# RCN Chief Pat Cullen to Step Down for Political Pursuits



Pat Cullen, the general secretary and chief executive of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN), is stepping down to pursue a political career. On July 4, she confirmed her intention to seek nomination as a Sinn Féin candidate for the Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency in the upcoming Westminster election.

Cullen has been at the forefront of the nurses' strike actions over the past few years, advocating for better pay and working conditions. Her leadership in the RCN began in 2016, with her becoming director of the college in Northern Ireland in 2019.

If Cullen secures the Sinn Féin nomination, she will be replacing current MP Michelle Gildernew, who is standing down. Sinn Féin MPs traditionally do not take their seats in Westminster due to their refusal to take the oath of allegiance to the monarch.

Cullen expressed her gratitude for her time at the RCN, stating her readiness to address issues important to workers, families, and communities in her potential new role. Paul Vaughan, chair of the RCN Council, praised Cullen for her transformative leadership and advocacy within the organization.

The RCN will be seeking a permanent replacement for Cullen, with Professor Nicola Ranger stepping in as acting general secretary and chief executive.