Supporting nurses, improving care
Introduction

The RCN Foundation supports the needs of nurses, midwives and health care assistants as well as nursing students. As a registered charity we help individuals to develop their practice so that they can provide the very best possible advice, support and care to patients.

Additionally, our Benevolent Fund provides assistance to members of the nursing team facing hardship.

Established in April 2010 when the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) amended its legal structure, we have our own board of trustees. However, four RCN Council members have seats on the board, enabling us to retain our strong connections with the College, while also maintaining our independence.

We know that every day many thousands of people rely on the care and assistance of nurses, midwives and other health care professionals. The pressures of modern life mean they are not just seeking solutions from nurses to improve their own health and quality of life, but that of their families and communities too. Additionally, health care is evolving; requiring patients, families and carers, and nurses to develop a new understanding of how prevention care and treatment is delivered. Patients rightly have high expectations and require respect, dignity and compassion to be at the centre of care. The RCN Foundation aims to support nurses to proactively respond to new demands; to share their innovations and solutions; and to ultimately deliver high-quality patient care.

Our mission

Our purpose is to enable nurses and nursing to improve the health and wellbeing of the public.

We do this through:
- benevolent funding
- education and training bursaries
- supporting the development of clinical practice and the improvement of care
- developing practice to enable people and communities to make positive choices about their own health and wellbeing
- promoting research.
Our beliefs and values

Our working relationships with each other and with those we provide benefit to will be guided and governed by our beliefs and values.

Be relevant today and ready for tomorrow

We learn from others, from our past and also by looking to the future. Together with our partners, we are ready and willing to act. We embrace how things can change for the better. We think ahead strategically.

Be focused on impact

We work together, uniting our energy. We rightfully challenge what might be a barrier to our aims and ambitions. We work to the strategic priorities of the Foundation. We demonstrate our independence while embracing partnership and collaboration. We manage expectations to ensure they are met and seek to exceed them where appropriate.

Be accountable

We ensure prudent use of resources to achieve the goals of the Foundation. We take responsibility for our decisions. We are transparent in prioritising our efforts. We operate to the highest standards of corporate governance. We evaluate our achievements through measurable results. We utilise the skills and expertise of RCN members and staff, fellow trustees and partners.

Be ambitious

We are creative and innovative. We try new things and learn from them. We celebrate achievements.

Be collaborative

We respect and value each other. We work with partners to leverage our charity and charitable strengths where common values and outcomes are shared. We listen to and learn from constructive dialogue.
To help us deliver our strategy we have developed five key priorities. Over the following pages you can read about each priority in detail, including what we will do to achieve our goals. These priorities are underpinned by business plans which we will monitor and change in response to developments in nursing practice, health care and public/patient experience.

Over the next five years our focus will be on funding nursing-led public health initiatives that contribute to healthier communities, and innovative projects which transform the care experiences of patients with long-term conditions.

We will also be supporting more people to enter nursing and assisting individuals to innovate and develop their knowledge and skills. Ultimately this will transform service delivery and provide quality patient care in the new and emerging health care context. Additionally, our Benevolent Fund will continue to provide assistance to members of the nursing team facing particular hardship.
Funding and disseminating research and practice development

Why it matters

Nurses and other health care professionals play a pivotal role in improving public health and providing quality care for individuals, families, vulnerable groups and communities. As health and social care evolves, different models of service create new opportunities. Nurses need to be innovative in how they develop new ways of providing person- and community-centred care. In particular, they must always take advantage of emerging technologies.

Our plans

We will shape our profession by:

• funding clinical research and supporting innovative projects which make a difference to service development and the safety, quality and dignity of patient care. We will measure outcomes and not be afraid to learn from surprising results
• contribute to healthier communities by supporting projects that promote equal access to health care
• evaluating and disseminating project results from which others can learn; implementing them across the UK and internationally
• partnering with other organisations to promote informed health and wellbeing choice for patients.
shaping our profession
Funding scholarships and learning and development bursaries

Why it matters
There is a consensus across society that patients deserve the best possible experience and care, delivered by well trained and high-performing professionals. Nurses have a duty of care to their patients to keep up to date with new developments and to use their knowledge and skills to transform the care patients receive. This means proactively seeking their own development opportunities and sharing learning.

Our plans
To prepare for our future we will:
• support more young people from all parts of society to choose a career caring for people
• fund awards for nursing students to undertake tailor-made work placements, enabling them to study in the area of their choice
• fund scholarships for post-graduate study
• fund scholarships to encourage graduates with a non-nursing degree to qualify as a registered nurse
• foster excellence in practice by funding clinically-focused research which is academically supervised or supported
• fostering excellence, skill advancement and improvements in patient care and services by supporting individuals to conduct health care projects or study practice connected with their clinical specialty
• fund education and development activity that promotes health, prevents ill-health and improves health outcomes.
Preparing for our future
Our strategy – 2012 and beyond

We will safeguard nurses by:
• funding practical support and direct social welfare advice
• funding recuperation and rehabilitation support
• providing financial assistance.

Why it matters
Through its funding, the RCN Foundation provides vital advice and support to all working and retired nurses, midwives, health care assistants, nursing students and their families in times of need, getting their lives and careers back on track.

Our plans
We will safeguard nurses by:
• funding practical support and direct social welfare advice
• funding recuperation and rehabilitation support
• providing financial assistance.

Priority three
Reaching out to those in need
Here when it matters
Engaging our communities
Our people and community

Why it matters
Everyone should be able to feel the difference we make and be part of it too. The RCN Foundation aims to promote and disseminate the outcomes of the work we fund to support healthier communities; improving patient care and experiences across the UK and internationally.

Our plans
We will engage our communities by:
- building a supporter network across the UK and beyond
- fostering enduring partnerships with business, the public sector, social partners, funders and philanthropists to continue our work
- harnessing a volunteer ethos which makes people feel at home with us and want to participate in our work
- identifying corporate supporters whose employees and customers can support the charity
- identifying local champions and establishing country and regional supporter/fundraising committees
- encouraging our supporters to reach out and embrace more and more people in our activities.
Sustaining the future of the Foundation

Why it matters
As a new charity it is essential for the Foundation to develop a robust and sustainable financial framework which enables it to prosper and grow. Through this we will deliver our mission to improve the health and wellbeing of the public and to support nursing and health professionals to deliver the best possible patient experience and care.

Our plans
We are sustaining the Foundation’s future by:

• setting performance measures to monitor progress against our five priorities, ensuring ongoing sustainability and value for money

• promoting the work of the charity and developing our fundraising capacity-growing our grants programme which will focus on innovation, encouraging best practice and helping to facilitate change

• celebrating the completion of the first RCN Foundation funded projects and publishing the outcomes of the work we have funded

• developing and enhancing trustee capacity and capability to ensure the Foundation’s structure and processes are fit for purpose and delivering on the strategy.