nurses Nutrition Group, Claire hopes to forge closer connections between this and the RCN Gastrointestinal Nursing Forum to explore these links.

Claire currently works in a dedicated nutrition team at Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust. She supports nursing staff to address nutrition as part of patient care.

"We have such mixed messages about nutrition," she says. "On

the one hand, we have the obesity crisis and consequences of that on health. On the other hand, a VLJQL ζ FDQW QXPEHU RI SHRSOH DUH malnourished, and that needs a whole different set of advice."

Nursing staff in hospitals and the community can often see what patients are eating and drinking.

They're in a position to discuss how this affects general health, but also address changing nutrition needs in times of ill-health and ethical questions around tube feeding.

Claire says: "If nursing staff I HOW PRUH FRQ ζ GHQW WR VSHDN WR patients about food and drink and drill down into issues a bit further, that would potentially have a huge impact on patients' overall health and wellbeing."

On the one hand, we have the obesity crisis. On the other hand, a significant number of people are malnourished

New pocket guide for student children's nurses

Clinical placements are an essential part of nurse training, but can be daunting, especially for new student nurses.

The Nursing Essentials pocket-sized guide is a set of cards given WR DOO ζ UVW \ HDU Q XUVLQJ VWXGHQW V who join the RCN, to provide support during placements. Now, a new card has been added to assist children's nursing students and improve outcomes.

Designed by experienced members of the Children and Young People (CYP) forums and shaped by feedback from third-year Queen's University Belfast children's nursing students,

the card gives vital information quickly. It contains important blood values for infants, children and young people. This includes laboratory and monitoring ranges, a handy referenced checklist and links to online resources.

The guide follows recommendations from the inquiry into the hyponatraemia-related deaths of children in Northern Ireland.

This new card helps improve quality of care and safety by ensuring children's nursing students have accurate information about blood sodium levels and other important PHDVXUHPHQWV DW W



