

Impact Report 2020



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Introduction

The last year has been an extraordinary one for the nursing and midwifery professions. 2020 was designated by the World Health Organization as the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife and marked the 10th anniversary of the RCN Foundation.

However, 2020 is likely to be remembered for another reason entirely – not only for the Foundation but for the professions, for the health and care sectors, and for the world. Throughout 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has touched people's lives in all sectors, and in every part of the UK and beyond. Therefore, much of this 2020 Impact Report is focused on the Foundation's response to the pandemic and to the support provided to frontline nursing and midwifery staff.

This is also the first Impact Report for the RCN Foundation Group, encompassing the activities of the RCN Foundation and its new subsidiary charity, the COVID-19 Healthcare Support Appeal (CHSA). The establishment of CHSA was in direct response to the pandemic and was made possible by a donation of £5m from TikTok, the global media company. CHSA was set up to support wider health and care staff across the UK and you can find out more about its activities on Page 10.



Introduction

It became apparent to us early on during the pandemic that some of the existing issues of financial hardship, poor mental health and wellbeing, and workforce pressures, would increase acutely as a result of the additional strain brought about by working on the frontline. So, in April 2020 we established the COVID-19 Support Fund – a vehicle for reaching out to staff who had been adversely affected by the pandemic.

The Fund aimed to provide emergency aid grants to frontline staff who had fallen into hardship or needed psychological support during this challenging time. However, we were astounded and humbled that it also attracted philanthropic donations from many hundreds of individuals and organisations, all of whom were eager to support those caring for the nation. By the time we closed the Fund in July, the Foundation had

awarded around £1.45m in grants to over 3,200 individuals.

You can find out more about this and our wider response to COVID-19 on Pages 6-9 of this report.

The mental health of nurses and midwives, exacerbated and heightened by the challenges presented by the pandemic, will continue to remain a key priority for the Foundation in 2021.

COVID-19 has significantly changed the world in which we live and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future, even with the rollout of vaccines. The effects of the pandemic are likely to be profound and long-lasting, both for the workforce and their patients. What is clear to us is that the focus of the Foundation's work – on hardship, education and ground-breaking research – has never

been more needed. We will continue to support, strengthen, and sustain the profession as it navigates the pandemic and beyond.

Finally, we are extremely grateful for the support we received from so many individuals and organisations throughout 2020, which helped us to deliver much of the work you will read about in this Impact Report.



Deepa Korea,
RCN Foundation
Director



**Professor Jane
Cummings CBE RN,**
Chair of the Board
of Trustees

Impact of your support

In 2020, outside of our COVID-19 response, we directly supported 1,160 nurses, midwives and health care support workers, as well as many hundreds of others through the projects we funded.

We helped 1,088 members of the nursing team adapt to change or deal with pressures adversely affecting their financial situation, including many facing extreme hardship.

This included 533 who were experiencing ill health, including mental health issues, and 25 disclosing domestic abuse.

We awarded £150k in grants to 69 nurses, midwives, nursing and midwifery students, and health care support workers who wanted to improve their clinical skills through education and learning opportunities. Areas of study focused on some of the most pressing health issues facing the nation including diabetes, public health, cancer care and mental health.

How education grants benefit individuals

95% of respondents stated that the funded activity had a positive impact on their career

43% of those who responded have taken on more responsibilities since completing the funded activity

62% secured a new job

28% moved up a band

The average financial gain for an individual given advice and before a grant was made was £5,800.

 **65%**

of clients who underwent an assessment were potentially better off as a result.

 **70%**

of grant recipients said that the grant increased their independence.

 **85%**

of clients reported that they were satisfied following the appointment.

 **75%**

of clients reported that they felt more in control of their circumstances following their engagement with the Lamplight team.

Our COVID-19 Response

Throughout 2020, we have been dedicated and focused on our aim to support frontline nursing and midwifery staff, across the health and care sectors, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It became apparent to us early on that some of the existing challenges faced by nursing and midwifery staff, including financial hardship, poor mental health and wellbeing, and workforce pressures, were exacerbated by the additional strain brought about by working on the frontline during the pandemic.

Covid-19 Support Fund

Therefore, the COVID-19 Support Fund was established in April 2020,

to provide emergency aid grants to those who had been adversely affected due to the pandemic. Thanks to the overwhelming generosity of our supporters, between April 2020 and October 2020, the RCN Foundation helped 3,286 nursing and midwifery staff providing just over £1.45m in grants through our COVID-19 Support Fund and the Stelios Says Thank you Awards.

The Stelios Says Thank You Awards

The Stelios Philanthropic Foundation, established by the entrepreneur Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou, donated £250,000 to the RCN Foundation in order to thank and recognise the contribution of frontline nursing and midwifery staff working and living in London, where the Foundation's UK headquarters are based, for their tireless contribution during the COVID-19 pandemic. We received



an unprecedented number of applications for these £250 grants, which have made a real difference to frontline staff who have been adversely affected by the effects of the COVID-19 crisis.

Coming through a storm



It was a devastating chain of events that led mental health nurse Maria* to apply for a grant from the RCN Foundation's COVID-19 Support Fund. Diagnosed with cancer four years ago, she endured chemotherapy and radical surgery, with reconstructive operations following later. She had also separated from her husband, and eventually moved house and changed cities. She continued to be employed by the same organisation but had recurring periods of sick leave and when coronavirus hit the UK last year she was forced to shield. Then, for complex reasons, her employer demanded that she repay three months' wages, leaving her in dire financial straits. She applied successfully to the COVID-19 Support Fund and was awarded £1,000. The new rented home she found came unfurnished but the grant allowed her to buy some necessary furniture such as a bed and chest of drawers.

Maria says she feels as though she has come through a storm. "I felt so moved to receive the grant. And I feel encouraged to press on and pursue my goals to rebuild my life and independence."

Help with the cost of counselling for COVID-related trauma



Emma* is an intensive care nurse who, after seeing many patients die with COVID-19, began to struggle. She applied to the RCN Foundation for a grant from the Stelios Says Thank You Awards. Successful in her application, she used the grant to help cover the cost of counselling to improve her mental health and wellbeing. "The past seven weeks at work have seen me endure sleepless nights, severe anxiety about going to work, about getting infected and bringing that infection home to my partner," Emma says.

"It has been heart-breaking to see so many people die right in front of us and to see my colleagues break down. I have started regular therapy to try and cope day-to-day and to help deal with some of what I've seen. This grant will go towards my ongoing therapy, which is expensive, but crucial for me in order to go the distance in this marathon."





COVID-19 Response - Projects

Our response to the pandemic extended to our funded project work, which had a particular focus on the mental health of the professions and supporting patients with intellectual disabilities.

The King's Fund Report, *The Courage of Compassion: Supporting Nurses and Midwives to Deliver High-quality Care*, was commissioned by the RCN Foundation in response to the pandemic. It provided a fresh perspective on the mental health and wellbeing of nurses and midwives, concentrating on the efforts needed to change the factors that cause stress, rather than simply dealing with symptoms.

The report found that staff stress, absenteeism and turnover in the professions had reached high levels and had been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, which

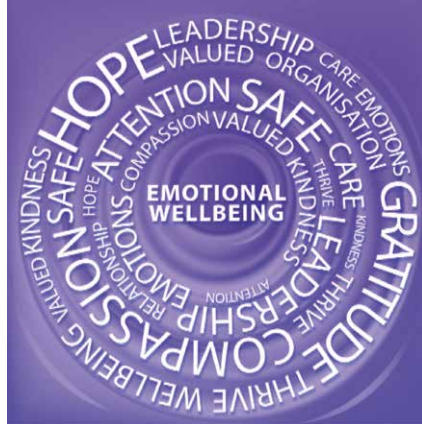
exacerbated longer-term issues including chronic excessive workload, inadequate working conditions, staff burnout and inequalities, particularly among minority ethnic groups. It set out eight key recommendations to support the wellbeing of nurses and midwives across the UK, including those working in adult social care, GP practices, community care and other settings. To read the report visit rcnfoundation.org.uk

The King's Fund >

Mental health and wellbeing / Psychological support

We awarded a grant to the Institute of Health Visiting (iHV) to develop a programme to promote emotional wellbeing at work for small groups of health visitors (HV) working in the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Health visitors work with the most vulnerable families in society and were struggling to meet the needs of families experiencing mental health problems, domestic violence, poverty and isolation due to their services being stretched by low numbers.

This escalated significantly during the pandemic, as some staff were redeployed into intensive care and other services to support the pandemic response, whilst others were left to meet the almost overwhelming wall of need from parents. To read the pilot findings visit ihv.org.uk



Supporting people with learning disabilities

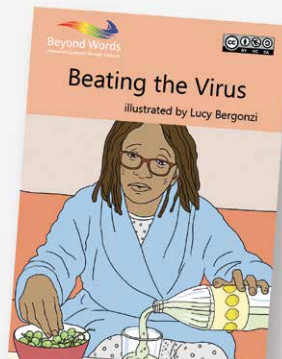
When the UK went into the first lockdown in March 2020, it became clear that the country was facing a national health crisis. As public health bodies and the government worked together to advise and inform the general public on coronavirus, there remained a gap in accessible and appropriate information for people with learning disabilities and/or autism. To respond to this need, and with funding through the RCN Foundation and NHS England, the charity Beyond Words developed a wordless picture story called *Beating*

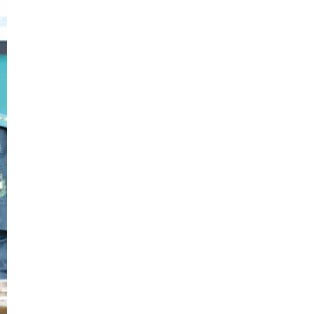
the Virus, to help people with learning disabilities or communication difficulties to better understand COVID-19 and to cope with the additional constraints that it has imposed.



Beating the Virus is available to download for free from the Beyond Words website:

booksbeyondwords.co.uk/coping-with-coronavirus





COVID-19 HEALTHCARE SUPPORT APPEAL (CHSA)

COVID-19 HEALTHCARE SUPPORT APPEAL (CHSA) WAS SET UP AS A SUBSIDIARY CHARITY OF THE RCN FOUNDATION IN APRIL 2020. IT'S A TIME-LIMITED CHARITY WITH A SPECIFIC AIM, WHICH IS TO SUPPORT HEALTH AND CARE STAFF THROUGH THE PANDEMIC. IT IS FUNDED BY A GENEROUS DONATION FROM THE GLOBAL VIDEO SHARING COMPANY TIKTOK.

Unique in its reach and ambition, CHSA is helping people working in all health and social care professions, from doctors and nurses to hospital porters, administrative staff, ambulance and care workers, health care assistants, housekeepers and community workers.

During the year, CHSA made grants to a wide variety of health and care organisations helping frontline workers with hardship grants and psychological support. It also funded projects that are looking to the longer term to support the recovery and resilience of the sector and individuals.

CHSA has a Board of Trustees chaired by Lord Victor Adebowale and they agreed that a key objective would be to reach those most in need and disproportionately affected by COVID-19, which would include those in lower salary bands, people from a

**CHSA BOARD AGREED
GRANTS TOTTALLING**

£3,186,172



BAME background, or people in vulnerable groups with an underlying health condition.

In response to this urgent need, and in the space of just a few months, the CHSA Board had agreed grants totalling £3,186,172 to 18 organisations by the end of December 2020. As this report goes to print, more than 6,000 health and social care workers have benefited from CHSA support to help them through the impact of the pandemic.

Emergency aid and hardship

Frontline health and care staff are at the forefront of the fight against COVID-19 and for many, this has presented unexpected financial challenges. CHSA funds organisations that are helping people who are struggling, including by providing:

- living costs for those unable to work if they are self-isolating, particularly those on zero hours contracts
- living costs for those whose financial situation has been directly impacted as a result of the virus
- financial support for families of health and care staff who have died from COVID-19 to pay for funeral costs.

Psychological support

The impact of COVID-19 on the mental health of health and social care staff is profound. CHSA is committed to funding projects that offer tailored psychological support to those who are experiencing the traumatic effects of working on the frontline.

In 2020, 10 organisations were given grants to support the mental health and wellbeing of their workers. These included TASC (The Ambulance Staff Charity) and QNI (The Queen's Nursing Institute).

TASC's grant will help provide mental health interventions for all occupations in the ambulance service from call handlers to paramedics.

Karl Demian, CEO of TASC

"It's an unprecedented time for the ambulance community and their families and I continue to be humbled by their hard work, dedication, and the sacrifices they have made during this difficult time. The grant from CHSA means we are here to care and support those who care for us."



The CHSA grant to The Queen's Nursing Institute (QNI) is being used towards running a telephone support line called TalkToUs which is for community nurses and any other nurses wanting confidential, peer to peer support.



Karolina Gerlich, CEO of CWC

One of the nine organisations that has received funds to support its beneficiaries with crisis grants is the Care Workers Charity (CWC).

"We have been inundated with requests for support from those working on the frontline in care homes and in domiciliary care. Most are low paid and often on zero hours contracts so when they have to self-isolate or become ill with the virus, they quickly find themselves in dire financial circumstances. The grant from CHSA has helped us to respond quickly to those needing our help."

Each of the 442 care workers helped in 2020 by CHSA has their own story.

"I was overwhelmed to receive this funding which arrived when I was really poorly and my husband as well. We were both off work for 7 weeks and tested positive for Covid-19 together, working at the same care home. This will help us immensely on our road to recovery and ease the financial burden. A massive thank you and very much appreciated."



Dr Crystal Oldman CBE, Chief Executive of QNI

“We have been very concerned about the mental and emotional toll on the health of nurses since the start of the pandemic. QNI was quick to respond to this, setting up a telephone listening service for all nurses working in the community, primary care and social care.”

“The impacts of the pandemic on the mental and emotional health of nurses are likely to be long term. The funding from CHSA will help us reach out to more nurses and give them the vital support they need at this time and in the future.”

Recovery and Resilience

CHSA recognises that the pandemic will have a long-term impact on the health and social care workforce and that new ways of working and plans for recovery will be important. That’s why CHSA is supporting evidence-based projects that will strengthen the workforce and is encouraging creative applications that look to bring about positive change across the sector, including through better leadership and peer to peer support.

In 2020, three organisations received CHSA funding for recovery and resilience. One of these was the Intensive Care Society (ICS).

Dr Sandy Mather, Intensive Care Society Chief Executive

“Intensive Care professionals have been pushed to the extremes throughout the pandemic and are still dealing with the psychological aftermath of it. With the support of CHSA funding, we have been able to create dedicated psychoeducation and peer support wellbeing programmes accessible to all intensive care staff across the UK. Our programmes are designed to have the longer-term impact of keeping staff healthy, retaining them and giving them tools to maintain their psychological wellbeing, enabling them to continue to care for patients.”



CHSA in 2021

In 2021, the CHSA Trustees are clear that the charity’s main objective is to see its remaining funds allocated during the year to those organisations that can best support the continuing and emerging needs which COVID-19 has caused across the whole of the health and social care sector.

Find out more about CHSA:
rcnfoundation.rcn.org.uk/support-appeal-home

Highlights from our funded projects

Despite the pandemic, progress on other areas of our work also continued during the year.

**Sheffield
Hallam
University**

Sheffield Hallam University

Sheffield Hallam University was awarded £30,000 to undertake a scoping study on nursing-led interventions that supported children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. This research formed the basis of the first of our two priority areas. The final research report, *Nursing-led Interventions to Support the Psychological and Emotional*

Wellbeing of Children and Young People, was published in September. The findings of the research will form the basis of a three-year grant-making programme on nurse-led early interventions to support the psychological and emotional wellbeing of children and young people, to be implemented from 2021 onwards.

Postgraduate Certificate in Neurological Rehabilitation and Care

A particular highlight from the year was the development and launch of the Postgraduate Certificate in Neurological Rehabilitation and Care, funded by the Foundation. In partnership with the brain injury charity SameYou, the programme

has been developed and delivered by the University of Edinburgh. The launch of the programme in November marked the culmination of two years of work and will make a tangible difference to the care of people with a brain injury.



It's your chance to make
a real difference to
people's lives.

PGCert in Neurological Rehabilitation and Care
edin.ac/neuro-rehab



Supporting individual members of the nursing team



Charlotte's Story



- We continued to support individual nurses, midwives and health care support workers who were either facing hardship or who were seeking to develop their professional skills to improve patient care.
- We funded the RCN's Lamplight Support Service to provide advice and make grants to those facing hardship and crisis.
- We also directly funded individuals to undertake a wide range of post-graduate and other training courses.
- Improving patient care through education and professional development.

"The bursary enabled me to fulfil a dream", says Charlotte, a practice development nurse in Essex.

"I've only ever known nursing and have been qualified for just over seven years now." Charlotte went to work in ITU where she forged a great career, gaining specialist qualifications and her first Sisters post at 25 years old. "During this time, I found out that I had a real passion for staff wellbeing – I came to discover that there is a link between our wellbeing and its impact on patient care. I had some ideas on what could be done to challenge and change this, but I needed funding. That's when I came across the RCN Foundation Professional Bursary Scheme."

"When I applied, I never thought in a million years I would be successful.

When I got the call and was told I had been successful and was awarded the full amount of £5,000 to 'top-up' my DipHE to a degree, I was so elated and in shock, to be honest." Charlotte went on to study and get a promotion in ITU – she also became a mother "I still completed my degree and got a First Class Honours – I was so proud to get to go to my Graduation with my newborn baby, and for family to witness what I had achieved! I am so proud of myself, on what I have achieved, and as a result, creating successful tools in ITU to improve staff morale, reduce burnout and improve patient care as a result. That degree has enabled me to become a practice development nurse in Broomfield Hospital, Chelmsford. The bursary enabled me to fulfil a dream, and I am not sure I would be here doing what I do if I hadn't received the grant."

Supporting individual members of the nursing team

Claire's Story



Claire is a final year PhD student at Queens University Belfast. Her PhD looks at using art activities to improve mental health and wellbeing for patients receiving haemodialysis, a particularly difficult and tedious treatment. The focus of Claire's research was on delivering art activities such as painting or creative writing at the bedside while patients were receiving this treatment.



The RCN Foundation funded a bursary for Claire to present her PhD focus at an international conference in Italy. Claire says of the experience: "Presenting at this conference has developed awareness of this approach to care. This bursary from the RCN Foundation has transformed my PhD experience, and because of that it has also been able to transform clinical practice and patient experience. My aspiration is that the work I'm doing is going to have a long-term impact on day to day practice across haemodialysis units across the UK."

Hannah's Story



"Without the grant I would have struggled to keep a roof over my head."

When registered nurse Hannah* lost her job in January she knew she had some savings to fall back on. But then the pandemic struck and life got much more complicated for the 71 year-old. Born in South Africa, she was struggling to renew her work permit and turned to the RCN for help. Staff there helped her with her work permit application and also mentioned to her the grant scheme offered by the RCN Foundation. "It was a godsend. My savings only went so far and when they ran out I had to rely on the generosity of others. Just when I was worried my luck had run out, the RCN Foundation grant came through -£600. It meant I could do a food shop and pay a month's rent. Without the grant, I would have struggled to keep a roof over my head. I don't have any family in the UK."

She now has a new job which she hopes to start in the new year once her new work permit comes through. Having lived in the UK since 2016, she then plans to save up some money before returning to South Africa.

Leaving a lasting gift to the nursing team

Thanks to supporters like you, the RCN Foundation has been helping nurses, midwives and health care support workers get through tough times, develop their careers, and improve how they care for their patients through innovation and research. We are so grateful.

Some of our supporters are also choosing to leave a gift in their Will to the RCN Foundation. This will enable us to continue our essential work – and continue to improve nursing care for years to come.

Leaving a gift in your Will can be one of the single most valuable gifts you can ever give. After you have provided for your family and friends, we would be honoured if you would consider the RCN Foundation in your Will.

One such supporter is former RCN President, Dame Betty Kershaw:

“I know that together, our support can make a huge difference to future generations of nurses, midwives and support workers.”

“I had always been aware of the Foundation’s work but meeting the beneficiaries in person really brought home the positive impact that the charity has. That’s why I have decided to leave a gift in my Will to the RCN Foundation – to enable the charity to continue its great work supporting the nursing team for years to come. I know that together, our support can make a huge difference to future generations of nurses, midwives, support workers and health visitors, as well as to the patients and families they care for.”



Legacy gifts, no matter how large or small, will help to support the nursing profession for generations. It will enable us to support members of the nursing community in times of hardship and will empower nurses, midwives and nursing support workers with learning and development opportunities to improve patient care for years to come.

If you would like to discuss this further or would like more information, please contact a member of the RCN Foundation team on **rcnfoundation@rcn.org.uk** or by calling **020 7647 3622**.

COVERS FOR OTHERS

#CoversForCarers



salt.

Thank you to all our supporters

We are extraordinarily grateful to each and every individual, team and organisation who has supported us during the year. With their vital help, we have been able to continue to achieve our purpose of supporting and strengthening nursing and midwifery to improve the health and wellbeing of the public. This year in particular has been like no other, and so we also want to thank the many new donors who have helped us to support frontline staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Every donation we receive, whether big or small, makes a real difference to the lives of hundreds of nurses, midwives and health care practitioners, and through them patients and families.

Thank you.



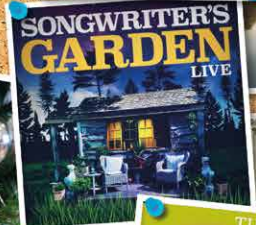
Supporting health and care staff through COVID-19

CHSA



LVE

Jefferies



Lisou



BNI





We can only do what we do
because of your support
and generosity. Thank you.



We want to hear from you.

Feel free to contact us and see how we can help:

 rcnfoundation@rcn.org.uk

 020 7647 3645

 rcnfoundation.org.uk

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