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25 May 2023

**Helen Whyley, RN, MA**  
Director, RCN Wales

Russell George MS,  
Chair Health and Social Care Committee  
Welsh Parliament  
Cardiff Bay  
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Dear Chair

I am writing in response to the Health and Social Care Committee inquiry into supporting people with chronic conditions.

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) Wales would welcome the opportunity to provide oral evidence to this inquiry to demonstrate the value and importance of chronic condition nurses.

Chronic condition nurse practitioners can help patients prevent and manage chronic illnesses by providing them with a more comprehensive understanding of their conditions and the tools they can employ to take control of their own health. This can take the form of information on healthy lifestyle choices like nutrition and exercise or advice on managing prescription regimens and monitoring symptoms.

Nurses assist patients with integrating chronic illness management into their daily lives, coordinating care among health care providers, ensuring that patients receive necessary medical treatments and follow-up care, and aiding them in navigating the health care system by making appointments, ordering tests, and filling prescriptions.

Continued...

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Helen Whyley

Mae'r RCN yn cynrychioli nrysys a nyrsio, gan hyrwyddo rhagoriaeth mewn arfer a llunio polisiau iechyd  
The RCN represents nurses and nursing, promotes excellence in practice and shapes health policies

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Rydym yn buddsoddi mewn llesiant Arian

Mae'r Coleg Nyrsio Brenhinol yn Goleg Brenhinol a sefydlwyd drwy Siarter Frenhinol ac Undeb Llafur Cofestr Arbennig a sefydlwyd a dan Ddeddf Undebau Llafur (Cydgrynhoi) 1992.

The RCN is a Royal College set up by Royal Charter and a Special Register Trade Union established under the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

Nurses also support patients in dealing with the emotional and psychological impacts of their chronic illnesses. They can offer their patients assistance and counselling to help them cope with the physical restrictions and mental health issues that often accompany chronic illnesses, connect them with support groups, and refer them to mental health experts.

In addition to chronic condition nurses' other nurses such as general practice nurses, learning disability nurses, and community nurses are often the first source of information and support for patients and therefore also play a key role in supporting patients with chronic conditions.

The Health and Social Care Committee have big ambition in setting out such a broad and important set of items in the terms of reference for this inquiry. However, because of the ambitious nature of the inquiry, RCN Wales feels unable to provide the comprehensive response that is necessary to truly reflect the importance of nursing in supporting people with chronic conditions. RCN Wales would welcome an insight into the direction of this inquiry and refining the Terms of Reference.

Nurses are present at every stage of an individual's life and provide the continuity of care needed when supporting an individual with a chronic conditions. The nursing workforce is well placed to educate, promote independence and self-sufficiency, monitor deterioration and providing intervention when necessary.

The nursing workforce works across secondary, primary and community settings, social care, and within criminal justice services. They cover a wide range of roles, including, neonatal nurses, paediatric nurses, children and adolescent mental health nurses, substance misuse nurses, community nurses, specialist nurses such as Diabetes nurses and stroke nurses, critical care nurses, and palliative care nurses. To put it simply, the nursing profession supports people from cradle to grave.

I have attached three papers that truly highlight the importance of nurses in supporting people with chronic conditions.

- [Mental Health Nursing: A profession that must be valued \(2023\)](#)
- [Learning Disability Nursing \(2022\)](#)
- [Community nursing Teams: The role of the District Nurse and Community Children Nurses \(2021\)](#)

Continued...

I look forward to hearing more as this committee's work progresses into stage two of the inquiry. If RCN Wales can be of assistance or support, please do get in touch.

Kind regards,

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Helen Whyley', written in a cursive style.

**HELEN WHYLEY, RN, MA  
DIRECTOR, RCN WALES**