

## RCN Forum Annual Report 2024

**Forum Name:** Bladder and Bowel Forum

### **Introduction:**

The RCN Bladder and Bowel forum has played a pivotal role in working with other organisations in lobbying for evidence-based Continence (Bladder and Bowel) care. We have contributed to National guidelines, research, commissioning documents, and the setting of national standards for continence service.

The Committee have continued to support National groups that have met both virtually and face to face this year, by representing the RCN on the projects helps to inform and shape future Bladder and Bowel pathways. Working collaboratively and in partnership with other interested groups to highlight the discrepancies in Bladder and Bowel across the United Kingdom and we have successfully recruited to vacancies within the steering group which reflects the membership across the UK to strengthen our offer.

### **Membership of the forum**

Total number of forum members: 3521

First choice membership: 1321 which shows an increase in membership of 9.18%

The Forum has an active Facebook group which steadily increases' year on year with a membership of 849

Twitter followers total 1.872k which is an increase from the previous year.

Social media presence is crucial in engaging with members and the current staff shortages has highlighted the need for robust and an increased visibility via social media channels.

Committee membership – we are quorate as a committee. This year three committee members tenure came up for renewal, one decided to step down due to work commitments. We interviewed five candidates (two current committee members and three new applicants). The two current committee members were successful as was one of our paediatric link nurses which gives the forum a further depth of experience. We are also delighted to have now have a vice chair on the committee.

### **Reflections on 2024: (Outputs and outcomes)**

#### **➤ Resources:**

- The review of *Catheter Care - Guidance for Health Care Professionals* and *Bowel Care Management of lower bowel dysfunction, including digital rectal examination and digital removal of faeces* has now been completed and are waiting for publication and relaunch.

#### **➤ Congress 2024:**

- Unfortunately, our submission for a learning and wellbeing event for congress was unsuccessful however two committee members were able to attend, one for the first time.
- The Bladder & Bowel forum also had a stand one lunchtime to explain the work of our forum, this was well attended and promoted the important work of the forum.

#### **➤ Webinars**

The forum held a series of lunchtime webinars this year:

- Fundamentals of catheter care and forum member engagement: 13 March 2024:
- Fundamentals of lower bowel dysfunction and forum member engagement – 16 May 2024
- Current research in continence - changing the landscape - 11 July 2024

These were all very well attended and received very positive feedback

➤ **Conference**

- The Bladder & Bowel Fundamentals of Continence Conference took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November at RCN HQ. The speakers were all committee members; however, we are also honoured to have Ms Jacq Emkes providing our keynote session providing first hand insights on the lived experience of the continence journey. Jacq is a passionate patient advocate working with national bodies and groups to change how continence is viewed and prioritised to improve outcomes for all
- The conference was aimed at General Nurses in acute, primary and social care, Student Nurses and Support Workers. The aim of the conference is that attendees will leave the conference with the ability to demonstrate an understanding of the importance of continence care.

They will be able to:

- to perform baseline continence assessments for patients with bladder and bowel issues
  - to be able to utilise resources to diagnose and plan better continence care
  - to implement preliminary management of continence in order to improve a patient's quality of life
  - to determine which product to utilise for a continence issue ("Puzzle by Products")
  - understand how Laxatives work, and what they taste like
  - identify problems with catheters and resolve them
  - evaluate effectiveness of the continence care plan and change or update, as needed or indicated.
- There were only 48 attendees, which allowed us to keep the event intimate and informal .

**Contribution to Consultations/Policy development** the forum continues to work with:

- NICE
- Patient Industry and Professionals forum (PIP's)
- UK Continence Society

- NHS England. Excellence in Continence Care Programme Board
- Unplanned Admissions Consensus Committee
- EICC Programme Board National Bladder & Bowel Health Project
- Spinal Injury Association
- Bladder & Bowel UK
- Association of Continence Professionals

The committee have been asked to represent the forum by speaking at conferences around the UK.

### **Current projects**

The committee and our Paediatric link nurses are managing a project to develop a - Daytime wetting resource. The resource has been agreed by FGG and will be published by November 2025.

**Strategy day** took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> November at RCN Head Quarters

### **Plans for 2025**

- Committee members to attend Congress 2025
  - Learning and Wellbeing Programme application
  - The committee also plan to submit an agenda item to be debated
- To complete the Daytime wetting resource
- To imbed updated guidance
- To review and update Continence resource.

**Date prepared: 04.12.24**

**By: Fiona Le Ber Chair of the RCN Bladder and Bowel Forum Steering Committee**