

# RCN Forum Annual Report 2024

## Forum Name: Defence Nursing Forum (DNF)

### Introduction

The forum represents RCN members who are currently employed or have previously worked in Defence Nursing inclusive of the whole force: Royal Navy, Army, the Royal Air Force, and Civil Service. Our primary objective is to advance the academic and professional growth of our members through collaboration with various RCN forums, teams, and wider Defence stakeholders. We strive to raise awareness of the positive impact of Defence Nursing within Defence and the broader nursing workforce. We provide Defence nursing expert advice and guidance to the RCN to support its mission of promoting safe, high-quality, person-centred nursing care across all settings.

### Membership of the forum

The Forum Steering Committee has diverse membership representing a variety of clinical specialties, officers and NCOs, reserves and regular, the Army, RAF, and civil service. It currently does not represent the Royal Navy; however, the existing members are committed to being mindful of this when recruiting, representing, and planning activity.

The steering committee is made up of:

- Suzanne Turner, primary healthcare and civil service
- Major James Cooper, Senior Nursing Officer and Regular Army
- Major Nei Gilbert, Primary healthcare and Regular Army
- Captain Louise Jones, paediatrics and Army Reserve
- Cpl Rebecca Crisp, critical care and RAF

The Forum currently has 1128 members of which 576 indicates that the DNF is their first choice. This is up from last year and allows the forum one voting member at RCN Congress.

### Reflections on 2024 (outputs and outcomes)

The forum has focused on developing as a steering committee, gaining understanding and confidence in role and networking with other organisations. This was particularly key as all members were recruited outside of the normal recruiting calendar and therefore did not get a Forum induction. The Steering Committee met for its face-to-face strategy in March and virtual, monthly committee meetings have been established with a standard agenda enabling feedback from all committee members and structuring discussions.

- **DNF Charter.** The committee completely rewrote the DNF Charter with a new purpose, vision and objectives. This was a useful exercise as it allowed an entirely new committee, who were appointed outside of the normal recruiting timeline and were therefore not afforded an induction, to better understand their role and remit.
- **RCN Congress.** The forum was represented by two members fulfilling its one voting member position over the course of RCN Congress. These members took the opportunity to better understand the RCN and congress and forge greater relationships with CNO Defence and the Defence Recruiting Team who were both also in attendance. They also supported the forum stand, participated in the forum world cage and networked with other forums and members.
- **Social Media and Comms.** The forum used Facebook (820) & X (667) communication to greater effect this year. The X account has now been mothballed in line with RCN policy. The RCN DNF webpages have been kept up to date.

- **Representation and Conferences.** The steering committee attended and promoted the forum through attendance and presentation at the Defence conferences/gathering such as the CNO Army Symposium.
- **Edith Cavell Memorial Service.** Cpl Rebecca Crisp from the forum steering committee attended and laid a wreath at the Edith Cavell Memorial Service on 12 October 24. Cpl Crisp subsequently published a [blog](#) on her experience which has been widely shared.
- **RCN Emergency Nurse Competencies.** Captain Louise Jones supported the Emergency Care Forum in its review of the RCN Emergency Nurse Competencies with SME paediatrics advice.
- **RCN Magazine Advice.** The steering committee provided SME advice to the RCN Magazine in the drafting of [Who were the Flying Nightingales? | RCN Magazine](#)
- **Support to Professional Lead.** The forum steering committee have provided SME advice to their professional lead on several workstreams and topics such as the Defence Functional Nursing Strategy, workforce issues, professional development pathways and more.
- **2025 planning.** The steering committee have done the hard work to hit the ground running in 2025. It has programmed a series of webinars for next year which are detailed below.

### **Plans for 2025**

1. Plan a strategy to listen to what our membership wants, possibly through social media posts, listening events, survey (distributed widely including through chair email, suggestion box at Congress, social media) by Sep 25.
2. Recruit two new committee members and become a full committee reflective our membership by Jan 25.
3. Review the RCN Library [Defence Nursing Subject Guide](#) by Jun 25.
4. Work with Critical Care and Flight Nursing, Peri-Operative, and Emergency Care Forum to deliver the [RCN Acute Care Symposium](#) in 2025.
5. Actively participate in RCN Congress 25.
6. Submit a bid to run a DNF Learning and Wellbeing Event at RCN Congress 25.
7. Contribute to key Defence Nursing events such as the CNO Symposium for Royal Navy, Army, RAF throughout 25.
8. Promote the benefits of the RCN and the DNF with Defence Nursing students throughout the year.
9. Deliver the planned webinar series on topics: Managing professional behaviours, managing a transient workforce, caring for paediatrics patients when deployed, and exploring opportunities with nursing across Defence.

**Date: 21 Nov 2024**

**Kendal Andreason, Professional Lead for Acute and Emergency Care and Defence Nursing**