

RCN Forum Annual Report 2024

Forum Name: Ophthalmic Nursing Forum (ONF)

Introduction:

The ophthalmic nursing forum consists of ophthalmic nurses who share a commitment to the care of people with ophthalmic conditions and visual impairment. We are dedicated to promoting an ophthalmic nursing workforce who have the appropriate education, skills and expertise to provide safe and effective patient care.

Membership of the forum

Count	Forum (All)	Count	Forum (1 st Choice)
Nov 2024	1597	Nov 2024	1157
Nov 2023	1501	Nov 2023	1086
Increased by	96	Increased by	71

Committee membership

- New chair appointed in April this year.
- Four new members appointed to the committee this year.
- The seventh member was interviewed and is due to start in January 2025
- The committee meets via teleconference every two months; attendance and engagement were initially variable, but there has been a significant improvement recently. Most of our strategy goals have been met. We continue to be invited to inform national developments in ophthalmic practice.

Reflections on 2024: (Outputs and outcomes)

- Successful bit for the Ophthalmic Nursing: Advanced Practice Competency Framework.
- Established collaboration with Eye News for ophthalmic publications to raise the profile of ophthalmic nurses.
- Collaboration with workforce lead to promote safer staffing
- Eyes right: Older people and driving Publication - review completed
- Talking Heads – <https://www.rcn.org.uk/clinical-topics/Ophthalmic-nursing/Ophthalmic-conditions-and-treatment-pathways> review completed
- Ophthalmic Nursing Digital Pages <https://www.rcn.org.uk/clinical-topics/Ophthalmic-nursing> - Review completed

Social media: we are active on X and Facebook. Communication via X is relatively low, and this may be reflective of the current general declining trend. Face book communication remains stable. The current social media membership is reflected below.

X : October 2024	FACEBOOK: October 2024
66	240

Representation (meetings the forum has represented the RCN in 2024)

The ONF has been actively involved in a range of events and contributions to ophthalmic workforce strategy. Overall, the level of activity and influence on the ophthalmic nursing workforce developments is a particular highlight.

- **Department of Health & Social Care forum: Eye Health Forum:** To represent & act as a stakeholder for RCN ONF. Agenda items included DHSC and NHSE update, Transformation of Ophthalmic care update, Patient support pathway, Community Minor and Urgent Eye Care Services Specification, the College of Optometrists workforce project and an update on vision screening. This is a strategic meeting with potential to influence major eye health programmes of work.
- **Clinical Council for Eye Health Commissioning (CCEHC): Standards Service Specification for Community Minor and Urgent Eye Care (England).** As the voice of nursing, RCN needs to be represented at this meeting. The meeting was held to conclude on commissioning processes that were previously discussed about the provision of primary eye care service in the community by Optometry services, and to collate feedback from the members and shareholders before submitting to the commission and Minister. Feedback included clinical acronyms table, metrics, service names glossary, and issues relating to practice inclusivity of HES supported optometry service in the community.
- **100% Optical / Ophthalmology. ONF attended as a panel discussion regarding The Eye Care Support Pathway.** Overall aim of the day was: How can Optometry and Ophthalmology work to better embed patient support into NHS systems and change practices and behaviours to improve patient outcomes?
- **UK Ophthalmology Alliance (UKOA) Stakeholder Update:** To ensure the voice of nursing but this group, and to reference the RCN and ONF as a stakeholder in the forum. Matters discussed included UK-wide multi-professional eye care workforce supply and demand data modelling project. The Eye Care Support Pathway, led by RNIB, Discover Wellbeing, and Visibly Better Employer.
- **UKOA Board meeting: The RCN ONF is a stakeholder member of the board.** The agenda included: Actions from last meeting, Board Membership, Membership Fee Update, Finance Update Member Meetings Update and the current UKOA Project Portfolio.
- **RCOph National Ophthalmology Database Audit (Age-related macular degeneration (AMD))** Disseminate of audit data. Engagement across all ophthalmic units. Software issues issued. Providing input into audit process from RCN/Nursing perspective.
- **National Falls Prevention Coordination Group (NFPCG); National Healthcare Public Health team** - ongoing collaboration following task and finish group; to share knowledge and expertise about vision and falls. To continue providing advice and participating in actions as part of strategic updates, discussions strategic updates, falls research updates.
- **APPG on Eye Health and Visual Improvement. Changing attitudes, Changing Lives: An inquiry into employer attitudes and the employment of blind and partially sighted people. The Emotional Impact of Sight Loss.**
- **College of Optometrist Workforce Advisory Group: ONF represented to ensure the role of the ophthalmic nurse is recognised in this workforce development project.**

- **Eye Health Forum/ Eye Care Services, Dept. Health and Social Care Rationale for attending** - to have the role of the ophthalmic nurse as part of the eye care workforce recognised. Ministerial update-support for increasing the eye care workforce and discussed need to increase number of healthcare professionals; apprenticeships, digital and technical learning; eye care as a pillar of primary care.
- **National Falls Prevention Coordination Group (NFPCG) - NHS Public Health team** Updates from researchers e.g. action for falls- falls in care homes and Group discussions.
- **Ophthalmic Practitioner Training ((RCOph OPT) ongoing contribution to discussions regarding implementation.**
- **Royal National Society of Blind People-Eye Care Support Pathway roundtable.**
- **Royal National Society of Blind People-Eye Care Support Pathway. Launch event 18th September 2024**

Consultations:

Requests for advice sought to gain an understanding of the role of the ophthalmic nurse for education and workforce planning from HEIs and Trusts

ONF Representation at the RCN

- Strategy day was held on the 7th January 2024 and Bi-monthly meetings
- Forum chairs buddying
- Engagement in forum chairs networking, collaboration and peer support.

RCN Congress 2024 2 voting members attended including GE from the steering committee.

ONF Conference 16th November 2024

- Conference theme for 2024 is: “Advancing your practice in ophthalmic nursing”.
- Good attendance and positive feedback received.

Forum Webpages Refreshed and updated by the RCN team supported by professional lead

FGG Projects: Successful bid for the Ophthalmic Nursing: Advanced Practice Competency Framework.

Plans for 2024: Aspirations for future work:

- To undertake the Safer Staffing and Workforce project
- Undertake the Advanced Practice Competency
- Develop an ophthalmic education programme in collaboration with Abbvie
- To continue to influence the NHS agendas on ophthalmic patient care, ophthalmic nursing and ophthalmic nurse education.
- To strengthen the profile of ophthalmic nursing

Date Prepared 29/10/24

By: Tendai Gwenhure, Chair RCN ONF