

**VOTE FOR
NURSING**
**PLEIDLEISIWCH
DROS NYRSIO**
2021 Because Nursing Saves Lives.
Gan Fod Nyrsio'n Achub Bywydau.

Foreword

Nursing is at the heart of health and social care in Wales. Nursing cares for people in every stage of life across every setting. Our members provide care in birth and pregnancy, in schools, homes, prisons and hospitals. Our members provide and oversee complex care arrangements give advice and support, manage nursing teams and wards, prescribe treatments and medication, promote people's recovery and maintain their independence and work to reduce health inequalities within society.

2020, the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife, challenged the nursing profession in new ways with our members returning from retirement and student member postponing their studies to help their community. The qualities of hard work, acquired knowledge, practiced skills, decision-making, innovation and compassion of nurses and nursing has shone through. The public have seen how nursing has stepped up and supported communities in the most difficult circumstances.

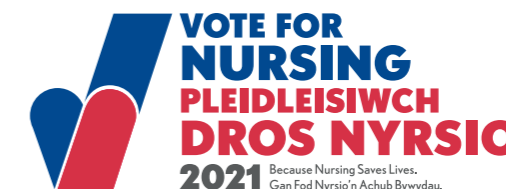
RCN Wales is calling upon the next Welsh Government and every political party in Wales to vote for nursing. Our members have set out the policy calls laid out in this manifesto based on their experience and expertise. They know best how to invest in community services and care homes and how to improve mental health and reduce health inequalities – and why these actions will matter to people's lives and to improving the wellbeing and prosperity of our nation.

It is time to protect and invest in the best care for the people of Wales through valuing the nursing family. Vote for Nursing because nursing saves lives.

From

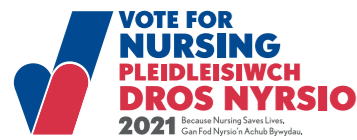


Denise Llewelyn MBE FRCN, Chair of the RCN Wales Board and Helen Whyley, Director of RCN Wales



“It is time to protect and invest in the best care for the people of Wales through valuing the nursing family. Vote for Nursing because nursing saves lives”.





Nursing Saves Lives

Actions for the next Welsh Government

1

Ensure safe and effective nursing care

- and enough nurses to deliver

1. **Safe nursing care saves lives** – the next Welsh Government must extend section 25B of the Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Act 2016 to children's and mental health inpatient wards and to community nursing.
2. **The next Welsh Government must increase** the number of commissioned nurse student places in all fields of nursing. Ensure financial support for full-time nursing students and create a national nursing apprenticeship scheme.
3. **The next Welsh Government must ensure** a national nursing retention strategy for the NHS with increased access to flexible working as one of the policy drivers.

2

Invest in community nursing and care homes

4. **The next Welsh Government must increase** the number of district nurses and nurses with a community master's degree. Increase the number of infection prevention and control nurses working in the community. Invest in IT support for community nursing.
5. **The next Welsh Government must work** to equalise pay, terms and conditions between health and social care.
6. **The next Welsh Government must launch** a national campaign to raise the profile of Registered Nursing in care homes and encourage student nurse placements in care homes.
7. **The next Welsh Government must work** with the UK Government to ensure the immigration system encourages the international nursing workforce to immigrate to Wales.

3

Support mental health and wellbeing

8. **The next Welsh Government must increase** access to psychological therapies in primary care settings, invest in social prescribing and introduce strategies to develop emotional resilience in pre-16 education.
9. **The next Welsh Government must increase** the number of places commissioned for mental health nursing students.

4

Improve public health and fight to end health inequalities

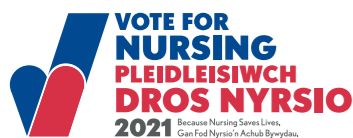
10. **The next Welsh Government must promote and invest in** physical activity schemes, such as the National Exercise Referral Scheme, bike 'hire' and walk/cycle to work schemes. Fund initiatives aimed at increasing participation of women, older people and BAME groups.
11. **The next Welsh Government must make** it a statutory requirement for schools to deliver sexual health education via health professionals specifically educated in providing sexual health education and ensure investment in sexual health services by Health Boards.
12. **The next Welsh Government must support** and invest in maintaining a comprehensive test track and trace programme and support a vaccination programme at the appropriate time. Invest in Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) procurement and storage in Wales.
13. **The next Welsh Government must expand** access to public broadband and invest in communication technology for healthcare services. Improve access, frequency and cleanliness of public transport.

5

Value nursing

– Fair pay and access to CPD

14. **All political parties should make** a clear public statement of intent that the valued contribution of all nursing staff, whatever their grade or setting will be reflected in future conversations about pay.
15. **The UK Government must fully fund**, and the next Welsh Government must commit to a 12.5% pay increase for all staff covered by Agenda for Change, as part of a one-year deal that applies equally across all bands.
16. **The next Welsh Government must commit** to improving pay and terms and conditions for nursing in social care settings. All nursing staff should have fair pay, good employment terms and safe working conditions. This should compare fairly across all settings.
17. **The next Welsh Government must ensure** CPD uptake for nurses and nursing staff is improved.



Ensure safe and effective nursing care and enough nurses to deliver

DID YOU KNOW?

Poor nurse staffing levels increase mortality rates by up to 26% compared to better staffed wards¹.

Safe nursing care

Research has proven safe and effective nurse staffing levels reduce readmissions, healthcare associated infection rates, medication errors, falls and pressure ulcers.

Safe and effective nurse staffing levels enable nurses to oversee hydration, mobility and nutrition and deliver expert knowledge, compassionate care and communicate with patients in a safe environment.

Section 25B of the Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Act 2016 requires that in adult acute medical and surgical wards the level of "sufficient nursing" must be calculated to take account of factors such as the severity of the patient illness and the skills and experience of the nursing staff. In 2019 the RCN published a report which found the Act had changed NHS culture for the better - and there was extra nursing staff on every hospital ward covered by Section 25B.

ACTION

Extend Section 25B to children's and mental health inpatient wards and to community nursing.

¹Rafferty, A. et al. 2007, 'Outcomes of Variation in hospital nurse staffing in English hospitals: Cross-section analysis of survey data and discharge records', *International Journal of Nurse Studies*, 44(2); pp.175-182.

²Royal College of Nursing, 2019, *RCN Employment survey*, <https://www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/publications/pub-007927>.

³Aiken, L. 2014, 'Nurse staffing and education and hospital mortality in nine European countries: a retrospective observational study', *The Lancet*, 383(9931), pp.1824-1830.

Wales needs nurses

To deliver safe and effective care Wales needs more nurses and more nursing support workers. This means we need to increase the number of people who become nurses.

The Welsh Government commissions nursing degree places from universities and the number of places commissioned for adult nursing has increased in recent years. However, the number of places commissioned for mental health, children and learning disability nursing have not. This needs to be addressed to provide a highly skilled workforce for the future.

Full-time student nurses need financial support. The average age of a nursing student is 29. A 2019 RCN survey found that 31% had dependent children, 10% were single parents and 23% were caring for a sick, disabled or elderly relative.

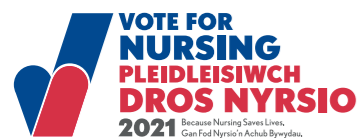
Alongside full-time study there needs to be other ways to gain a nursing degree. NHS Wales currently offers a limited number of nursing apprenticeships to those already employed as healthcare support workers. This should be a national scheme open directly to those who want to earn a nursing degree whilst working and earning a wage.

ACTION

Increase the number of commissioned nurse student places in all fields of nursing. Ensure financial support for full-time nursing students and create a national nursing apprenticeship scheme.

DID YOU KNOW?

50% of a nursing degree is spent on clinical placement learning practical skills². Every 10% increase in the number of degree educated nurses within a hospital is associated with a 7% decline in patient mortality³.



Ensure safe and effective nursing care and enough nurses to deliver

DID YOU KNOW?

There are over 1600 vacant registered nurse posts in NHS Wales. Imagine the care that these missing nurses could deliver!⁴.

DID YOU KNOW?

Every week nurses in Wales give the NHS extra hours to the value of 976 full-time nurses. Pressurising nurses to work longer hours contributes to stress and sickness⁵.

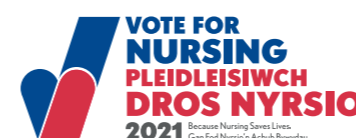
The Welsh Government needs to take action to ensure that working in the NHS is a viable option for nurses, currently more nurses leave the NHS than join. Many nurses have caring responsibilities for both young children and older parents and would prefer to work for an employer where they have control over their working hours.⁵

ACTION

Ensure a national nursing retention strategy for the NHS with increased access to flexible working as one of the policy drivers.

⁴Royal College of Nursing Wales, 2019, *The Nursing workforce in Wales 2019*, <https://www.rcn.org.uk/-/media/royal-college-of-nursing/documents/publications/2019/october/007-907.pdf?la=en>.

⁵Royal College of Nursing Wales, 2019, *The Nursing workforce in Wales 2019*, <https://www.rcn.org.uk/-/media/royal-college-of-nursing/documents/publications/2019/october/007-907.pdf?la=en>.



Invest in community nursing and care homes



Support nursing in the community

Most nurses do not work in a hospital. Two thirds of the RCN's membership work in the community.

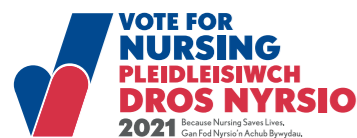
Adults and children with complex conditions receive care in the community as do those recovering from treatment or operations. Health Visitors support new mothers and those in vulnerable circumstances. Learning Disability Nurses support people to live full independent lives in the community. School Nurses support children and young people. Mental health nurses, prison nurses, substance misuse nurses and practice nurses are all working hard across Wales to make sure we are supported in our daily lives. Some of our most vulnerable older people are supported to continue to enjoy living in their own home 365 days of the year by community nursing delivering complex care and treatment packages at home.

For the last decade in Wales, Health Boards have been reconfiguring acute hospital services, reducing bed numbers, encouraging shorter patients stays and enabling more complex treatments and care to be delivered at home.

All of these services mean we need more nurses and nursing staff in the community. The good news is the numbers of community nurses and nursing staff are rising in Wales! However, investment in modern technology is urgently needed – many of our community nurse are still carrying around large suitcases of paper notes and writing these up for hours at the end of the day. We need investment in independent non-medical prescribing to provide timelier infection control and pain relief to the patient and save unnecessary referrals.

DID YOU KNOW?

Most nurses do not work in a hospital. Two thirds of the RCN's membership work in the community.



Invest in community nursing and care homes

DID YOU KNOW?

There are only 1,545 Registered Nurses employed by commissioned care providers in Wales. This is only 3% of the total care home workforce employed by commissioned care providers⁶.

Wales urgently needs more district nurses (who have a specialist practitioner qualification) or community nurses with a community master's level degree. These senior nurses are the ones who are the leaders and deputies of community nursing teams. They provide clinical supervision to the nurses and support workers in the team and make critical decisions to support vulnerable people who need complex care. Without this level of leadership patients are likely to be readmitted unnecessarily and serious health issues are less likely to be spotted and dealt with in a timely fashion.

The numbers of district nurses and community nurses have been falling for many years in Wales. The Welsh Government has consistently failed to commission more postgraduate education in this area and Health Boards often block any attempt to increase it. The main reason for this failure is that Health Boards will need to backfill the vacancy on the frontline while a nurse undertakes studies. This perpetual short-term thinking has created a crisis for Wales by severely undermining community healthcare provision.

ACTION

Increase the number of district nurses and nurses with a community master's degree. Increase the number of infection prevention and control nurses working in the community. Invest in IT support for community nursing.

Support nursing in care homes. Invest in the quality of life for older people

Nursing in a care home is a rewarding role. A Registered Nurse presence in care homes for residents with nursing needs is essential for continuous monitoring and assessment of residents' health and wellbeing.

As autonomous practitioners their clinical skills are used to recognise and anticipate problems, taking swift action if needed and avoiding unnecessary hospital admissions. Registered Nurses are key to managing acute illness, making decisions around the management of long-term conditions, palliative and end-of-life care and delivering complex interventions in emergency or crisis situations. They also help to support the seamless transition from hospital back into the care home.

Unfortunately, nurses and nursing staff in care homes are often paid a lower salary compared with nurses and nursing staff working for the NHS. They also need access to continuous professional development to support their skills and knowledge and the right equipment (such as PPE).

ACTION

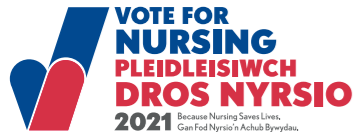
Equalise pay, terms and conditions between health and social care.

COVID-19 has highlighted the need to have a Registered Nurse in every care home across Wales. The pandemic has shown the extra mile that nurses and nursing staff working in care homes go to care for our loved ones. We need to make nursing in a care home a career of first choice for our graduates and young people.

ACTION

Launch a national campaign to raise the profile of Registered Nursing in care homes and encourage student nurse placements in care homes.

⁶Social Care Wales, 2018, *Social Care Wales - workforce profile 2018: Commissioned Care Provider Services*, https://socialcare.wales/cms_assets/file-uploads/SCWWDP_commissioned-services_2018_eng_Final.pdf

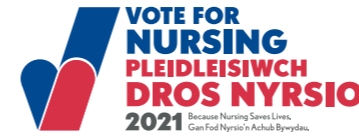


Invest in community nursing and care homes

Nursing is an international profession. Many international nurses and nursing staff come from various countries to offer their expertise to Wales. Attracting international nurses is important to research and innovation in practice. The aging population in Wales also means that migration of younger people to Wales helps us to provide the social care support our older people need. The RCN believes any immigration rules must encourage the international nursing workforce to immigrate to Wales.

ACTION

Ensure the immigration system encourages the international nursing workforce to immigrate to Wales.



Support mental health and wellbeing

Mental health is just like physical health; everyone has it, it can be affected differently, and it needs to be taken care of.

The people of Wales require access to high quality psychological services (such as cognitive behavioural therapy or mindfulness) for mild to moderate anxiety or depression. These should be available in primary care without an excessive waiting list. These services have a proven evidence base and can help people return to and maintain an active life. Social prescribing is another option that needs to be strengthened. This enables people to access a non-clinical activity such as group learning, arts, gardening, healthy eating and a range of sports. Psychological interventions should also be available to those with serious mental illnesses as stated in NICE guidelines. RCN Wales also believes that the pre-16 education curriculum should include the teaching of strategies to develop emotional resilience skills.

ACTION

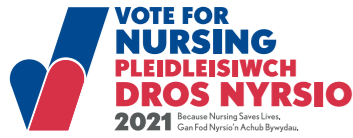
Increase access to psychological therapies in primary care settings. Invest in social prescribing. Introduce strategies to develop emotional resilience in pre-16 education.



DID YOU KNOW?

One in 4 adults experiences mental health problems or illness at some point during their lifetime, while one in 6 of us will experience symptoms at any one time. Each year in Wales between 300 and 350 people die from suicide, three times the number killed in road accidents⁷.

⁷Welsh Government, 2015, *Talk to Me, Suicide and Self Harm reduction strategy for Wales, 2015-2020*.



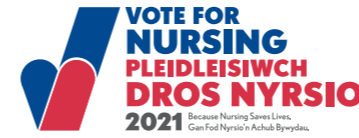
Support mental health and wellbeing

Unhappy patient experience and robust independent reviews have demonstrated through a range of high-profile cases that lower and less stable staffing levels on mental health wards have been a cause of poor patient care in Wales. The number of nursing student places commissioned by the Welsh Government in mental health needs to be increased to ensure safe and effective care on mental health inpatient wards.

The Royal College of Nursing calls for a clear workforce development and education strategy for mental health nursing in Wales that will meet the future mental health needs of children or adults. There needs to be sustainable funding for post registration education. Specialist education is needed in fields such as eating disorders, alcohol and substance misuse, cognitive behavioural therapy, family work, and personality disorder.

ACTION

Increase the number of places commissioned for mental health nursing students.



Improve public health and fight to end health inequalities

It has never been more important to help people live a healthier lifestyle and in doing so reduce avoidable illness and unnecessary hospital admission.

Caring for people effectively means our society is healthier and happier and inequalities are greatly reduced. The Royal College of Nursing believes that nursing should be at the heart of minimising the impact of illness, promoting health and helping people to function at home, work and leisure.

Physical health

Physical activity is an essential part of healthy living. It reduces the risk of many diseases, reduces the risk of obesity levels and improves mental wellbeing.

ACTION

Promote and invest physical activity schemes, such as the National Exercise Referral Scheme, bike 'hire' and walk/cycle to work schemes. Fund initiatives aimed at increasing participation of women, older people and BAME groups.

Sexual health

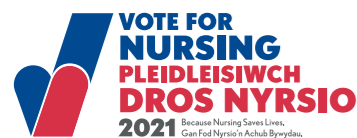
Good sexual health is part of a healthy and fulfilling life. Sexual health services provide information and advice related to healthy sexuality, contraception, treatment of sexually transmitted infections and termination of pregnancy. Accessing sexual health services is not only about the geographical availability, it includes ensuring people can access the right type of service at the right time.



DID YOU KNOW?

In 2019 only 47% of women in Wales report having been active for at least 150 minutes in the previous week. 38% of women were inactive (active for less than 30 minutes the previous week)⁸.

⁸Welsh Government, 2019, *National Survey for Wales 2018-19: Adult lifestyle*, <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-06/national-survey-for-wales-april-2018-to-march-2019-adult-lifestyle-534.pdf>



Improve public health and fight to end health inequalities

Video conferencing may be ideal for example for those who are less mobile or are anxious about confidentiality.

ACTION

Make it a statutory requirement for schools to deliver sexual health education via health professionals specifically educated in providing sexual health education and ensure investment in sexual health services by Health Boards.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a tragic loss of life and changed how we live and work permanently. Nurses and nursing staff in care homes, hospices, the community and hospitals have been working long hours under great stress, risking their own health to protect others.

There are many actions we can all take such as washing our hands frequently and maintaining social distancing that will help reduce the risk of widespread community transmission. The next Welsh Government must also work to ensure that our care services are prepared and resilient:

ACTION

Support and invest in maintaining a comprehensive test track and trace programme and support a vaccination programme at the appropriate time. Invest in Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) procurement and storage in Wales.

Access to healthcare

Improving access to healthcare services is an important way of tackling health inequalities. Often those who need healthcare the most are those least able to access it.⁹

Our healthcare services need access to modern technology. If consultant or specialist appointments could be done by video for example it would significantly improve access for people in rural areas to healthcare. Public access to broadband is also vital. Only 29 per cent of Welsh homes and businesses were able to access an ultrafast fixed broadband speed in September 2018. This is significantly lower than the UK rate of 49 per cent.

Public transport needs investment to improve access to healthcare. The frequency of services and their cleanliness is often an issue. There are also huge problems with public transport not being accessible to older people or those with mobility difficulties or for those escorting children on pushchairs – the two groups most likely to need to use public transport!¹⁰

ACTION

Expand access to public broadband and invest in communications technology for healthcare services. Improve access, frequency and cleanliness of public transport.

DID YOU KNOW?

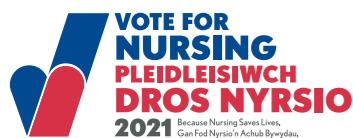
Across Wales' local authorities, average download speeds ranged from 24.5 Mbit/s in Powys to 61.0 Mbit/s in Cardiff⁹.

DID YOU KNOW?

In Mid Wales there are over 48,000 registered patients that would have to travel more than thirty minutes to attend a GP appointment and return home¹⁰.

⁹ Welsh Government, 2019, *Summary statistics for Welsh economic regions: Wales*, https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-05/summary-statistics-for-welsh-economic-regions-wales-338_0.pdf

¹⁰ Longley, M. et al, 2014. *Mid Wales Healthcare Study*, <http://www.midwalesjointcommittee.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/1158/23%20October%202014%20-%20WIHSC%20Mid%20Wales%20Healthcare%20Study%20Report%20-%20English.pdf>



Value nursing

Fair pay and access to CPD

DID YOU KNOW?

The RCN has launched a Fair Pay for Nursing campaign to demand a 12.5% pay rise for nursing staff across the UK. Click [HERE](#) to find out the latest on our pay campaign.

TÂL TEG AR GYFER NYRSIO
FAIR PAY FOR NURSING

Pay, Terms and Conditions

The leadership and professionalism shown by nursing staff, and all health and social care workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, is testament to their commitment to patient safety.

Nursing staff deserve to be recognised for the complexity of skill, responsibility and expertise they demonstrate every day.

The nursing profession has been at the forefront of the response to the pandemic, leading on innovation, working long hours in stressful conditions and improving the quality of treatment and care. However, this level of commitment is not new for nursing. Nurses and nursing staff have always strived to deliver high quality patient care in all settings at all times. COVID-19 has simply highlighted this to the public in a new way.

Nursing staff in all settings across health and social care deserve to know that their work is valued:

ACTION

All political parties should make a clear public statement of intent that the valued contribution of all nursing staff, whatever their grade or setting will be reflected in future conversations about pay.

ACTION

The UK Government must fully fund, and the next Welsh Government must commit to a 12.5% pay increase for all staff covered by Agenda for Change, as part of a one-year deal that applies equally across all bands.

ACTION

The next Welsh Government must commit to improving pay and terms and conditions for nursing in social care settings. All nursing staff should have fair pay, good employment terms and safe working conditions. This should compare fairly across all settings.

Continued Professional Development

Professional development and learning is a fundamental career-long requirement for every nurse. It is a requirement for successful revalidation by the Nursing and Midwifery Council and essential for patient safety and clinical effectiveness. Yet, because of the difficulty of backfilling nurses on the team, some employers have stopped all access to continuous professional development (CPD) for nurses. This means that keeping up to date (e.g. with new mental capacity legislation) and learning new skills (e.g. in looking after vulnerable patients with dementia) becomes something that nurses have to struggle to do in their own time and at their own cost. In contrast, doctors have access to CPD as part of their contracts.

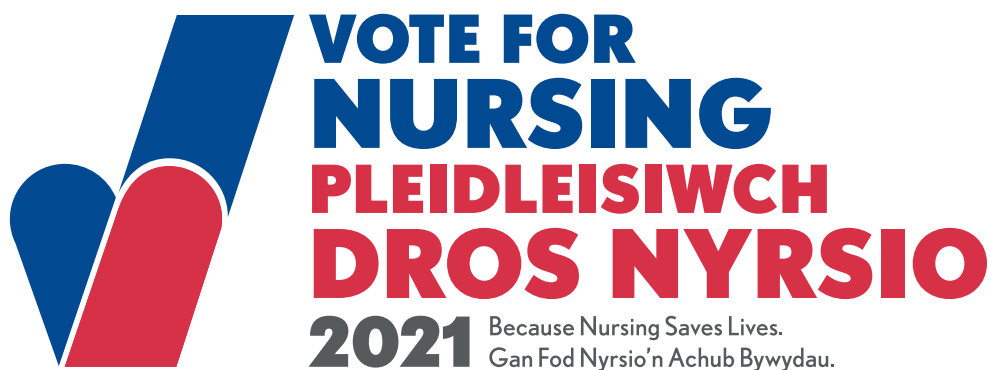
ACTION

Ensure CPD uptake for nurses and nursing staff is improved.

DID YOU KNOW?

Across the UK 85% of all nursing staff indicated that they had completed all their mandatory training, but this fell to 70% in Wales. Across the UK 54% said they had completed their last mandatory training in normal working time but in Wales this falls further to a disturbing 29%.¹¹

¹¹ Royal College of Nursing Wales, 2019, *The Nursing workforce in Wales 2019*, <https://www.rcn.org.uk/-/media/royal-college-of-nursing/documents/publications/2019/october/007-907.pdf?la=en>.



Because Nursing Saves Lives.
Gan Fod Nyrsio'n Achub Bywydau.

For more information please contact:
Royal College of Nursing Wales
Policy.PublicAffairs.Wales@rcn.org.uk