

## Royal College of Nursing

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largest professional organisation and trade union for nursing staff, with members in the NHS, independent and third sectors. RCN Scotland promotes patient and nursing interests by campaigning on issues that affect members, shaping national health policies, representing members on practice and employment issues and providing members with learning and development opportunities. With over 40,000 members in Scotland, the RCN is the voice of nursing.

## Background

Health inequalities remain a significant problem in Scotland. The reasons behind it, its manifestations and potential solutions are complex and wide-ranging.

In general, deprivation and social inequality are central drivers of health inequalities; this means that everything from employment status, income, education, quality of housing and wider community services can have an impact on the quality and length of people's lives.

with wider problems linked to social deprivation. They are confronted daily with the consequences of social conditions on the health and well-being of the communities they care for.

In many circumstances nurses are not only addressing the direct health needs of patients, but trying to promote positive physical and mental health where the social and physical environment may be high unemployment, high crime, a lack of opportunity and a lack of green space.

## Taking decisions for generations to come

People need to know they can access the right care in the right place whenever they need it, in their own communities. But to deliver that Scotland is going to have to work in new ways.

