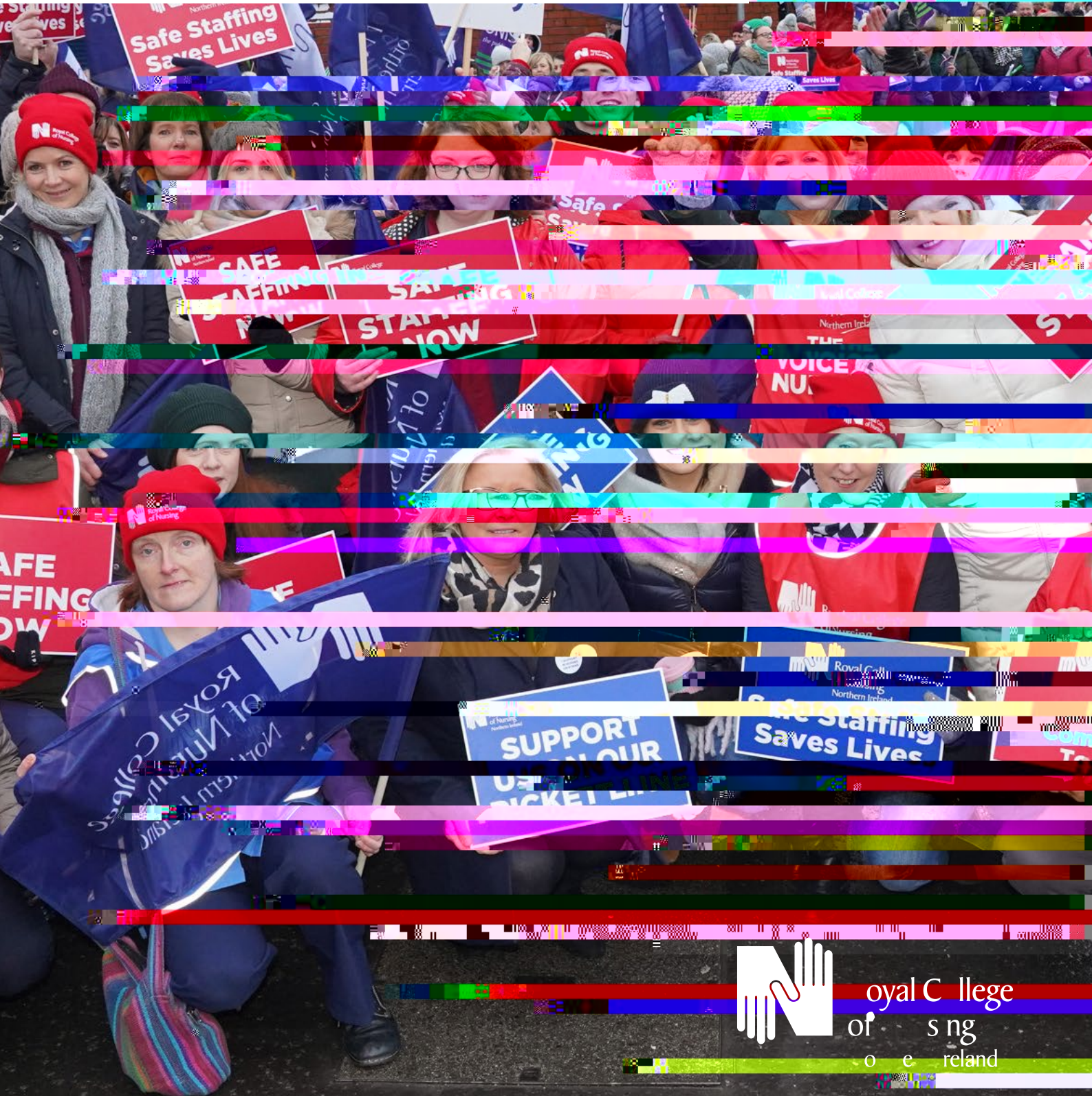


RCN Northern Ireland Annual Review 2020



Royal College
of Nursing
of Northern Ireland

CORPORATE

This document has been designed in collaboration with our members to ensure it meets most accessibility standards. However, if this does not fit your requirements, please contact corporate.communications@rcn.org.uk

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Introduction

A year in the life of our members through SenseMaker

"Short-staffed, two nurses doing an extra 60 hours a week between them to try and see patients in the community due to staff shortages from Covid. I personally broke down due to pressure and stress."

Staff nurse/practitioner, 46-55 years old, community service

Life of a care home manager: Work is highly stressful at present. All the pressures of managing a care home continue to exist with the added pressures of managing a pandemic and Covid testing, outbreak testing, changing guidance.

Service manager, 30-45

Overwhelmed, lonely, disaster awaits... Sent to a ward I have never worked on, never been ward based, staffing crisis - no one from that ward there, working mainly on my own. No one to ask for advice and felt overwhelmed which gradually worsened until by lunchtime I was in tears, sobbing, unable to think, work or make a sensible balanced decision. Had to go home by 3pm. This was my 6th or 7th place of work since March.

Specialist nurse, 45-55, acute setting

"Trying to describe my last week at work is quite the challenge! I would say it has been stressful to say the least with huge staffing issues at the forefront. Patient needs are always the priority and that often means that staff go above and beyond to ensure that patients receive the best care possible, resulting in staff feeling overwhelmed, exhausted and burnt out, physically and emotionally. The way in which we are currently working is unsustainable. Staff working together is essential and we have been relying on each other throughout this whole pandemic, but I feel that we

Go or be disciplined: Last week I didn't know if I would still be working within my department the following week. The rota was not released until Thursday for the following week. I have a family of four very young children who need childcare arrangements made at the very last minute. The staff in my department have been told they may be needed to staff ICU (we are nowhere near trained for ICU). We have been told we must go or face discipline. Even if we offer to work in other areas which may require staff we don't have that choice we must go. So we are waiting from week to week. Anxiety and sickness levels are of a scale I've not seen before.

Staff nurse, 30-45, acute setting

Influencing for you

Political influencing on behalf of nurses and nursing is a key priority for the RCN. This is how our members can make change happen and ensure that politicians and decision-makers take action on the issues of importance to nursing staff and patients. Politicians of all political parties greatly value direct engagement with nurses. We work to ensure that politicians listen to, and act upon, the voice of nursing.

There are many ways in which our members can influence. You can become an e-campaigner, helping to promote RCN campaigns on issues such as pay and safe staffing. Getting involved with your local branch or an RCN network also provides an opportunity to work with your colleagues to promote nursing issues and get things moving. Political influencing can also include promoting change by responding to consultations and policy developments, sharing your messages through the media and social media, or speaking out at a conference or event.

During 2020, meetings were held with four Executive Ministers, five members of the Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Health and ten of our 18 MPs. These meetings covered a wide range of issues including the supply of PPE during the pandemic, safe nurse staffing, the mental health and well-being of nursing staff, and pay.

The RCN presented evidence on nursing workforce issues and the position of care homes during the pandemic to the Committee for Health and made several written submissions on a wide range of issues affecting members. Involving members in these activities means that politicians are listening directly to the issues that matter to nursing staff in all health care settings across Northern Ireland.



Update on the independent sector

Learning and development

While the pandemic and its restrictions resulted in many planned events being cancelled, the opportunities for online development and learning have proved vital and we have worked hard to ensure that members could access events virtually throughout the year. RCN Northern Ireland supported 86 sessions throughout 2020, most of them virtually. We have devised new ways of working and different platforms to engage with members.

The RCN Northern Ireland Library and Information Zone provided services remotely and continued to support members online while RCN Northern Ireland networks also continued to meet and hold events, including a very successful Safeguarding in a Digital World event held by the RCN Northern Sexual Health Network.

Library Europe's largest nursing-specific collection

Search

Books Journals and Databases

Library and Information Zone

You are here: [Library](#) / [About us](#) / Northern Ireland Library and Information Zone

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) - the RCN Library and Archive Service is currently online only
 You can still contact us via email, phone and wechat although our library buildings in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and London are closed until further notice.
 Keep up with the latest information on our [Library Services and COVID-19 pages](#).

From borrowing a book to improving your information literacy, our library of... and facilities to support your learning.

Opening Hours

Monday to Friday:	9am - 5pm
Weekends:	Closed

Find us at: **RCN Northern Ireland Library and Information Zone**
 17 Windsor Avenue
 Belfast

"I've worked in oncology for the last 18 years in various roles, including as a chemotherapy nurse and in research, and I've recently transitioned into a new role as an oncology nurse practitioner. I've used the RCN's library in Belfast since I was a student and always found it to be a fabulous resource."

Jennifer Foreman

RCN representatives: working for you

2020 began with RCN representatives and staff supporting members on picket lines across Northern Ireland. RCN Learning Reps, Safety Reps and Stewards played a vital part in informing and engaging with RCN members during the campaign and industrial action.



RCN members facing allegations from an NMC referral

Being referred to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) can be distressing and isolating. It can also lead to other issues with finances, relationships and maintaining professional registration. Unlike some unions, our members are supported and represented by a solicitor in NMC cases. For an insight into the RCN support and NMC process watch out for your local RCN branch organising an event called *Regulating Rita*. This play tells the story of a nurse who gets into difficulty in her clinical setting and eventually ends up in front of an NMC regulatory panel.

In 2020 RCN Northern Ireland opened 27 new cases in support of members with NMC referrals. During the year 17 existing cases were closed. At any one time there are, on average, approximately 70 RCN members with ongoing NMC cases.

Following RCN legal support and representation, in the 17 NMC cases closed during the year:

- 12 members were found to have 'no case to answer'
- one resulted in the ending of an Interim Order
- two resulted in continued suspension from the register
- one found no impairment
- one resulted in an extension of conditions on practice.

The outcomes for our members represented at the NMC compare more favourably than for those with other representation, or those with no representation.

Any RCN member referred to the NMC, should contact our Customer Service Centre on [0345 772 6100](tel:03457726100). You will receive advice and support and onward referral can be made to a range of RCN support services.

