



## **Royal College of Nursing briefing ahead of Second Reading of the Compulsory Emergency First Aid Education (State-Funded Secondary Schools) Bill**

With a membership of more than 430,000 registered nurses, midwives, health visitors, nursing students, health care assistants and nurse cadets, the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) is the voice of nursing across the UK and the largest professional union of nursing staff in the world. RCN members work in a variety of hospital and community settings in the NHS and the independent sector. The RCN promotes patient and nursing interests on a wide range of issues by working closely with the Government, the UK parliaments and other national and European political institutions, trade unions, professional bodies and voluntary organisations.

### **The RCN's position on the Bill**

The RCN supports the proposals in this bill. Mortality statistics show that around 6000 people die each year from accidents in the home.<sup>1</sup> Nursing staff see first-hand the consequences of people not knowing what to do in emergency situations where time is critical, and can mean the difference between life and death. Delays in receiving emergency first aid treatment can lead to serious long-term health effects, and death.

At the meeting of the RCN's Congress in 2010, RCN members voted overwhelmingly in favour of a resolution to mandate the teaching of first aid to primary and secondary school children.<sup>2</sup> The RCN is calling for this bill to go even further, to include emergency first-aid education for primary schools as well.

The RCN argues that increasing first aid knowledge and skills among future generations will save lives and equip children with skills and confidence that they will carry with them throughout their lives and that statutory first aid education is a simple, affordable solution. A recent example of such education saving a life is the example of 11 year old Joshua Williamson, who was awarded the Child of Courage Award at the 2015 *Pride of Britain Awards*.<sup>3</sup> Joshua had received emergency first aid training at sea cadets and was able to perform CPR on his father, after finding him unconscious as a result of a heart attack. It was this swift action that kept his father alive until paramedics arrived and were able to restart his heart with a defibrillator

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.rospa.com/home-safety/advice/general/facts-and-figures/>

<sup>2</sup>

[https://www.rcn.org.uk/newsevents/congress/2010/congress\\_2010\\_resolutions\\_and\\_matters\\_for\\_discussion/7.\\_first\\_aid\\_training\\_for\\_children](https://www.rcn.org.uk/newsevents/congress/2010/congress_2010_resolutions_and_matters_for_discussion/7._first_aid_training_for_children)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.prideofbritain.com/child-of-courage-josh-williamson>

The RCN commends the *Every Child a Lifesaver* campaign<sup>4</sup>, by St John Ambulance, the British Heart Foundation and the British Red Cross, which seeks to include emergency first aid education on the national curriculum secondary schools.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://everychildalifesaver.org.uk/>