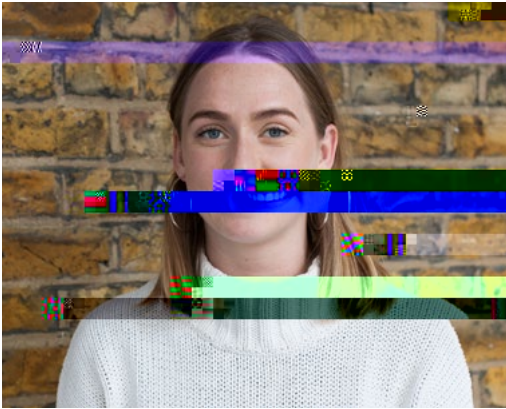


P10

P14

P18

P20



Student update	4-5
Global nursing	6-7
Political inf uencing	8-9
Skin health	10-11
Learning disabilities.....	12-13
Unique placement	14-15
Healthy eating.....	16-17
Climate change.....	18-19
Dementia care	20-21
Your committee.....	22-23

If you've got a story to share, or there's a topic you'd like to see covered in a future issue, why not get in touch? Email studentsmagazine@rcn.org.uk

Did you know [rcn.org.uk/online](https://www.rcn.org.uk/online) is online? Read unmissable student stories, advice and guidance on the go, anywhere, any time. Visit [rcn.org.uk/studentsmag](https://www.rcn.org.uk/studentsmag)

Our online practical guides cover a whole range of issues, including incidents at work, indemnity, bullying and stress. Visit [rcn.org.uk/get-help](https://www.rcn.org.uk/get-help) or call 0345 772 6100 to speak to an RCN Direct adviser.

Editor: Sophie Goode
Production: Mark Kalaher
Design: Fern Bale
Published by: Royal College of Nursing, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN
W: [rcn.org.uk/studentsmag](https://www.rcn.org.uk/studentsmag)
E: studentsmagazine@rcn.org.uk
Publication code: 009 412
Cover image: Jonathan Perugia

The RCN Starting Out app, aimed at nursing students and newly qualified nurses, is now here and provides knowledge, expertise and support from the RCN straight to your mobile or other device.

It includes information on education and learning resources; support with professional and personal matters; guidance on the role of the RCN; details of specific RCN membership benefits; and membership management, including easy ways to keep your personal details up to date.

The RCN Students Committee was involved in developing the app, offering feedback on content and testing it before it was launched. New features and content will be added to the app throughout the year. Visit rcn.org.uk/startingout



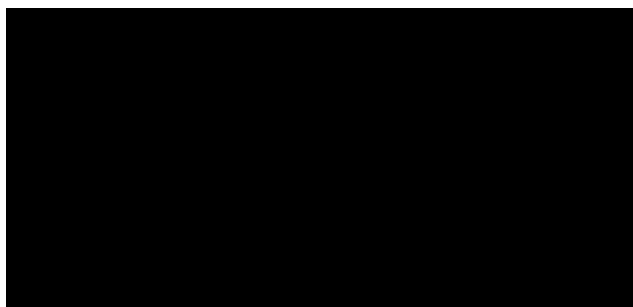
Got a question about COVID-19 and how it affects you? See our online advice for all the latest information on issues relating to the pandemic at rcn.org.uk/covid-19-advice. Staff at RCN Direct are also available to help provide the information you need at this challenging time. Our online advice guide is being continually updated in response to your queries and concerns. If you can't find what you're looking for, contact us online at rcn.org.uk/get-help or call 0345 772 6100.



The RCN Library and Archive Service is developing its online training offer. "Following a number of successful group sessions over the summer, including ones on literature searching, we now have exciting plans for more," says Alan Chalkley, RCN Information Literacy Assistant. You can book training at bit.ly/2DRdV9C and access the e-library at rcn.org.uk/library

Meanwhile, the RCN education team has been busy consulting with members on developing the RCN Group Education, Learning and Development Strategy for 2021-2024 as part of its commitment to support your lifelong learning. Visit tinyurl.com/rcn-elds

y



We've launched a campaign to demand fair pay for nursing in recognition of the complexity of skill, responsibility and experience demonstrated every day by members of the profession.

If you want to help show the UK government why we believe nursing staff deserve a 12.5% pay rise, get involved with our campaign today.

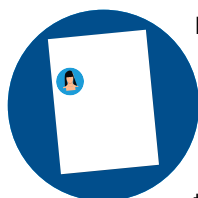
"Fair pay for nursing and proper funding for nursing

education is the only sustainable way to address the severe shortages in our profession," said Jess Sainsbury, Chair of the RCN Students Committee.

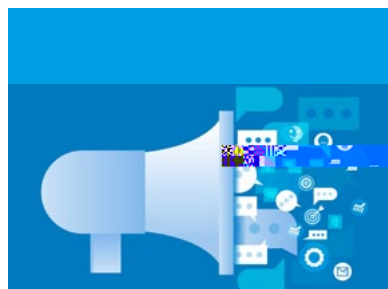
"We'll continue to fight for nursing student tuition fees to be abolished, for the debt of current nursing students to be forgiven, and for the introduction of maintenance grants that reflect actual student need."

Join us at rcn.org.uk/fairpayfornursing

Enclosed with this issue of *Nursing Times* is your ballot paper for the election of the next student member of RCN Council, as well as information on each of the candidates. Make your voice



heard by returning your ballot paper as soon as possible via the prepaid envelope. Your paper needs to be received by 30 November to be counted so don't delay, vote today. Visit rcn.org.uk/elections



There was a time recently when I felt I was drowning in debt. My friend suggested writing to my local MP, Sarah Olney, as a last resort. I sent her a letter and didn't expect a reply. I couldn't believe it when someone called me back.

Sarah's office made an appointment for three weeks later. I was nervous as I'd never met a politician before. But I needn't have worried. Sarah was so kind and listened to me intently. A few weeks later I received a copy of a letter she had written to Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock, alongside two other MPs, highlighting my concerns. Reading the letter was like listening to every detail we discussed. It asked the government to directly reimburse student nurses for their final term of tuition fees.

Not in a million years did I think reaching out would get a result. It gave me faith that people do listen. As students, we need to get involved with politics – it affects us all. One listening ear may just create action which will blow your socks off.

Theresa, international nursing student. Turn to page 8 for more on political influencing

Political engagement has
been a huge part of my
role as Chair of the RCN
Students Committee. I feel

The COVID-19 pandemic began

so it's extra important to check for signs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you're experiencing any of these symptoms, you should seek help and advice from your placement provider or your GP.

"Even in normal times, far too often gloves are worn when they're not necessary," says Rose. "This can have a real impact on skin health. In the current circumstances



we are all being extra vigilant about hygiene but using gloves should not be seen as a replacement for good hand hygiene."

It is important to assess when to use gloves—both

- Wet hands thoroughly before applying soap.
- Rinse off all soap when washing hands.
- Dry hands thoroughly after washing – pat skin with a soft paper towel where possible and avoid hand dryers if you can.
- Apply moisturiser containing emollient to hands regularly.
- Stay hydrated.
- Gloves are not a substitute for hand hygiene. Over-use can put you at risk of dermatitis.

under and overuse of gloves can put you at risk of dermatitis. Gloves should be worn if you're in contact with blood, body fluid, broken skin, or mucous membranes. They're also needed if there's a chance of chemical hazards, such as disinfectants or cytotoxic drugs, touching your hands.

Only put gloves on when your hands are completely dry and remove them when the task that required them is complete. Remember, gloves are single-use items so they should be changed between each patient or care task.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, you may be using other forms of PPE,

such as gowns, overalls, eye protection and face masks.

Public Health England recommends only wearing PPE for two-hour stretches so your skin can dry and recover (this does not apply to gloves). Regular breaks will also allow you to rehydrate and apply moisturiser containing emollients to the points where your PPE touches your skin.

Masks that have been fitted are less likely to damage your skin. Even if you have been fitted, check your skin regularly for any signs of redness, soreness or cracking. If you spot any, report this to your placement provider.

Visit [tinyurl.com/rcn-ppe-skin-health](https://www.rcn.org.uk/skin-health) for more information.

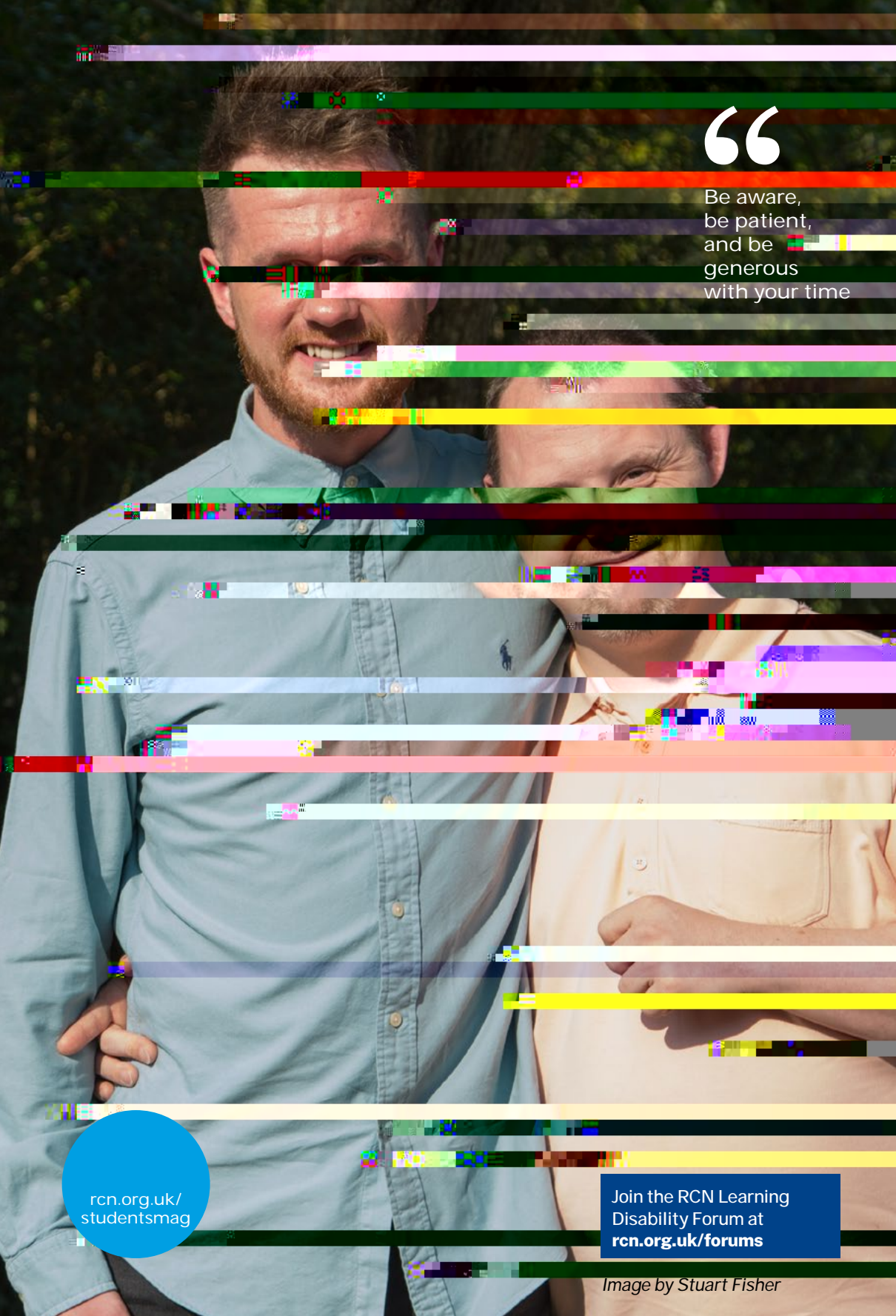
Having to go to hospital is pretty frightening for everyone. I can't imagine anyone looks forward to it, even if it's planned. When admitted, I want everyone to have the same level of care as I would get.

I want this for all my patients, but I also want it for my brother, Nathan. We come as a duo. Everything we do is "half each". He just happens to have a learning disability.

I've always been passionate about providing excellent care for people with a learning disability but when I started my nurse training in 2016 I chose to study mental health to broaden my knowledge. I still wanted to share my experience with others though, and I was determined to champion the needs of individuals with a learning disability across all health care sectors.

courses and" d6 d" ous

I'm going to tie this in with the staë s th this é y l ú tg c e " disab it ô ha io` tra



“

Be aware,
be patient,
and be
generous
with your time

[rcn.org.uk/
studentsmag](http://rcn.org.uk/studentsmag)

Join the RCN Learning
Disability Forum at
rcn.org.uk/forums

Image by Stuart Fisher

“Before I started this placement I had no idea about Marie Stopes UK and sexual health clinics, I knew nothing about abortion. Now I feel so much more knowledgeable,” says Ozlem Top (pictured right) who, with fellow King’s College London course mate Trishnu Thakali, is in the second group of pre-registration nursing students to complete placements at the Marie Stopes UK clinic in West London.

“It was the same for me—it was a completely new experience with different opportunities,” says Trishnu (pictured left).

Back in September 2019, NICE published updated guidance on abortion care, recommending that anyone who may care for someone who requests an abortion should have the chance to gain experience of abortion services during their training.

“We wanted to offer students a chance to experience an area of health care that is not included as a core part of any major pre-registration courses for nursing or midwifery,” says Angela Jones, Clinical
2 £ edt an u /



It can be difficult to live healthily as a student, but it's essential you

nurses of the future have to play in the fight for our world

I have recently been thinking a lot about sustainability, climate change and nursing, and the connections between them – spurred on by writing about my top five podcasts for online, “Audio for the mind and soul”, which you can read at rcn.org.uk/studentmag

My final podcast recommendation wasn't in the field of nursing, health or wellbeing like the others on my list, but about climate change. At the time I said it was the wild card as it wasn't directly related to nursing, however, the more I think about the topics, the more I am sure that they are intrinsically linked.

There is now no denying that human activity is changing the planet's biosphere, bringing disruption to planetary health through climate change, air pollution, ocean acidification, and deforestation. This is already affecting and will continue to affect our patients' health and wellbeing to a greater degree year on year. Be this through air pollution adversely affecting pulmonary conditions, resource scarcity leading to malnutrition, or the fear and anxiety provoked by an uncertain future affecting mental health.

This list is not exhaustive – the natural world and our climate affects our physical and mental health in a myriad of ways as I am sure your public health lecturers have repeatedly told you. Indeed, the World Health Organization (WHO) has described climate change as the defining health challenge of our time.

Unless drastic measures are taken, climate change will fundamentally alter the world in which future humans will live. However, it is not too late – we can make individual and organisational changes to our everyday lives to create a beautiful green future for everyone.

Understanding this, RCN Congress 2019 voted in favour of an emergency resolution to acknowledge the climate emergency and lobby health care providers to develop policies and strategies that are environmentally sustainable. Since then work has been done to make the RCN itself more sustainable, build relationships with external organisations like the UK Health Alliance on Climate Change, and start initiatives to improve the sustainability of nursing practice,



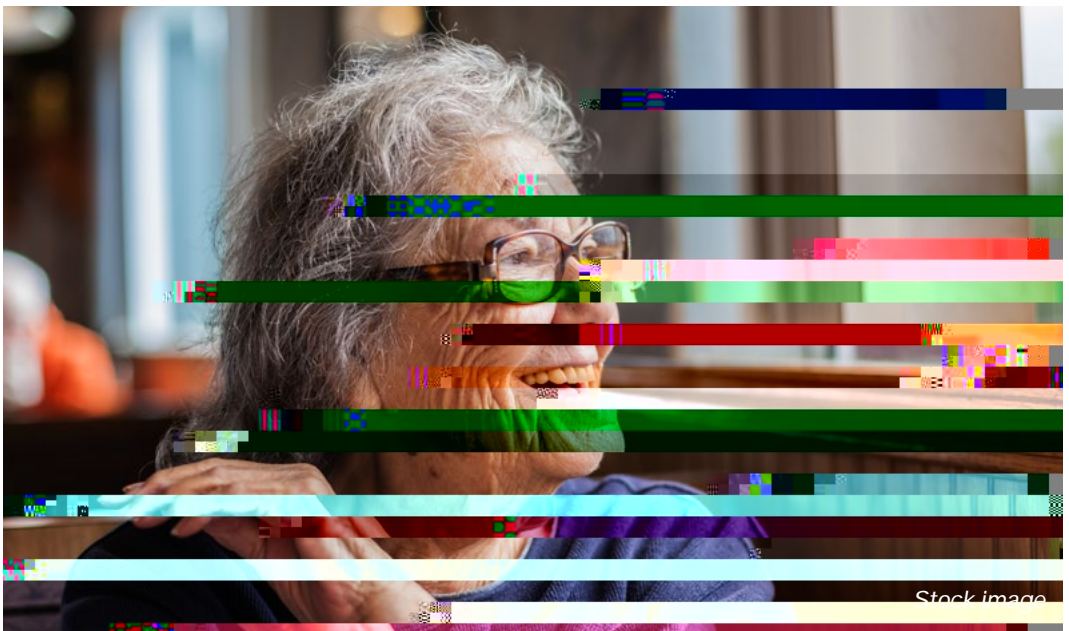
Engagement with this topic is paramount

🔗 Read about why sustainability matters in health and care, and what the RCN is doing at tinyurl.com/rcngreenworkplace

Read the RCN's position statement on climate change at rcn.org.uk/publications (pub code: 007878)

with campaigns like Glove Awareness Week. The RCN Students Committee has also resolved to become more involved in work in this area.

But, should this be a concern for nurses on an individual level? I would argue yes. Nurses have a duty to protect and promote health in the face of these threats and have a unique and vital role to play. As students the issue is even more vital – as the future of the workforce we will see and feel the cumulative effects of u— f~ tive



People living with dementia face many challenges throughout their illness. One of the biggest challenges relates to public misconceptions about dementia, and this can be disempowering.

Just because someone lives with the disease, it doesn't mean they can't do things like drive, manage money, or have romantic relationships. As dementia progresses,

each person will encounter unique challenges and these can affect people emotionally, physically and practically.

Caring for people with dementia is about seeing the person behind the illness and helping them to actively live their life in the here and now. It's also about empowering and facilitating people to take control of what they can still do and

provide support for things that are more difficult.

As nursing students, we have first-hand experience of some of the best ways to do this – but not all people living with dementia regularly see nurses or health care professionals. It is therefore very important that family members, carers and the general public have good knowledge about how best to support them.

I am proud to have been involved in a project which seeks to improve public perception of dementia. A key part of the project was developing a free digital game. It aims to help improve society's awareness so that people with dementia feel empowered, supported and included in their local communities.

Along with a research team, a gaming company, five other nursing students and my lecturer, we worked alongside seven people living with dementia to co-design the game. My role was to work with all these individuals to help actively decide how the game would look, how it would play and what questions needed to be asked within the game.

To our knowledge this is the first game of its type. It works

on any device through a web browser and only takes a few minutes to play. Players answer random questions from an existing question bank about dementia. The idea is that the more times you play, the more you'll learn about dementia.

At my university, Queen's University Belfast, all nursing students are encouraged to play the game in their first year of study. The game has now been played more than 3,000 times and research conducted by the university on its impact shows that after playing the game, a person's attitudes to people living with dementia improve.

Whether you are a nursing student, a registered nurse, a health care professional, or a person who looks after someone with dementia, I invite you to take a couple of minutes to play our free game. It might just change how you think about people living with dementia. Go to dementiagame.com



Hi all, it's been a turbulent year and we recognise it's far from over. With a second wave of COVID-19 upon us, and – at the time of writing – local lockdowns in place, nurse education programmes across the country at different stages, and variable placement experiences, we need to stick together. Please know you have a whole network of support via your RCN family, from your local branch to your national students committee. Please r f• local s

Our priority, first and foremost, is to support student members in a way that is courageous and inclusive. We encourage all members to optimise their RCN membership and seek professional resources and support to complete their nursing education to the best of their ability.

On 16 November the RCN Student Ambassador Conference is going virtual. Like most events this year, we've had to be imaginative with our hosting skills but it was very important to the committee that we recognised the contribution of our student ambassadors and provided them with this important learning opportunity. [#RCNSA](#)

Unless you were nose deep in a literature review, you wouldn't have missed the comments from Minister for Care Helen Whately on "student nurses not providing a service". Your students committee invited the minister for an open and frank discussion

