



Royal College
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A Strategy for Scotland's Languages
Scottish Executive Education Department
Cultural Policy Division
Area 1-A North
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

8th March 2007

Dear Sir/Madam

'A strategy for Scotland's Languages'

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) is the UK's largest professional association and union for nurses with around 390,000 members, over 37,500 in Scotland. Most RCN members work in the NHS, with approximately a quarter working in the independent sector. The RCN works locally, nationally and internationally to promote standards of care and the interests of patients and nurses, and of nursing as a profession. The RCN is a major contributor to the development of nursing practice, standards of care and health policy.

We at RCN Scotland support both the Scottish Executive's reasons for promoting a wide range of language activity and the guiding principles outlined for shaping the development of language provision in Scotland. We particularly welcome the explicit acknowledgement of the importance of language both in ensuring access to public services and in enabling labour mobility.

High quality translation, interpreting and communication support services (TICS) are vital not only in ensuring equitable access to health services but also to achieving improved health outcomes. We look forward therefore to the speedy publication of the Scottish Executive's recommendations on TICS referred to on page 12, paragraph 2.

Nursing is increasingly a global workforce. We believe effective communication is fundamental to good nursing and that it requires more than technical language competence. We recommend therefore that the Scottish Executive actively encourage employers to support internationally recruited nurses in gaining a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of local idiom and customs¹.

We look forward to participating in any future consultation processes.

Yours sincerely

Anne Thomson
Acting Deputy Director
RCN Scotland

¹ RCN (2005) Internationally recruited nurses. Good practice guidance for healthcare employers and RCN negotiators



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