



### **Workforce in Scotland**

Nursing levels are at historically high levels, but the rising demands on our health and care services mean that staff are under pressure like never before.

RCN's centenary survey of its members in 2016 showed that staffing levels were their biggest concern, as they just don't feel they have enough time to care for their patients.

Health boards are struggling to recruit and retain enough nurses and the continuing cap on pay is putting further pressure on already overworked nursing staff.

Without the right number of nursing staff, patients simply do not get the care that they need, whether that is in hospital, at home, in a care home or in another health and care setting. Nursing patients are at risk of being treated against

The total  
31 Dec

Comm  
654.9  
vacan  
vacan

Hospit  
1797.7  
vacan  
vacancy rate.

This corresponds with a year on year increase of 30%, over the past 5 years, on the number of RCN members seeking specialist money advice from the RCN's Welfare Service [Dec 2016 statistics]. This contact from RCN members focuses predominantly on dealing with unmanageable consumer credit debt.

RCN members are borrowing more money to meet essential costs associated with the rising costs of childcare and day to day living expenses. Many are taking second jobs, and some are having to use food banks to feed their families.

### **The reality for nursing staff**

There must be a meaningful pay rise for nursing staff to prevent wages falling further behind inflation, and pay levels in comparable professions. This is important for morale and motivation in the short-term, and for recruitment and retention in the longer-term.

The RCN's most recent Employment Survey of members [Sep 2015] found that:

- 30% had struggled to pay gas and electricity bills
- 14% had missed meals because of financial difficulties
- 53% had been compelled to work extra hours to increase earnings
- 32% were working extra night/weekend shifts to help pay bills and everyday living expenses