For the record
Your role in record keeping

Also inside: regulation, diabetes care, developing your potential
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• have your say in discussions and debates
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Book your place today for fast entry at www.rcn.org.uk/congress

Advance booking closes on 10 April.

For further details see page 5.
I’m delighted to welcome you to this issue of the RCN magazine for health care support workers

It’s an interesting time in our world as we wait to see how – or whether – the recent Francis report recommendations will be turned into reality. You can find out more about the inquiry into care failings at the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust on pages 5 and 6.

In this issue we lay out the facts on record keeping, consider ways you can develop your potential and explore your vital role in diabetes care. We also look at how to make your money go further and highlight ways the relaunched RCN resource First Steps could benefit you.

Are you coming to RCN Congress in Liverpool between 21 and 25 April? We will be there from Monday to Wednesday running a programme of events specifically for HCAs and APs alongside the main programme. It is free to attend, and you can come for one or more days as suits you best. You don’t have to be a member of the RCN to attend Congress, and you can be sure of a warm welcome.

We have an ever growing membership of HCAs and APs, in the “health practitioner” membership group. We have members who represent you on RCN Council, and a committee that works on your behalf to make sure the views of HCAs and APs are heard in everything the RCN is involved in.

The more HCA and AP members, the stronger our voice. Although we’re already very influential, we can be even more so with your support. So please show this magazine to your colleagues. Why not take it to work and leave it on the coffee table? There will be something of interest to everyone, wherever you work, right across the UK.

Incidentally, please note that throughout the magazine, we use the abbreviations HCA (health care assistant) and AP (assistant practitioner) to cover all those in health care support worker roles.

Tanis Hand
RCN HCA and AP Adviser

Benefits of RCN membership

Did you know that RCN membership for an HCA or AP costs just £4.06 per month for the first year, and only £8.12 per month after that? And as well as RCN membership being great value for money, it also gives a wide range of membership benefits. These include online resources to help develop your skills, access to the largest specialist nursing library in the world with more than 64,000 books, key nursing databases, 1,000 e-journals and 600 e-books, and the help of 4,000 accredited representatives in workplaces across the country.

Make sure you encourage your colleagues to sign up and become a valued member of the UK’s only nursing union. To sign up, visit www.rcn.org.uk/join and select the “health practitioner” membership category.
A day for everybody

Sunday 12 May is Nurses’ Day – the day for everyone working in nursing to celebrate the best of the profession together

Tanis Hand, RCN HCA and AP Adviser, said: “The RCN looks forward to celebrating with all its members, whatever position they work in – registered nurses, students, health care assistants and assistant practitioners – in fact every single member of the nursing team.”

Northern Ireland HCA Brenda McIlmurray, one of the RCN Council members representing HCAs and APs, said the profession should do more to celebrate Nurses’ Day. “We are so busy doing our jobs that we don’t promote ourselves or the job we are doing. Nurses’ Day gives us the perfect opportunity to do that,” she said. “I for one am proud to be part of the profession.”

Members from across the UK will be organising events to promote the day. Nationally, the RCN will focus on telling the story of what nursing means to people – professionals and patients alike.

If you know any patients who would like to share their story about why nursing staff are so important to them, please ask them to email frontline.first@rcn.org.uk and one of the team will be in touch.

Keep an eye on the RCN website for updates on when the new Nurses’ Day website will be launched. Free merchandise will be available for RCN members to order from the site by the beginning of April.

In the genes

The RCN has launched an interactive resource to help you understand how genetics plays an important role in everyday care.

The Future is in Their History contains practical, must-know knowledge that all nursing staff can put to immediate use in day-to-day work.

Go to www.rcn.org.uk/genetics

Vitality boost

Regain your vitality with the RCN’s personal health and fitness programme. This flexible plan can work around your shift patterns, helping to keep you motivated.

The tailored 50-week programme includes a personal assessment, demonstration workout videos, access to a qualified coach and top nutritional tips to help you achieve your goals. RCN members receive exclusive rates; membership is only 70p per week.

Learn more at www.rcnvitality.org.uk

Tweet tweet

Every Friday the RCN hosts #RCNchat on Twitter, where anyone can join a live discussion with an expert from the RCN on topics important to members. You can follow @theRCN and join #RCNchat each Friday from 12.45-1.15pm. In some instances chats may be held at different times, so check the RCN feed for the latest information.
Francis: HCSWs must be regulated

The RCN welcomed last month’s Mid Staffs inquiry report which calls for the registration of health care support workers (HCSWs).

The inquiry, led by Robert Francis QC, examined care failings at the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust and why they were not addressed sooner. Delivering a total of 290 recommendations, the three-volume report seeks to address many issues that the RCN has, for some time, been highlighting as underlying causes of poor care, including staffing levels, NHS culture and leadership issues.

Dr Peter Carter, RCN Chief Executive & General Secretary, said: “The report delivers key recommendations which we support and have been calling for, including the registration and regulation of health care assistants. We welcome moves for overarching standards which enshrine what patients deserve from the NHS and from those who work for it.”

Turn to page 6 to read about the recommendations for HCSWs.

What is your experience?

As part of its This is nursing initiative, the RCN is undertaking work on professional attitudes and behaviours. It is seeking to share examples of how your workplace promotes, addresses and develops professional attitudes and behaviours among staff. The RCN will be working with other organisations to ensure mentorship, training and development provide a professional culture which delivers high quality patient care. And the College needs to hear the views of HCAs and APs.

RCN Deputy President Cecilia Anim said: “Hearing from HCAs and APs as well as other frontline nursing staff is crucial if we are to understand what needs to improve in this area and what support is needed.” How does your organisation promote professional attitudes and behaviours? Share your experiences at http://tinyurl.com/bc7e5k2
The report of the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust public inquiry includes a number of recommendations regarding health care support workers (HCSWs)

Registration of HCSWs
Francis says all HCSWs should be registered whether they are working for the NHS or independent health care providers, in the community, for agencies or as independent agents.

The RCN has long called for regulation of all HCSWs in the interest of public protection and welcomes Francis’ call for the registration and eventual regulation of HCSWs.

While the Government proposes a system of voluntary registration, the RCN believes that only a mandatory system of regulation will provide peace of mind to patients and assurance that all HCSWs have the appropriate level of knowledge and skills required for the role. In Europe, other member states such as Belgium, Denmark and Finland all have forms of mandatory HCSW regulation.

Download the RCN policy briefing The Weaknesses of Voluntary Regulation for Health Care Support Workers from www.rcn.org.uk/policy

A national code of conduct and a common set of national standards for education and training
Registered nurses work within a code of conduct, and the RCN agrees this should be the same for all HCSWs. However, the RCN believes this national code of conduct must be underpinned by mandatory regulation for it to have meaning and influence.

Francis says that because of the close connection with registered nursing, the code of conduct, training standards and registration requirements should be maintained by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). While the RCN supports this view, it could take time for the NMC to be in a position to perform this role.

Francis states that until the NMC is charged with the recommended regulatory responsibilities, the Department of Health should institute a nationwide system to protect patients from harm.

Strengthening identification of HCSWs and nurses
Francis recommends that there should be a common description of the role of HCSWs and their relationship to registered nurses (RNs) made clear. He suggests the title “nursing assistant” or “community nursing assistant”.

Many patients are confused by the range of titles HCSWs are given, and often refer to all the nursing staff as “nurse”. Patients need to understand what they can expect from different members of staff and be able to tell the difference between them.

The RCN believes that role clarity is vital, and it is essential that patients and clients understand the role of the HCSW. While all members of the nursing team should work towards providing the best possible care for their patients, registered nurses should be making the clinical judgment calls, assessing, planning, and overseeing the care their patients receive.

Download the RCN publication The Nursing Team: Common Goals, Different Roles from www.rcn.org.uk/publications

Visit www.midstaffspublicinquiry.com to download the full report.
Visit www.rcn.org.uk/thisisnursing for report FAQs.
First steps and beyond

With thousands of visitors a month, the RCN’s First Steps online resource is supporting HCAs and APs on a daily basis

“It can be daunting at the start of a new role – whether you’re an HCA or an AP – knowing that you will be providing clinical and personal care for people in need,” says Tanis Hand, RCN HCA and AP Adviser. “Most employers provide induction programmes, but they’re not always as comprehensive as you would like. The more you can learn at this important time the better it will be for you and your patients.”

To support you in your first few weeks and months, the RCN has relaunched its hugely popular and free online induction resource. It provides you with information relevant to your induction training that you can work through in addition to the training provided by your employer.

Even better

The revamped site retains all the features members have said they like, but has incorporated users’ feedback to make it even better. And an assessment quiz is now included so when you’ve completed all the sections and the quiz, you’ll get a certificate of completion.

First Steps is now fully searchable, and for those of you on the move, it's now available on mobile devices, giving you access whenever and wherever you like.

Based on National Occupational Standards and the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework, the resource includes sections on communication, infection prevention and control, record keeping, personal development, accountability, person-centered care, clinical skills, and promoting health.

The resource covers so much it is now proving popular not just as an induction tool, but for all nursing staff to refresh their knowledge and skills. Not only that, nursing staff are finding the interactive and visual elements of First Steps a useful way of explaining clinical concepts to patients.

RCN member Lorraine Hicking-Woodison says: “As an assistant practitioner working in a GP surgery, I've found First Steps to be an excellent resource. I often use the body mass index (BMI) diagram in the clinical skills section to demonstrate to patients how BMI is calculated.

“I can show them where they are on the scale and then adjust the graphic to show where they need to be to obtain a normal BMI. The patients really like seeing the visual.”

Find out how First Steps can support you at www.rcnhca.org.uk

Looking for next steps?

If you’ve been in your role a while or you’ve completed First Steps and are looking for more, the RCN has a range of online learning resources on specific topics such as diabetes, HIV/AIDS and patient safety.

Visit www.rcn.org.uk/cpd
Diabetes affects all aspects of an individual’s life. And it’s on the rise. By 2025 it is estimated that five million people in the UK will have diabetes, with most cases being type 2.

As an HCA or AP you are pivotal in helping to look after the population and improve diabetes care.

“Wherever you work it’s likely you will be caring for people with diabetes,” says Tanis Hand, RCN HCA and AP Adviser. “As an HCA or AP, you will be performing blood glucose monitoring, venepuncture and a range of relevant observations such as body mass index (BMI), blood pressure and urinalysis. These may be for routine monitoring, preparation for annual reviews, or during an acute illness – and could be for people with type 1 or type 2 diabetes.

“It’s crucial you have a thorough understanding of diabetes and are clear on the types so you understand the reasons behind the range of tests performed in diabetes management,” says Tanis.

To help HCAs and APs increase their knowledge, the RCN has developed an easy-to-use, interactive online resource covering the management of diabetes on a day-to-day basis. It covers the different types, diagnosis, management and complications.

“The recent national diabetes audit showed the complications of diabetes are resulting in significant additional ill health and premature death,” says Amanda Cheesley, RCN Long-Term Conditions Adviser. “In light of the fact that type 2 diabetes is a growing problem, and the evidence suggesting it’s not always being as well managed as it could be, we are keen to support HCAs and APs who are in contact with people with diabetes on a regular basis.

“Associated complications of diabetes can be costly and have a significant affect on quality of life,” Amanda adds. “But with the help and support of well-informed nursing staff the condition can be managed.” Access the resource at www.rcn.org.uk/diabetes_essentials

Diabetes: the facts

Diabetes is a common long-term health condition where the amount of glucose in a person’s blood is too high because their body is unable to process it properly. This is because the pancreas doesn’t produce any insulin, or not enough, to help glucose enter the body’s cells, or because the insulin that is produced doesn’t work properly.

- **Type 1** develops when the insulin-producing cells in the body have been destroyed and the body is unable to produce insulin.
- **Type 2** develops when the body can still produce some insulin but not enough for it to function properly, or when the cells in the body do not react properly to insulin.
Best foot forward

HCAs and APs can play an important part in diabetic foot examinations, says Tanis Hand

If good blood glucose control is not maintained, diabetes can lead to a number of health problems. High glucose levels can cause damage to blood vessels, nerves and organs, which can result in heart disease, nerve damage, vision damage, kidney disease, fertility problems and foot problems.

“Diabetes affects the circulation which can impact on the blood supply to the feet. In turn this can damage the nerves on the feet, meaning small cuts and breaks in the skin can go unnoticed,” says Tanis. “This can lead to one in 10 patients developing a foot ulcer, which can ultimately cause a serious infection. For this reason, people with diabetes must have a foot examination at least once a year.

“As the role of the HCA and AP develops, some are being involved in the diabetic foot examination preparatory stages – where they examine the foot and check for pulses and sensation. Any abnormal results are then flagged to the registered nurse running the clinic so that they can be managed appropriately, and the person will be referred to the podiatrist.”

Tanis believes that HCAs and APs are ideally placed to perform such tests, providing they have been suitably trained and demonstrated competence. “Of course, the registered nursing staff must be certain that delegation is in the patient’s best interests, and the HCA or AP must feel confident in the aspects of care they provide. They must also have protocols within which they can work so they’re not expected to make stand-alone clinical judgment calls,” she adds. See www.rcn.org.uk/hcaaccountability

A vital role caring for patients

Sandra Jones is an HCA working in a GP surgery in west Wales. She was recently trained to perform foot checks for people with diabetes.

When Sandra first heard she could learn how to perform foot checks, she was keen to get involved. “We were taught about diabetes and how it causes complications such as neuropathy and circulatory problems which affect the tiny blood vessels in the extremities,” she says. “I now fully understand why these checks are crucial, and why as part of them I need to look at the person’s footwear.”

Sandra says that since she started carrying out the checks she can see how vital her role is in caring for people with diabetes. “It gives me a lot of satisfaction to be closely involved in patients’ annual reviews. It also helps our specialist nurse who can spend more time concentrating on other aspects of the patients’ diabetes management,” she adds. “I follow a protocol and record results on a template – any abnormalities are documented and the person is referred to podiatry.”

Why not join a forum?

RCN forums are groups of RCN members interested in a similar nursing specialty – such as diabetes, mental health, or defence nursing. Visit www.rcn.org.uk/forums
Developing your potential

Planning your next career move can be tricky. But whether you want to develop your current role or explore new horizons, there are many ways to achieve your goals.

“The beauty of being an HCA or AP is that you can take it as far as you want to go,” says Cathy Taylor, RCN Careers Adviser. For some, that may mean continuing as an HCA or AP but doing some further studies or training.

If you are an HCA you may contemplate becoming an AP. “This allows you to advance your skills and knowledge, but without having the three-year commitment of studying to become a registered nurse,” says Cathy. “Pre-reg nurse education is also another option for both HCAs and APs.”

As a starting point, she advises making sure you get one-to-one time with your manager, and plan your development as part of your appraisal. “Check out what local support is available, including your employer’s training policies,” adds Cathy.

Shadowing an AP or registered nurse could also help to broaden your perspective. “If you work in the community, think about a hospital or vice versa,” advises Cathy. “Increase your experience by casting your net more widely.”

Be what you want to be
Since starting out as a health care support worker 11 years ago, Claire Smith continues to develop her role working with children and families in Torfaen, part of the Aneurin Bevan Health Board. “We want to give children the best start in life so that they can thrive once they get to nursery and then school,” says Claire.

Among the initiatives she has helped to spearhead is a weekly support group specifically targeted at teenage mothers. “They love it, because they’re not being judged,” says Claire. New Beginnings helps new young mums – and occasionally dads – to learn basic parenting skills, such as bathing. “When the baby is born it can be such a culture shock for the parents,” says Claire. “They have often not thought about the reality of having a child, so can’t understand why their baby is crying. Here they have someone to talk to who is neutral and can help.”

Last year her work was recognised with the runner-up prize in the Health Care Support Worker category in the RCN in Wales Nurse of the Year awards. “I really enjoy my job and I’m pleased about how it has developed over the years,” says Claire. “I have children too, so it’s important for me to have a good work-life balance.”

This year, and for the third year running, Claire will take a leading role in organising a local showcasing event to celebrate the contribution health care support workers are making, through presentations about their work.

“We can think we are at the bottom of the pyramid and feel that sometimes others don’t recognise who we are and what we do,” she says. “But it’s important to remember that you’re not ‘just’ a support worker. You can be what you want to be – and there is education there to help you, if you want it.”

The RCN’s careers service can help HCAs and APs with career planning and advice on applying for jobs. Visit www.rcn.org.uk/careers or call 0345 408 4391.
Although Ryan Compton really enjoyed being an HCA in the cardiology department at Warwick Hospital, there were times when he found it frustrating. “I would be caring for a patient and then have to get a registered nurse to continue with certain aspects of their care,” he recalls.

So in 2009, when Ryan was offered the opportunity of a three-year secondment to do his nurse education, he took it. “It felt like a natural progression,” he says. But before making the final commitment, Ryan talked to as many registered nurses as he could to find out if it was really for him. “I tried to take a step back and understand the role,” he says. “I also did some extra hours in other departments, including A&E and outpatients. It’s all well and good and good reading about something, but I wanted to get to grips with what it was really like.”

The experiences he gained as an HCA have helped him considerably in his nurse training, he believes. “I felt two steps ahead,” says Ryan. His communication skills with patients proved especially useful. “I was also used to getting up early, long days and missing breaks, while some on the course had never been employed before. I found that a lot of the students came to me for support.”

Now he’s back at the hospital as a registered nurse, working in ophthalmology, where he did a 12-week placement as a student. “It’s very different now,” says Ryan. “I’m more autonomous and there is more pressure. But I love what I’m doing.”

Willis report

Published in 2012, the Willis Commission report, Quality with Compassion: The Future of Nursing Education, says: “Meaningful career pathways for support staff in bands 1-4 should be created, to encourage and reward talent and to avoid the cap on career progression that was a major shortcoming of the old state enrolled nurse role.”

To download the report and find out more visit www.williscommission.org.uk
While good record keeping is an essential aspect of being an HCA or AP, many people believe that their notes must be countersigned by a registered nurse.

Not necessarily so, says RCN guidance. Delegating Record Keeping and Countersigning Records says that recording the care you provide can be done by you, without the need for a countersignature. This is providing the registered nurse supervising is sure you are competent in the complete provision of care, including record keeping, and that it’s in the patient’s best interests. You must also work within your local policy at all times.

For Maive Coley, East Midlands representative on the RCN Health Practitioner Committee, the guidance is extremely useful. At the trust where she works in the neonatal unit, current practice is to countersign all HCA and AP records.

“I now understand more clearly why countersigning is not required at all times,” says Maive. “I’ll be able to use the RCN advice to ask my department why our records need to be countersigned. Often registered nurses say to me, ‘I don’t see why we need to sign this as you are doing everything that is asked of you’. We are accountable for our actions.”

Keeping full and accurate records is always important but particularly so when working with babies, Maive believes. “I’ve learned over the years it’s always better to document anything that concerns me. It could be nothing at all to worry about, but I’d rather be safe than sorry. If there was an issue further down the line, at least I have a written record.”

It takes Maive about 30 minutes each day to write up her records, and she uses the activity as an opportunity to reflect on what has happened. “As I am writing my notes, if there’s something I’m not happy about, I will draw someone’s attention to it – whether a registered nurse or a member of the medical team. I never make a guess, but always get a second opinion.”

Six key principles

1. Record keeping can be delegated to HCAs, APs and nursing students to document the care they provide.
2. Record keeping is an integral part of every intervention and the student, HCA or AP should be assessed as competent in the complete provision of care, including record keeping.
3. As with any delegated activity, the registered nurse needs to ensure that it is in the patient’s best interests for the activity and documentation to be delegated.
4. Supervision and a countersignature are required until the student, HCA or AP is deemed competent at the activity and keeping records.
5. Registered nurses should only countersign if they have witnessed the activity or can validate it took place.
6. Health care providers should supply clear guidance, following the Nursing and Midwifery Council’s Record Keeping Guidance.

RCN HCA and AP Adviser Tanis Hand says...

“Until you are deemed wholly competent in both the activity and its documentation, countersigning should be performed. It is important to apply the principles of accountability and delegation.”

Go to www.rcn.org.uk/hcaaccountability

Download the guidance at www.rcn.org.uk/publications
Making your money go further

We all have times when our finances don’t go to plan. RCN help is at hand when times get tough and you need some support

Mounting bills, rising costs, pay freezes. Is it any wonder keeping on top of finances can feel like an uphill struggle?

“When money matters take a turn for the worse, getting budgets back on track has become increasingly difficult, with the rising costs of food, rent and fuel hitting many people hard,” says Claire Cannings, RCN Senior Welfare Adviser.

“It is not just the increase in essential spending causing issues. We are acutely aware that the changes to in-work benefits and pay freezes are also having an impact on working members,” says Claire. “Last year we saw a reduction in the amount of money families could claim for childcare through working tax credits – and it’s predicted many more families will be affected by further reforms planned later this year.

“The RCN Welfare Rights and Guidance Service is monitoring the ongoing impact of these reforms on our members, and has already responded to several Government calls for evidence,” adds Claire.

Here for you

On a practical level, the RCN Welfare Rights and Guidance Service offers financial advice – including individual debt advice – to members who are struggling financially or whose circumstances might have changed.

Claire says it’s important members know there is help for them should they need it. “Financial problems can cause a lot of stress,” she says. “Remember, there are always options for someone experiencing financial hardship, and an RCN welfare adviser can discuss these with you.”

Recently the service helped a member who was behind with rent payments. Fiona* had been working as an HCA at a general practice for six years but had to reduce her hours to help care for her parents. She was happy to be able to nurse her mother, but found the drop in income a real financial strain and paying rent became a struggle. Unable to cope, Fiona contacted the service.

The welfare adviser did a full benefits check and advised Fiona to apply for working tax credit and housing benefit for herself, and for attendance allowance for her mother. The adviser also spoke to Fiona’s landlord, and arranged a suitable period to repay the outstanding rent.

The RCN has worked alongside the Money Advice Service to produce an online financial resource. Making the Most of Your Money includes a financial health check. Visit www.mmoym.org.uk

Top tips from the guidance

1. Spend time planning and reviewing.
2. Keep track of your income and spending.
3. Don’t waste your money – shop around for the best deals.

RCNXtra offers discounts on a range of lifestyle products and services. Visit www.rcn.org.uk/xtra

*Member’s name has been changed
Q&A: Tony Sawyer

Tony Sawyer is the Director of Training at Park House Court Nursing Home in south Wales, with responsibility for all carer training. Here he explains the breadth and importance of his role.

What is your background?

I have an unusual background for someone now working in health care as I previously spent 20 years working in retail. When I left I wanted a new challenge and moved into training and development – initially in familiar areas, but I eventually moved into health care training.

What is the most important part of your training role?

Ensuring that people who have accessed my training are competent. There is no point in having a certificate if you are not able to deliver in practice.

What approach do you take?

The method of training delivery is important. I am upbeat in my approach and make it interesting for those attending. I don’t like to lecture people. It doesn’t matter what training is available if no one wants to come along. In my training courses I want to lead by example. I am supportive of the whole team and thankfully have the support of my employer in implementing my ideas.

How does the training facility operate?

I have a unique role. When I sell our training to other local organisations, all the profits are put back into the training pot here at the home. So it’s not just health care workers we provide training for – I’ve worked with many other organisations. We only train in areas where our courses are valid and where I’ve got experience in that sector.

Do you train all staff?

Yes, including the maintenance and housekeeping staff. My courses are aimed at carers but all staff at the home are welcome. I don’t train registered nurses on clinical issues.

Have you ever encountered challenges from registered staff and did you overcome this?

No. They recognise that I am not a threat. Instead I am here to help, supporting them at what they’re good at. I’m not here to be critical.

How has the RCN helped you in your role?

I was initially very interested in the professional side of the RCN and became a safety representative so I could access the College’s excellent training and development in the field of health and safety. After becoming active in the local branch, I became an RCN learning representative too.

Would you encourage HCAs and APs to become active in the RCN?

Yes – 100 per cent. Getting involved with the professional side will only help you in your work. I was very proud to have received the RCN Safety Representative of the Year award three years ago. That goes to prove that you do not need to be a registered nurse to have your contribution recognised within the RCN.
Representing you

The RCN Health Practitioner (HP) Committee represents the RCN’s HCA and AP members, highlighting issues affecting them. It reports directly to the RCN’s governing Council through its two HP Council members, and provides a voice for HCAs and APs in influencing RCN policy. If you have any feedback for the committee, email hca@rcn.org.uk

Elections for the following vacant seats were in progress at the time of publication: London, Northern, Northern Ireland, South West, West Midlands, Yorkshire & The Humber, and Wales. Visit www.rcn.org.uk/elections for the latest information. Voting for committee members to represent Yorkshire & The Humber and the South West opened on 8 March. If you are eligible to vote in these elections, you will receive a voting email from the Electoral Reform Services (ERS). Voting closes on 12 April.

Your HP Committee

Brenda McIlmurray (Chair)
RCN Council

Maive Coley
East Midlands

Richard Holtby
North West

David Cardwell
RCN Council

Brian Murphy
Scotland

David Herring
Eastern

Lorraine Hicking-Woodison (Vice Chair)
South East

At a workplace near you

The RCN has a network of stewards, safety representatives and learning representatives who dedicate their time to helping you. To contact your local representative, call RCN Direct on 0345 772 6100. Alternatively, if you think you have what it takes and would like to support other members, why not consider becoming a representative? Find out more at www.rcn.org.uk/becomearep

A privileged position

Brian Murphy, the newest member of the RCN HP Committee representing Scotland, introduces himself and explains what the committee has planned over the next 12 months

I joined the RCN three years ago when I started working as a clinical support worker with the hospital night team at Glasgow Royal Infirmary. I am now a steward, lead safety representative and communications officer for the Greater Glasgow branch. I feel privileged to represent HCA and AP members in Scotland on the RCN HP committee, especially at this exciting time for us within the organisation.

As a frontline member of the nursing family, I think it’s important to know that you have the support and guidance of a union and professional body that fully understands the issues that affect us as a profession and as individuals. The committee is looking at three main areas for the next 12 months: the regulation and education of HCA and APs, the important role of HCAs and APs in patient safety, and the recruitment and retention of HCA and AP members. I’m really looking forward to attending this year’s Congress with my colleagues where we will be a voting entity for the first time – a huge step in the right direction for HCA and AP members.
HCAs and APs: valued members of the nursing team

Did you know that HCAs and APs can join the RCN? As the largest union and professional body in the UK dedicated solely to the nursing and health care profession, we offer:

- legal assistance and representation from nursing specialists
- emotional and professional support and counselling
- wide-ranging learning, development and networking opportunities.

The RCN has significantly reduced its subscription rates. At just £4.06 per month for the first year, HCAs and APs can’t afford to be without us.

To join now, visit www.rcn.org.uk/join or call 0345 772 6100.

For a goodie pack with more information, text HCA18 followed by your name and address to 88020*