



Royal College
of Nursing

RCN Employment Standards for Independent Health and Social Care Sectors



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Published by the Royal College of Nursing, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN

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Introduction

The RCN employment standards set out what the RCN expects employers to deliver for the nursing workforce. They support different audiences in different ways. In essence, their relevance to the following audiences is:

- – what you should expect from your employer
- – what you should seek from employers on behalf of members
- – the fair employment standards we

Standard 1: **Fair Pay**

Employers are responsible for paying staff fairly for the work they undertake. Employers should recognise the value and worth of their nursing workforce and this should be reflected with pay appropriate to the level of work being undertaken and the skill, knowledge and experience required to undertake it.

Paying staff fairly for the work they undertake helps create trust and is a sign the employer respects and values its workforce.

The RCN believes that employees who feel they are being compensated fairly are more likely to be engaged and motivated to do their best work. This can lead to increased productivity and better overall performance, improving care, reducing staff turnover and retaining skilled staff in their workplaces.

Rates of pay

On commencement of employment, the minimum starting hourly rate for any employee should at least match the Real Living Wage as set by the Living Wage Foundation. Pay scales must be built upon the Real Living Wage with nursing support workers receiving higher pay to recognise the enhanced skills they need to deliver care. Registered nurses should also have higher pay rates to recognise the additional autonomy, skills and knowledge they have in their roles.

Pay progression

Standard 2:

Employment contract

All staff require a written contract of employment. A contract should be issued to a new member of staff before the first day of their new employment. Employment contracts set out the terms and conditions which govern the employment relationship such as pay, job title, location, holidays, sick pay and working conditions.

Employer liability and insurance cover

Employers have vicarious liability for their nursing staff and therefore require employer indemnity insurance to insure employees' work.

All employers should display the policy they have at the work base and provide confirmation to nursing staff that the necessary employer and public liability insurance policies insuring nursing staff are in place.

Occupational sick pay

All employees should have contractual sick pay from commencing employment in health

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Upon return from maternity leave a risk assessment should be carried out to ensure the provision of a safe working environment.

Paid time off and flexibility to attend appointments should also be provided for employees going through fertility treatment.

Occupational/contractual adoption pay should match the additional maternity pay. With agreement, occupational adoption pay may be paid in a different way, for example a combination of full pay and half pay, or a fixed amount spread equally over the adoption leave period.

Paternity pay

Staff should also have contractual/occupational entitlement to a minimum of 2 weeks' paternity leave paid at their normal rate of pay.

Annual leave

The RCN believes that all staff must have an appropriate provision of time off work to support a work-life balance, physical and mental wellbeing.

On commencement of employment, employees should be afforded a minimum of 27 days of annual leave plus 8 bank holidays or more bank holidays if recognised nationally. After 5 years of service, employees should be awarded a minimum of an additional 2 days of annual leave, with a minimum of a further 4 days after 10 years of service.

Standard 3:

Supportive policies

Supporting employees to balance home and work life reduces stress and assists with recruitment and retention. Having transparent and agreed policies in place helps ensure fair implementation of working practices.

Flexible working

Flexible working arrangements help employees to balance home and work life. The

Standard 4:

Health, safety and wellbeing

All nursing staff are entitled to work in environments where the risks to their physical and psychological health are properly controlled. Where environments are safe and healthy nursing staff are able to deliver the best possible care.

Wellbeing support

All staff should have access to an employee assistance programme and occupational health services, as well as access to physiotherapy and counselling services.

Incident reporting and action

There should be an open, transparent and easy to use reporting system for any incident, error, near miss or accident in the workplace. The system should be able to record all the facts.

There should be an organisation-wide approach to incident reporting that promotes a fair process to uncover the

Standard 5:

Working relationships and culture

A supportive culture and quality interactions between all staff, regardless of level or role, is imperative to an employee's health and wellbeing and enjoyment of work,

Standard 6:

Learning and development; funding and support

Standard 7:

Putting these standards into practice

Our Employment Standards for Independent Health and Social Care Sectors are here to guide a range of audiences on our positions relating to fair and appropriate pay, terms and conditions for nursing staff working across all independent health and social care settings. Below is a snapshot of how different audiences might put these standards into practice.

RCN members

These standards set out what you should expect from your employer.

Use these standards to discuss and negotiate your starting terms and conditions or to improve your current terms and conditions.

You can utilise these standards when meeting with your local MP to ensure they are supportive and include references to our positions in parliamentary meetings.

RCN representatives and staff

These standards set out what you should seek from employers on behalf of members.

Utilise these standards as a baseline for negotiations pertaining to pay, terms and conditions.

You can utilise these standards when meeting with MPs in your locality to ensure they are supportive and include references to our positions in parliamentary meetings.

Employers

These standards set out what you should do to provide fair employment standards for your nursing staff. Build these standards into your contracts of employment.

Utilise these standards when negotiating contracts with commissioners and funders.

Commissioners of nursing services/care

These standards set out the key employment principles and practices that you should be seeking to assure against from service-providing contractors which employ roles within the nursing workforce.

When tendering for services you should ensure that the successful bidder adheres to these employment standards, as a minimum.

Politicians and decision makers

These standards set out the key principles that you should ensure are 'built in' to employment practices for nursing services, including providing appropriate funding to deliver these standards.

The RCN represents nurses and nursing, promotes
excellence in practice and shapes health policies

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Published by the Royal College of Nursing
20 Cavendish Square

020 7409 3333

October 2024