

# Activate

10 5 May 2016

News, views and support for RCN activists



## Trade Union Act passed

RCN campaigning has secured key amendments to

## Strength in numbers will help deliver pay message

Nursing staff have told the RCN they are facing increasingly difficult financial decisions. The impact of pay restraint is becoming harder to deal with as costs continue to rise.



## Spread the word about 'high risk' funding proposals

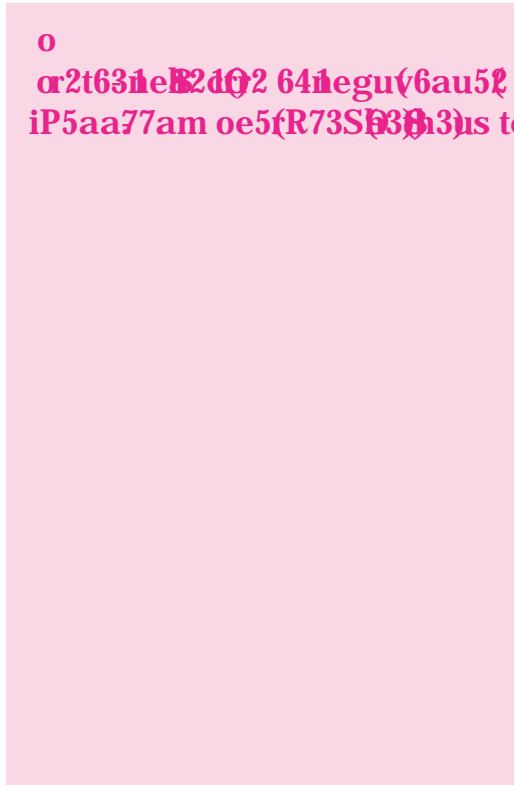
Representatives are encouraged to raise awareness of, and respond to, a government consultation on student nurse funding in England.

The RCN is surveying members with the aim of working with the Government to create a fair, effective and sustainable funding system for nursing education. Members' views will inform the RCN response to the Government's consultation, due by 30 June.

Representatives can help raise awareness of it by putting up posters and using an RCN factsheet to hold discussions with colleagues. Download materials from

[rcn.org.uk/resources/consultation](#)

Share pictures of any discussions you hold, or ways in which you use the materials, on social media @rcnuk or via [rcn.org.uk](#)



## Job evaluation

Representatives should encourage employers to take advantage of national training offered as part of NHS job evaluation. "The last survey about local practices showed a worrying lack of staff job evaluation in the system, underpinned by a commitment to partnership working," said Nicola Lee, RCN Employment Relations Adviser. "Organisations expose themselves to equal pay risks if they don't undertake job evaluation adequately and facilitate staff side participation." Visit [rcn.org.uk/employment](#) for information on training in England. Representatives elsewhere should contact their employer or discuss provision in partnership forum or Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee meetings.

## Rise in violence

New figures show that violence against NHS staff has risen by a quarter in six years to an average of 186 attacks a day. Kim Sunley, RCN Senior Employment Relations Adviser, said: "No-one should be assaulted or intimidated whilst going about their daily work. The figures are alarming and yet more evidence of the overwhelming pressures on the NHS." Download the *RCN Healthy Workplace, Healthy You* toolkit from [rcn.org.uk/healthyworkplace](#)

## Unfair suspensions

The RCN's member support services have taken a number of calls this year from members who have been suspended while their applications for visa extensions are processed by the Home Office.

As long as applications are sent before the expiry date on their visa, members should be allowed to continue working.

RCN Senior Immigration Adviser and Solicitor Sophia Barrett said: "If members can prove they've applied to extend their visa before it expires – for example sending the application by recorded delivery – there's no reason why they should be suspended. It's important representatives are aware of this issue as a quick conversation with

an employer should normally be enough to nip it in the bud.

"If the problem persists, they should direct members to the RCN's immigration advice service for further assistance."

## Activate app

Have you downloaded the *Activate* app yet? *Activate* is also available for smartphone and tablet as an interactive magazine via the new, free RCN *Activate* app. Search for and download it now on iPhone and Android devices.

# VIEWS

Strengthening the RCN

ASK AN  
ADVISER



## Reaching out on revalidation

Just the mention of NMC revalidation can make some members panic, so I've made it my business to help. Some people are surprised at this as I'm not a registered nurse, but I have relevant experience.

I was involved when the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework was introduced and this made me very aware of the importance of keeping a portfolio. And having had to keep evidence of my work for my foundation degree and completing the RCN's steward development modules, I understand the worry that some people experience when they wonder where on earth they're going to start.

I've read up on the NMC requirements, gathered all the paperwork I've used and posted it on a noticeboard for my colleagues to see. I recommend using electronic portfolios (e-logs) to help with this. I have a list of links to help you get started.

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# YOUR DEVELOPMENT

## **The RCN's support for representatives has been transformed in response to member feedback**

“Being a representative is a practical activity so getting the balance between theoretical knowledge and skills is essential,” says Terry Gammell, an RCN steward who has recently completed the RCN's learning and development foundation programme.

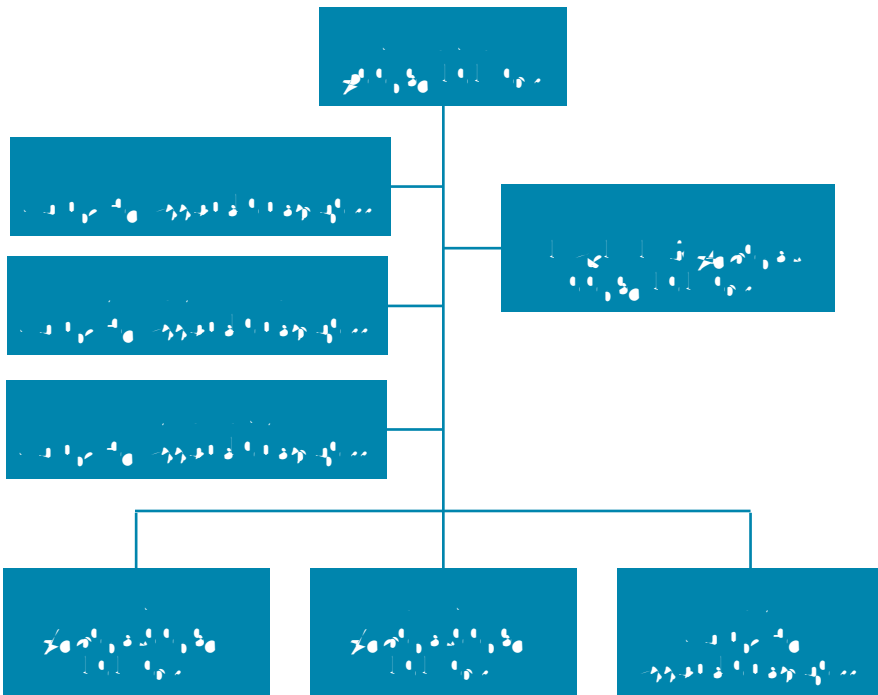
Many representatives agree. Respondents to a recent review said the RCN's training for representatives needed to include more practical learning to help them develop the confidence to deal with difficult issues in the workplace.

### **Improvements**

The training curriculum now includes activities recommended by the RCN's UK representative committees. “Representatives will now have a chance to have a go at things like supporting members to write statements and contributing to their



## The case for change



### Chair of RCN Council Michael Brown answers your Council Review questions

#### Why now?

The role and structure of RCN Council has remained unchanged for almost 40 years. We need to update the way the RCN is run; supporting our roles as a membership organisation, a trade union and a royal college.

#### What did members say needs to change?

The review was carried out by an independent group. You said the governance structure is key to demonstrating how we meet both our royal college and trade union responsibilities. The RCN must continue to be member-led but you would like Council to look and act more like a decision-making board rather than a representative body. You said the current governance structure is too large and unwieldy with too many committees.

#### What are the main proposed changes?

- More members will be directly elected to serve on Council and the two key Council committees.
- Council will be smaller and more strategic.
- Work will be delegated to Council committees.
- Committees will be strengthened by ensuring

they have the right membership able to fulfil their roles. They will also be held to account for the work they do.

- The committees will decide what committees or groups they need to help them deliver their agendas and involve as many members as possible in their work.
- There will be a stronger decision-making and reporting structure for the RCN Group (the RCN, The RCN Publishing Company and RCN Law).
- Seventeen members will be directly elected to Council and 14 members will be directly elected to the Membership and Representation Committee (MRC) and Nursing Practice and Policy Committee (NPPC).

#### How will this help?

I hope to see more members getting involved and taking on leadership roles. I also hope to see Council and its committees working better – decisions will be faster and more transparent, and better informed.

#### How will making Council smaller improve member engagement?

Council will remain the decision-making body of the organisation – unlike many other similar organisations that have set up a small decision-making board in addition to its representative council.

We are increasing the number of members involved in our governance structure by having members elect the 28 members of NPPC and MRC in addition to the 17 members of Council.

#### What will members vote on at the AGM?

Members will be asked to vote on an amendment to the standing orders to provide for RCN Council to be composed of 17 members, including one member per country and region, one student member, one health practitioner member, the President, Deputy President and Chair of Congress. It's an important decision for the RCN and we want as many members as possible to be part of making that decision so please vote in person or by proxy at [www.rcn.org.uk](#) if you are unable to attend the AGM.



The Health and Safety Executive has set out its priority themes for health and safety at work for the next five years. There are six strategic themes: acting together, tackling ill health, managing risk well, supporting small employers, keeping pace with change, and sharing success. Read *Helping Great Britain Work Well* at [https://www.hse.gov.uk/helping-great-britain-work-well/](#)

NHS Employers has called on the new London Mayor Sadiq Khan to commit to work with

London's NHS. [https://www.nhs.uk/news/2016/05/160516\\_nhs\\_calls\\_for\\_mayor\\_sadiq\\_khan\\_to\\_commit\\_to\\_work\\_with\\_london\\_s\\_nhs/](#)