



Royal College  
of Nursing

# EVERY POLITICIAN NEEDS THE NURSING VOTE

It is down to the campaigning efforts of our members that we are able to keep nursing high on the political agenda.

On Thursday 4 July, voters across the UK will go to the polls in a general election and elect their MP. The party with the largest number of MPs will form the next UK Government.

## WHY DOES MY VOICE MATTER IN THE RCN'S GENERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN?

Across the UK, there are 650 constituencies where parliamentary candidates from all parties are campaigning for your vote. They will attend local hustings, campaign events and will come to speak to you at your door.

Every conversation with a candidate can make a big difference. We want the next cohort of MPs to commit to the nursing profession's key priorities. We need you to:

- **Share your own reflections** as a member of nursing staff to show how the decisions that the UK government and parliamentarians make affect you and your patients.
- **Be the local voice of nursing.** Not all candidates will know a nurse, or understand the varied expertise, skills and knowledge you have.
- **Remember, you are the expert in nursing issues.** Use this knowledge to your advantage and talk about what matters to you and your patients.

The RCN does not support one political party over another. We work with all political parties to raise the voice of the nursing profession and secure change. We are calling on all parties and candidates to make firm commitments to nursing staff.

**We have launched our manifesto which calls for nursing to be the top priority for the next UK Government and all MPs elected to Parliament.**

## **OUR 12 PRIORITIES:**

- 1.** Give all nursing staff a substantial pay rise and introduce automatic band 5 to 6 pay progression for NHS nurses.
- 2.** Introduce safety-critical nurse-to-patient ratios in all care settings.
- 3.** Provide legal protection for people raising concerns about unsafe staffing.
- 4.** Fund mental health support for all nursing staff, provided by every employer.
- 5.** Eradicate corridor care, and force reporting of it.
- 6.** Commit to government-funded nursing degrees with a job guarantee for graduates.
- 7.** Revoke legislation restricting the right to strike.
- 8.** Protect the title 'nurse' in law.
- 9.** End exploitation of health and social care workers and properly fund the sector.
- 10.** Provide sufficient funding for continuing professional development.
- 11.** End punitive immigration policies which affect internationally educated nursing staff.
- 12.** Increase overseas aid spending to tackle global nursing shortages.

# QUESTIONS TO ASK PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES

Be prepared to engage with the candidates, challenge them and raise your concerns. Here are five questions about our priorities which you can ask:

## **1. What is your experience of nursing? What do you know about our profession and our skills?**

Some candidates may have a personal connection to nursing, but others will not be aware of the expertise you have. You can tell them about where you work, the positives of working in nursing but also the issues you face and how, if elected, they can help.

## **2. How will you and your party resolve the workforce shortages that impact nursing staff and patient care?**

Nursing shortages across the UK are compromising patient care, yet it is well evidenced that the right number of staff, with the right skills, at the right time and in the right place is essential for safe and effective care. We need legally enforced safety-critical ratios which enables safe patient care in every country of the UK.

## **3. How will you and your party support local health and care services to meet the needs of our local area?**

What data or research will they use to make sure that the health and care services will meet the health needs that people have? The next UK Government must understand local health needs and then fund, staff and plan health services accordingly.

## **4. Will you support action to end exploitative recruitment and employment practices that health and care workers experience?**

Exploitation that targets internationally educated nursing staff and their colleagues must be stamped out. Staff report being tied into contracts with hefty penalty fees and paying huge sums to rogue recruitment agencies to work.

## **5. Will you and your party commit to giving nursing the investment and funding we need? How will you secure this?**

This investment must include funding for professional development, education and pay, terms and conditions. You can see the details the RCN believes are important in our manifesto priorities, for example pay in #1, support for students in #6 and professional development in #10.

# HOW TO GET INVOLVED IN OUR GENERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN

## **Arrange meetings with your parliamentary candidates**

Meeting your candidates is a great way to hear their views on health and care services and to ask questions about your concerns for nursing and patient care. This can be an effective way to encourage them to commit to supporting nursing, and to understand their views.

## **Attend a hustings event**

A hustings is an open meeting between all candidates running to be elected in a constituency. You can attend and raise your concerns about nursing and ask the candidates for their view on the issues that we're campaigning on.

## **Encourage friends and family to ask their candidates to support nursing**

We need lots of people advocating for nursing and patients in the UK General Election campaign so that candidates are encouraged to support the RCN's agenda.

If you'd like help arranging a meeting with your candidates, or need support to attend your local hustings, visit our website or contact the RCN.

## **Stay up to date with our campaign**

Find out more about our priorities and how the RCN is campaigning for nursing through the UK general election visit our website:

[www.rcn.org.uk/general-election](http://www.rcn.org.uk/general-election)

## **Raise your voice with our candidate emails**

Email your parliamentary candidates today to raise the issues that matter to nursing.

