RESCUED FROM DESPAIR
FEATURES P8

HEALTH VISITING:
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FEATURES P10

PATIENT-CENTRED
CYP CARE
FORUM FOCUS P14

PAST
PRESENT
FUTURE

BLACK HISTORY MONTH P11
Case management satisfaction survey

The RCN has taken another step towards improving the case management service provided when the College is representing members.

When a case is closed, members will now be asked to complete a new satisfaction survey by post or online. Feedback from members, positive or negative, is invaluable in making the service better.

Maria Webb, UK Case Management Manager

If you have any comments, please email maria.webb@rcn.org.uk

RCNxtra: making savings for you

RCNxtra is the unique benefits package for RCN members. The RCN is constantly reviewing the service and introducing new discounts all the time.

Why not check out the 12 ways to save the cost of your membership?

One RCN member recently saved £314.27 on annual energy bills through Member Energy’s comparison service.

Eileen Rees Memorial Fund

The family and friends of former Chair of RCN Council Eileen Rees have donated £300, which will be used for a one-off award.

This is open to any nurse in Wales who has had an article published that relates to sharing an innovation introduced to improve patient care.
Vital AGM vote on subs increase

The RCN AGM on 17 October offers members a chance to vote on vital issues, including a proposed subscription increase

Pressure is intense on nursing staff up and down the country. From changes in health care delivery to the threat of local pay, RCN members are facing multiple challenges, local and national.

At this month’s RCN AGM, you have the chance to vote on a small increase in subscriptions carefully calculated to ensure that the College can continue to support members through all these challenges. The proposal, if accepted, will see the full nurse membership rate increase by just 32p a month and the health practitioner rate by 16p a month. The new rate will be frozen until 2015 and students will be unaffected.

Chair of Council Kath McCourt said that despite rising demand for its services, the RCN continues to offer exceptional benefits. “For example, last year in England and Wales, the RCN recovered more than £4 million in compensation for members, with compensation wins in Scotland and Northern Ireland running into hundreds of thousands of pounds.”

In 80 per cent of regulatory cases referred to the Nursing and Midwifery Council where members were represented by RCN lawyers, it was found there was no case to answer or no sanction given.

The RCN has also successfully defended Agenda for Change (AfC). An employer in the north west argued recently for a statutory cap on redundancy compensation despite long-standing interpretation to the contrary. An employment tribunal rejected that argument, so members will be entitled to the full amount of redundancy compensation paid in the past.

For full details on how to vote on all the AGM resolutions, please go to www.rcn.org.uk/2012

RCN adverts showcase nursing

A national bus advertising campaign was launched last month as part of the RCN initiative This is nursing to highlight that nursing is a demanding profession where staff need a mixture of clinical skills and compassion. The adverts are appearing on buses in the UK’s major towns and cities, and underground stations in London, and direct people to a new part of the This is nursing website. On the site, which includes a separate area for nursing staff, members of the public can watch the This is nursing film and find more details about the challenges facing modern day nursing staff.

www.rcn.org.uk/thisisnursing
See In the media, page 5.

Flu: protect yourself this winter

The RCN is advising members to protect themselves this winter by having the flu vaccine. The College maintains that any organisation which provides health care should be responsible for ensuring that their frontline staff who have direct contact with patients are vaccinated. Whether you are employed by the NHS or privately, your employer should be able to arrange for staff to be vaccinated.

For further information regarding specific advice relating to your UK country go to www.rcn.org.uk/bulletin
The RCN is encouraging NHS trusts and employers in England to stand by nationally agreed pay, terms and conditions. The message from a recent staff side survey was that while some NHS trusts are making threatening noises about breaking away from Agenda for Change (AfC), the majority would prefer to stay with national arrangements. But the RCN is aware that employers are watching developments in the south west pay cartel with interest.

Josie Irwin, RCN Head of Employment Relations, said: “We do not want local pay. National pay works best for a national workforce like nursing, and ensures nursing staff are paid fairly and feel valued.”

“We have always been happy to explore possible flexibilities to make sure AfC is fit for purpose – but not at any cost. We have never believed that AfC is cast in stone – there have been at least 24 changes to it since 2004.”

Josie added that continuing national discussions on proposals for flexibilities in AfC, which the employers say are necessary for them to stay with the national arrangements, requires demonstrated commitment to national pay, terms and conditions by withdrawing from or suspending involvement in the cartel.

South west

Meanwhile, Howard Catton, RCN Head of Policy, has said a recent Audit Commission report on NHS finances should be a wake-up call for politicians with regard to the south west pay cartel’s plans.

In a blog on the RCN Frontline First website, Howard highlighted how the overall surplus in south west NHS trusts is nearly £30 million – the second highest of any region. The Audit Commission report also showed that only 11 trusts in the whole of England had a surplus of over £5 million and two of these are part of the cartel.

Howard said: “The south west pay cartel has claimed they have no choice but to cut staff pay, terms and conditions. The RCN has produced a report that refuted this, showing that the workforce in the south west has already been depleted.”

RCN Devon and Somerset Regional Officer Jeni Watts (left) and RCN South West Regional Director Jeannett Martin protesting outside Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital

Pay Review Body

The RCN, alongside other NHS trade unions, is still waiting for the NHS Pay Review Body (PRB) report on local pay – which was expected in July.

The report has been sent to the Government – which is believed to be split on the issue.

When the NHS unions submitted evidence in March they warned that abandoning national pay would be seen as an attack on pay, terms and conditions.

Wales backs national pay

Concern over impact in deprived areas

The First Minister and Health Minister of the Welsh Government have backed national pay and conditions, but the RCN in Wales is still cautious about the impact of local pay if implemented in England.

Peter Meredith Smith, RCN Wales Associate Director: Employment Relations, believes local pay could prove extremely damaging for health services in Wales with services in the most deprived areas being at risk.

He said: “It is not an England-only issue. If there was any change to English terms and conditions it would have an impact on the Celtic nations. We would try to maintain a collective bargaining approach in Wales.”

Share your views on national pay. Email bulletin@rcn.org.uk to have your say
Scotland is committed to four-country pay bargaining

The Scottish Government has no interest in a local pay agenda, said Norman Provan, RCN Scotland’s Associate Director – Employment Relations.

He said there is a commitment to the NHS Pay Review Body (PRB) and four-country bargaining, with no plans to change terms and conditions in Scotland.

However, there are concerns that changes elsewhere in the UK could mean Scotland has to determine its own pay, terms and conditions in the NHS.

Norman said: "With more foundation trusts and social enterprises in England there is an opportunity for employers to vary pay."

He said if Scotland did have to take on pay bargaining there were already institutions in place where the RCN is represented which could take on the PRB’s responsibilities – such as the Scotland Terms and Conditions Committee and the Scottish Partnership Forum.

Norman also said the SNP has been clear that if forced to give up national terms and conditions, pay would be set Scotland-wide, rather than by local health boards.

The RCN has a productive relationship with the SNP government and has worked with it on the development of additional Scotland-wide terms and conditions. A new Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing, Alex Neil, has been appointed, and it is hoped the relationship can be maintained.

Fears for economy

Northern Ireland wants to keep national pay

Politicians and health service employers have said that local pay for nursing staff is not on the agenda in Northern Ireland, according to the RCN.

Garrett Martin, RCN Northern Ireland’s Deputy Director and Senior Employment Relations Officer, said the politicians do not think local pay would be right for the economy.

He said: "We are reliant on the public sector to a degree in terms of jobs and we do not believe it would be good for the economy.

“We believe Agenda for Change is a national pay agreement and we want to keep it that way.”

Garrett added that exploring local pay had been considered some months ago but when politicians heard that the Treasury in Westminster would reclaim the savings, they decided against it.

Agenda for Change is a national pay agreement and we want to keep it that way

Changes elsewhere could mean Scotland has to determine its own pay and conditions

Scots have ‘no interest’ in local pay

The launch of the RCN’s new initiative This is nursing received widespread attention in the media, with television, radio and newspaper coverage.

RCN Chief Executive Dr Peter Carter was interviewed on Radio 4’s Today programme, while Janet Davies, Director of Nursing and Service Delivery, was interviewed on Sky News.

Dr Carter was quoted on the BBC website, saying: "What we are doing today is showing the reality of nursing and how it takes both professionalism and compassion to be a nurse."

There was an opinion piece in The Sun by ward sister Rachel Armstrong, while the Daily Mail ran the This is nursing video on its website, under the headline: “Calming angry patients and mopping up sick: new advert shows what nursing is REALLY like.”

And RCN Scotland director Theresa Fyffe was quoted in the Daily Record, saying: "It’s time to celebrate the outstanding work nurses do daily, often in extremely difficult situations."
When the RCN asked members for examples of innovative nursing practice, ideas poured in via the Frontline First website. These “lightbulb innovations” are examples of nursing staff making creative changes to improve health, experiences of services and/or increase efficiency.

By sharing these innovations, we aim to help like-minded nursing staff connect with and support each other. We’re publishing them here in RCN Bulletin and posting lightbulb innovation blogs on the Frontline First website and the RCN Facebook page. In doing so, we hope to encourage debate and stimulate further research and innovation.

How can you get involved? If you have a Facebook account, “like” the RCN Facebook page and comment on the lightbulb innovations there. Via Twitter, you can re-tweet RCN messages about lightbulb innovations; and if you use email, subscribe to the RCN research and innovation bulletin (www.rcn.org.uk/researchbulletin).

Read the latest lightbulb innovation on page 9 and go to the web page below for a full catalogue.

www.rcn.org.uk/lightbulbinnovations

Letters and emails

**Nursing cuts could hit suicide prevention plans**

I read a news story about the Government strategy, Preventing Suicide in England, on the RCN website. As a mental health nurse, I work closely with individuals who have felt suicidal.

The strategy is definitely welcome; however, the cuts being made to nursing, especially within the mental health setting, mean that implementing such a strategy would be difficult.

It is important that the Government addresses this issue as a matter of urgency as levels of depression, and suicide, are on the rise due to the current economic situation and other socioeconomic challenges.

Hannah Marriage, RCN Mental Health Forum, by email

*Turn to page 8 to read about how the RCN is helping members at risk of suicide.*

**Games role makes for unique experiences**

“Inspire a generation” was the mantra around the Olympic Park in Stratford, east London, and for me, as a gamesmaker, the experience was certainly inspirational ("The spirit of the games", RCN Bulletin Online, September).

As part of the field of play medical team I worked with wheelchair athletes, officials and some VIPs. The rugby team in their armour-plated wheelchairs made television’s Robot Wars look tame. To see limbless athletes manipulate their chairs like ballet dancers and then crash them like dodgems was a revelation! Meeting some of them afterwards was also truly humbling.

Fortunately, we didn’t have too many major injuries to treat and despite very long shifts we all gelled quickly, and shared a unique and uplifting experience that will never be forgotten.

Roll on the Commonwealth Games.

Mike Smith
Emergency Nurse Practitioner, South West London RCN board member

**Help develop RCN Bulletin**

In January it will be a year since RCN Bulletin was relaunched, and we are planning a reader survey to gather views on the changes and on the way forward. Please look out for the survey in November’s issue. Complete it and you could be in with a chance of winning shopping vouchers worth £100.

We are also looking for members willing to answer further questions about RCN Bulletin either by phone or email. If you are interested, please email bulletin@rcn.org.uk or write to Daniel Allen at the address opposite with your name, address and a daytime phone number.
Mo inspired me

Nursing can learn from our incredible athletes

In October we come together to celebrate and recognise Black History Month. It is during this time in particular that we consider the remarkable contribution that the black and minority ethnic (BME) community make to this country. It is also important, of course, to take the opportunity to reflect on the struggle, injustice and prejudice that the community has faced, both in the past and the present day. However, for me, Black History Month should not be about looking behind; it should be about keeping our eyes fixed firmly on the future and how we can build on the successes we’ve already seen.

Take Mo Farah, one of the stars of our glorious Olympic and Paralympic summer. Here we have a man born in Somalia who came to the UK and ended up winning two gold medals for his country. When Mo won, he didn’t talk about the hardship or difficulties he faced; instead he spoke about the love and support of the people around him, and the opportunities he grabbed.

Nursing can learn lessons from moments like Mo’s. We are a profession made up of every colour and creed, and BME staff make an essential contribution to nursing – we need to celebrate this. However, that’s not because of the colour of their skin, but because of the depth of their talent, the scale of their enthusiasm and the level of their compassion. This Black History Month, let’s look to the future, build on what we’ve learned and inspire the next generation to achieve like Mo Farah.

Cecilia Anim
RCN Deputy President
Back from the brink

Nursing staff are a high-risk group for suicide, so it is vital that members monitor their own emotional health. And, as Sophie Lowthian reports, the RCN offers support to those in need with its free, confidential Counselling Service

Have you ever felt that your life is spiralling out of control, yet you continue battling on through each day, too afraid to ask for help?

“As nurses we just cope. However hard things get, however much turmoil we are in, we just get on with it – it’s as if we’re wired that way,” says Holly*, RCN member and nurse for 28 years who recently called RCN Direct in what she describes as a state of total despair.

Holly stumbled upon the RCN Counselling Service by chance. At the time she was working for a private health care company as a lead nurse, and didn’t feel her employer was allowing her to do her job safely. She became increasingly concerned about the levels of care and started to feel completely out of her depth with what she was witnessing. Panic set in.

Nowhere to turn

“My back was against the wall and I couldn’t trust anybody – I had nowhere to turn,” says Holly, who only dialled RCN Direct as she didn’t know what else to do. “I never even knew about the Counselling Service. It was a huge relief to know there was somebody I could speak to. I was at breaking point.

“RCN Direct arranged an appointment with the Counselling Service and things picked up from then on. I can honestly say the RCN saved my life.”

Calls to the Counselling Service usually peak this month – October. In light of this, and nursing staff being highlighted as a high-risk group in a recent government suicide prevention strategy, RCN Counselling Co-ordinator Sarah Murphy says it is important members know there is support for them if they need it. “We are here to look after members so they can care for their patients.”

Early intervention

Sarah is keen to stress the importance of early intervention to help prevent things getting out of control. “We have seen a rise in calls to the service over the last 12 months, especially for emergency appointments. This year, 10 per cent of new members who have approached us have come in as emergency referrals – it is worrying as it suggests many are waiting until crisis point to make contact and have been struggling with their issues for some time.”

Emergency appointments are given in situations where a member feels that without immediate intervention from the Counselling Service they would be unable to keep themselves safe. RCN member Jane*, a health care assistant (HCA), came to the Counselling Service under these circumstances.

Jane was worried that the RCN wouldn’t help as she described herself as “only an HCA”, and when she finally called RCN Direct she kept repeating that she wanted to take her own life.

After several bouts of illness and a long hospital stay after an accident, Jane had lost her confidence. She had also been assaulted by a patient prior to her illness and was worried it might happen again. When Jane came for counselling she wasn’t just dealing with depression and anxiety, she was also on statutory sick pay and was fearful she would lose her home due to mounting debts.

Reassurance

So how did the service help? Sarah says: “In this case, we took Jane’s GP contact details and agreed that if we felt she was risk to herself then we would call her GP. We then helped her plan a daily routine to ensure that she would get out of the house, see people, and have some gentle exercise to help with her anxieties.

“We supported Jane to decide what to say the next time she spoke to her manager as she was anxious her employer would be angry with her for being off sick. Finally, we managed to reassure Jane that many people find themselves in a similar situation and put her in touch with RCN Welfare Rights and Guidance for help with her money troubles.

“Following completion of her counselling sessions, Jane has made a successful return to work, and says that life is very much getting back on track,” Sarah says.

So far this year, 48 per cent of members who had been off work when they entered therapy with the
Don’t be frightened to ask for help

Counselling Service had returned to work by their last counselling session.

Sarah points out the service can help members with all sorts of issues. “While the top three work issues our team receives are around formal proceedings, bullying and harassment, and work relationships, we also support members with personal issues – stress, self-esteem and depression. Whatever the issue, you are never alone.”

Holly echoes Sarah’s message to members, and urges them to contact the “truly magical service” if needed. “They can support you when you feel lost and alone. If you are suffering, for crying out loud, pick up that phone. Not tomorrow, not next week, do it today. Don’t be frightened to ask for help – it could save your life.”

To book a counselling appointment contact RCN Member Support Services on 0345 408 4391, or visit www.rcn.org.uk/support/services/counselling to self refer online

A duty to yourself

Following World Suicide Prevention Day last month, 10 October is World Mental Health Day – a day for global mental health education and awareness.

With one in four people experiencing some kind of mental health problem in any given year, RCN Mental Health Adviser Ian Hulatt says it is a good opportunity for members to keep check on themselves.

“World Mental Health Day is an important annual event that focuses people’s attention on the importance of good mental health,” says Ian. “Nursing has a traditional culture of coping, but sometimes it is important to admit when you’re finding things difficult.

“If you do notice yourself feeling overwhelmed by circumstances or demands you’re placing on yourself, then it may be time to pay attention and seek help by talking to someone you trust or calling the RCN Counselling Service. It’s certainly not a sign of failure to acknowledge that certain issues in life have become a struggle and you need support – admitting it means you will have overcome the biggest obstacle.”

Ian adds: “World Mental Health Day also acts as a reminder to look out for each other – nursing can be a stressful occupation and despite nursing staff coping incredibly well most of the time, sometimes colleagues are visibly distressed and we must acknowledge these signs and support each other. Our duty of care to our patients extends to ourselves and our colleagues.”

Empowering people

Mary Codling
Primary Health Care Lead Nurse for Learning Disabilities

Working with people with learning disabilities is hugely rewarding as they are often so eager to learn the tasks of life. I’ve been involved in developing a set of board games designed to engage them in health promotion activities and empower them to take some responsibility for their own care.

The games address healthy eating, personal safety, general wellbeing, and keeping heart and lungs in shape. They’re big, bright and interactive, making learning fun. Best of all, they really do make a difference.

We first produced them a few years ago – feedback was overwhelmingly positive and they quickly sold out. I’m delighted to say they’re currently being reproduced and will be available again soon.

My hope is that they will be widely used, and in other settings too – it’s been suggested they could be useful in schools, hospital waiting rooms and for people with dementia.

www.rcn.org.uk/lightbulbinnovations

*A members names have been changed*
Here to stay

As health visiting marks its 150th anniversary, Daniel Allen considers how the RCN is helping to ensure the profession is fit for purpose across the UK

In newly industrialised, mid-19th century Britain, well-meaning Victorians came together to promote health and welfare among the masses. The Noxious Vapours Abatement Association and the Cheap Meals Committee were among the results of their endeavours. These noble philanthropists seem somewhat anachronistic now, but without them, particularly Manchester’s Ladies Sanitary Reform Association, health visiting might not have been born.

This year marks health visiting’s 150th anniversary, although the profession’s early incarnation was significantly different. Early “sanitary inspectors” focused on hygiene and welfare among poorer families, but the high infant mortality rate of the late 1800s called for a shift in focus, and the modern health visitor emerged.

Threats to identity

Fast forward, and health visiting today is not without its challenges. In fact, over the years, it has faced a succession of threats to its identity. Now, though, in a drive for improvement, the RCN is playing a role.

Janet Davies, RCN Director of Nursing and Service Delivery, is on a Department of Health taskforce that acts on the Government’s commitment to improve health visitor numbers and health outcomes in the early years. Taskforce members are visiting early implementer sites to see how services in England are responding to the Government’s challenge to health visitors and local partnerships to deliver the best for families and communities.

“Threats to identity

Well-planned and co-ordinated health visiting interventions reduce problems later but also promote resilience among communities,” Janet says. “The RCN sees that as vital work and my function on the taskforce is to support the Government’s health visitor programme but also to provide strategic challenge.”

The College is also challenging the Scottish Government over health visiting. Following a round-table event in the summer, RNC Scotland helped produce 10 “key asks” – focusing on the value of health visitors in supporting children and families in the early years and the need for more health visiting capacity across Scotland. Central is a call for a statutory entitlement for young children to universal health visiting services. Clare Mayo, Policy Adviser, says: “We have met with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill team to discuss our key asks and we’ll be lobbying the Government on them further”. The RCN response to the consultation on the bill is on the Scotland section of the RCN website.

Proactive

In Wales, the aim is for health visiting to move from a reactive, crisis intervention approach to a more proactive and preventative service, says Sue Thomas, RNC Primary Care and Independent Sector Adviser. Health visitors are also seen as having a contribution to make across the age range. Sue says: “Of course, that means an expansion in services and we are working with the Welsh Government to ensure any expansion is achieved by increased capacity and any necessary educational support.”

A strategy document on the contribution of health visitors and school nurses published by the DHSSPS in Northern Ireland in 2010 said all children and young people up to 19 should have a single point of access to teams led by health visitors. But the RCN in Northern Ireland has said that the strategic shift towards primary prevention has not been accompanied by a proportional shift in the nursing workforce or investment in workforce planning.

Can you help?

Fiona Smith, RNC Adviser in Children’s and Young People's Nursing and health visiting lead, is looking for members interested in helping develop a network and resource on the RNC website aimed at health visiting team members. Email fiona.smith@rcn.org.uk for details.

Read The RCN’s UK Position on Health Visiting in the Early Years at www.rcn.org.uk/publications
Value in diversity

A diverse workforce for a diverse public. Without the contribution of black and minority ethnic communities, nursing in the UK wouldn’t be what it is today.

The NHS was launched on 5 July 1948 by Minister of Health Aneurin Bevan. For the first time, health care was free to all. But there was an issue. There were 54,000 vacancies for nursing staff and a poor response from British-born women. Vacancies remained unfilled.

In 1949, things began to change. The Ministries of Health and Labour, the Colonial Office, the General Nursing Council and the RCN began focusing on attracting people from the British Colonies, especially the West Indies. The recruitment drive worked, and by 1959 there were 6,365 Caribbean women training in British hospitals. Figures continued to rise, and currently, the NHS is the largest employer of black and minority ethnic (BME) people in England.

RCN Diabetes Forum Chair Grace Vanterpool says she always wanted to work in the NHS. Today she is the only African Caribbean nurse consultant in diabetes in the UK. In 2006, she won Nursing Standard Community Nurse of the Year and overall Nurse of the Year and became an MBE for her work raising awareness of diabetes.

Grace says this month, Black History Month, is a great opportunity to recognise the significant contribution BME nursing staff have made to health care. “Unfortunately, that contribution isn’t always reflected in senior posts, but that is definitely changing and there are a growing number of programmes supporting BME nurses to go for senior roles.”

Individual determination

“BME nurses have faced a number of challenges over the years – climbing career ladders hasn’t always been easy,” says Grace. “But at the end of the day, it is about individual determination. You’ve got to look at both sides of the coin – while more could still be done to support BME individuals with talent, ability and drive, one has to go out and get it. Your journey is up to you – if you are passionate you will succeed, whatever the colour of your skin.”

“I would encourage all nursing staff, whatever your background, to get things down in your personal development plan that you want to achieve and follow your passion.”

Like Grace, fellow RCN member Cheryl Davis is also a specialist in diabetes and, as a research nurse at Birmingham’s Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust, has worked hard to raise awareness of the condition – and ways to prevent it.

A shared history

When Cheryl started nursing, she says she was the only BME person in her group. Today her team is a diverse mix of people, which is beneficial for nursing a diverse mix of patients. “Different cultures understand different needs,” she says. “Black History Month is important as there are so many achievements in BME nursing that people don’t know about. It is about alerting society that BME nursing staff have made a vital contribution and are an integral part of our shared history.”

To celebrate the BME contribution to UK nursing – past, present and future – and protect its history, new web pages have been developed by the RCN library, archives and information services to assist the study of BME nursing. The RCN UK Library will also be running a display throughout Black History Month.

Visit www.rcn.org.uk/bhm
To receive £20 off a new car insurance policy and/or £20 off a new buildings policy and a new contents policy when purchased at the same time (£10 for the buildings policy and £10 for the contents policy) you must be a current RCN member and state discount code XBNV when you call 0800 756 8457 (sorry, this offer is not available on our website). This offer is for your first year of cover only and is valid for quotes given until 31/03/2013. The £20 discount applies to one new car policy, and/or one new buildings and contents policy (when bought at the same time). The £10 discount applies for each when one buildings policy or one contents policy are bought separately. If you purchase a buildings or contents policy and choose to add the other at a later date you will receive a £10 discount for the initial policy only.

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Dedicated to dementia care

Up to a quarter of hospital beds are occupied by people with dementia. A new resource will help staff implement the RCN’s five principles that support good dementia care in general hospitals.

Dementia is a challenge for us all. “What people don’t see is that I need help in bathing, I can’t fasten my shoe laces, I can’t fasten my shirts. I have a problem when my wife is not there because I don’t know where I am or where she is and I tend to shout for her,” says Norms McNamara in a new RCN film being launched on 15 October to support nursing staff deliver better dementia care.

Norms is one of the estimated 820,000 people living with dementia in the UK. Alongside family carers, practitioners, and other people with dementia, the film shows Norms sharing his experiences to help nursing staff, and others, understand the unique set of care needs associated with dementia. As Norms puts it: “Help us to help you, to help us.”

The film is supplemented by a practical guide. Together they form a new RCN resource that supports implementation of the RCN’s five principles for improving dementia care in general hospitals.

The five SPACE principles are:
- Skilled staff with time to care;
- Partnerships with carers;
- Assessment and early identification;
- Care that is individualised; and
- Environments that are dementia friendly.

**Extremely powerful**

Jo James, RCN member and lead nurse for dementia at the Royal Free Hospital in London, helped develop the resource. “The film is extremely powerful as it gives people with dementia and their carers a voice. Each person will be affected by dementia in a different way – it is so important we listen to our patients and their carers so care is focused on the individual,” says Jo.

RCN Dementia Project Lead Rachel Thompson wrote the guide with Hazel Heath, RCN Older People’s Forum Chair. Rachel says hospital settings can be confusing, challenging and overwhelming for someone with dementia. “What happens in general hospitals can have a profound effect on individuals and their families, so it is crucial we get this right.”

Although there are examples of excellent care in some hospitals, Jo says she recognises that improvements can be made. “It’s all about staff getting the right training and resources. Knowledge has grown over the years, but there’s still more to learn.”

Jo says there are pockets of good work UK-wide, but people aren’t always aware of them. “The resource brings those good pieces of work together in one place – it is a smorgasbord of knowledge that can be adapted for local communities.”

Rachel says: “The RCN has been working to provide support and get nursing staff to think about transforming dementia care in their own setting. This resource will support them to do this.”

“It is so practical,” adds Jo. “It incorporates a simple, achievable set of standards. We need to move towards a body of staff who are dementia care experts, and it supports that need. I hope the principles will become embedded in our nursing culture.”

**We’re all affected**

“I’m willing to bet that there is hardly anyone in society these days who is not touched – in some way – by dementia. This film and practical guide will go a long way to helping us all become ‘dementia friendly.’”

Angela Rippon, Alzheimer’s Society Ambassador
APs’ key role in CYP care services

Assistant practitioners (APs) can contribute to effective, patient-centred care for children and young people (CYP), according to a new RCN publication.

It says that those designing children’s services should shape the AP role around the patient pathway to facilitate timely, holistic care of children and their families. The AP role can bridge the gap between home and the acute sector, while providing continuity across health and social care.

The report looks at skill mix, and how the potential for managers to use APs to reduce costs needs to be addressed through greater clarity around roles and clear accountability through regulation.

The report was produced by the five RCN Children and Young People’s Forums, in consultation with members – including an event at RCN Congress last year.

Kathy Brennan, former Chair of the CYP Professional Issues Forum and a matron at King’s College NHS Foundation Trust, said: “To get it right you need a vision of what you’re trying to achieve which includes senior management and clinical staff supporting the people doing the training, and a properly mapped out career pathway.”

The publication predicts an urgent shortfall of nurses within the next decade, so employers need to be proactive about service redesign and developing the workforce for the future.

It says that aspiring APs should be supported to develop skills using a flexible and accessible model of education. It also recommends that CYP-specific foundation degree programmes, or pathways within established courses, are created with a focus on competences developed in the workplace.

Staff working in education and all those in CYP services are encouraged to read the publications.

Proving the value of nursing

Imaging and public health forums contribute to new competence publications

The first nationally agreed competences for imaging nursing have been published.

Core Competences in Imaging Nursing identifies six competences that will clarify for nursing staff what skills can be expected at different levels. The competences will also assist nursing staff in other disciplines working with imaging technology to be certain what level of skill is required of them.

The document was written by members of the RCN Imaging Nursing Forum. Maggie Williams, Forum Chair, said: "In times of economic crisis, imaging nurses can feel vulnerable, and it is increasingly important that nurses in our small specialty are able to demonstrate specialist knowledge, skills and value to employers."

Free copies of the competences will be given to delegates at the RCN Imaging Roadshow in Birmingham on 17 November, courtesy of Cook Medical.

Meanwhile, the Public Health Forum has updated RCN guidance on Travel Health Nursing: Career Guidance and Competence Development. The specialty has seen many developments since the RCN produced the world’s first travel health nurse guidance in 2005.

The 2012 guidance draws on a robust evidence base in this fast-growing field. It provides a clear career pathway and is intended as a useful continuing professional development resource. Nursing staff in a variety of settings can use the expanded appendices on risk assessment and risk management when undertaking pre-travel assessments in their everyday practice.

Sandra Grieve, Chair of the Public Health Forum and co-author of the guidance, said nursing staff should read it for their own protection.

It is increasingly important that nurses in our small specialty demonstrate value to employers. Both competences can be downloaded from www.rcn.org.uk/publications.
Virtual archive plan
The Mental Health Forum is inviting members’ comments on plans for a virtual archive of the history of mental health nursing. The archive will include a timeline of events and audio recordings of nursing experiences over the last 50 years.

Other forum plans include a Congress resolution considering the effects of the economy on the nation’s mental health and a conference on managing risk. Visit the Mental Health Forum’s area of the RCN Discussion Zone to share your views.

The forum steering committee has two new members. Hannah Marriage is a staff nurse in Nottingham and former student activist, and Sharon Dennis is a former regional director of the RCN in the West Midlands.

Fair care for prisons
The rehabilitation of offenders on release depends on custody and care systems working together, according to Nursing in Criminal Justice Services Forum member Jo Tomlinson.

The Nursing Standard Nurse of the Year was speaking at last month’s RCN Bulletin jobs fair, when she also called on anyone with a passion for social justice to consider prison nursing.

Jo explained how her desire to tackle health inequalities, poverty and social exclusion motivated her to take up a post at HMP Stafford, where she developed an anxiety management course for inmates, and a care map for ex-armed forces personnel, which aims to improve the life outcomes of offenders, their families, and society as a whole.

New role for Helen
Helen Donovan has joined the RCN on a two-year secondment as Public Health Adviser.
Helen’s background is in health visiting and most recently she has been working as senior health protection nurse and immunisation lead in Haringey, London.

Recovery roll out
Members of several forums are feeding into a project to extend a rapid recovery model into new surgical areas.

The model is already being used in some forms of gastrointestinal and cancer surgery and now the Government is intending to roll it out to other specialties such as breast cancer.

Enhanced recovery involves patients actively preparing their bodies for recovery before elective surgery takes place. Evidence suggests it can improve recovery times and reduce length of hospital stay.

NICE guideline on opioid use
Members of the Pain and Palliative Care Forum contributed to the new National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guideline on Opioids in Palliative Care. The guideline is targeted at non-specialist health care professionals initiating strong opioids for pain in adults with advanced and progressive disease. The guidance can be downloaded from www.nice.org.uk

Email caroline.rapu@rcn.org.uk to participate in future NICE programmes.

What I’m thinking
Doreen Crawford
Chair, Children and Young People: Acute Care Forum

It’s an exciting time to be a children’s nurse. Not only are therapies advancing, but our roles are expanding. Although times are challenging the job stays rewarding. It’s a privilege to care for children, young people and their families.

We all need to recharge our professional batteries, and I am looking forward to the Children and Young People’s conference in Leeds on 12 October. Among the topics is a talk from Professor Neil Marlow on moral and ethical dilemmas in neonatal care. Neonatal care is no clinical niche; the outcomes from adverse early beginnings have profound implications for the child, their family and the nursing staff who will provide care. The lack of neonatal nurses across the country is a perennial problem, which needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

The conference also provides the chance to share ideas – we all have a passion to push children’s nursing forward for the benefit of future generations.

www.rcn.org.uk/forums
Northern Ireland
www.rcn.org.uk/northernireland

Northern
Date: 26 October at 1pm
(rescheduled meeting)
Location: Bretten Hall,
Antrim Hospital, 45 Bush
Road, Antrim.
Details: includes pensions
seminar.

Scotland
www.rcn.org.uk/scotland

Ayrshire and Arran
Date: 1 November at 5.30pm
Location: Education Centre,
Crosshouse Hospital,
Kilmarnock Road,
Kilmarnock KA2 0BE.

Borders
Date: 8 November at 5pm
Location: Lecture Theatre,
Education Centre, Borders
General Hospital, Melrose,
 Roxburghshire TD6 9BS.

Fife
Date: 23 October at 7pm
Location: Staff Club,
Victoria Hospital,
Kirkcaldy KY2 5AH.

Forth Valley
Date: 30 October at 6pm
Location: Room 1, Learning
Centre, Third Floor, Forth
Valley Royal Hospital,
Stirling Road, Larbert
FK5 4WR.

Lanarkshire
Date: 9 October at 6pm
(rescheduled meeting)
Location: Syndicate
Room 3, Wishaw General
Hospital, Wishaw
ML2 0DP.

North Highland
Date: 29 October at 5.30pm
Location: Seminar Room,
Highland Heartbeat Centre,
Raigmore Hospital,
Inverness IV2 3UJ.

Tayside
Date: 25 October at 7pm
Location: Seminar Room,
King's Cross Hospital, Dundee
DD3 8EA.

North West
www.rcn.org.uk/northwest

Cheshire West
Date: 22 October at 4pm
Location: Holiday Inn,
Wrexham Road, Chester.

Isle of Man
Date: 22 October at 3.30pm
Location: Keyll Darree
Education Centre,
Nobles Hospital.

South West
www.rcn.org.uk/southwest

Bath
Date: 30 October at 7pm
Location: Emergency
Department Seminar Room,
Royal United Hospital
NHS Trust.

Somerset
Date: 31 October, time TBC
Location: The Canalside,
Marsh Lane, Bridgwater
TA6 6LQ.
Contact: Scchilli@aol.com

West Dorset
Date: 6 December at 5pm
Location: The Education
Centre, Dorset County
Hospital, Williams
Avenue, Dorchester
DT1 2JY.
Contact:
Dee.Angell@dchft.nhs.uk

West Midlands
www.rcn.org.uk/westmidlands

Worcestershire
Date: 30 October at 2pm
Location: Syndicate
Room 1, Charles Hastings
Education Centre,
Worcestershire
Royal Hospital, Charles
Hastings Way, Worcester
WR5 1DD.

Yorkshire & The Humber
www.rcn.org.uk/
yorkshireandhumber

Rotherham
Date: 29 October at 6pm
Location: Rooftop
Restaurant, A Level, Rotherham
Hospital, Moorgate Road, Rotherham
S60 2UD.

Black History Month events
The RCN is holding a range of events to celebrate Black History Month (BHM). An evening reception is being held by the RCN Diversity Unit on 16 October at RCN HQ.

The guest speaker is Paula Vasco Knight, Chief Executive of South Devon Healthcare Foundation NHS Trust and recently appointed National Equality Lead of the NHS Commissioning Board. Email diversity.team@rcn.org.uk to reserve a place.

And the RCN West Midlands and the Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust in Birmingham are jointly running a diversity event on 30 October. To book a place, email jane.turvey@heartofengland.nhs.uk

Visit your country or region web page at www.rcn.org.uk to see what is happening in your area.

With less than two months to go, spaces are filling up quickly for RCN Scotland's flagship conference, so make sure you book your place now for This is Change. This is Nursing.

RCN Scotland is leading the way on health and social care integration. Come along and find out more, debate the future of integration with nursing colleagues and other partners and learn new ways to shape change positively in your area.

The way nurses and nursing teams work with each other, with partners and with service users is changing.

The Scottish Government’s plans to integrate health and social care will transform all parts of the health service.

By attending our conference, you’ll find out more about how this transformation of services will affect you and your service users, and get your voice heard in an interactive, fun and inspiring way.

The conference is taking place on 21-22 November at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh.

Contact:
Scchilli@aol.com