

School Nurses Forum NEWSLETTER

www.rcn.org.uk/schoolnurses

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Check it out ...

Be sure to see the consultation response report – *Towards a framework for post-registration nursing careers* – on the Department of Health website (www.dh.gov.uk).

Further information

Send contributions for the next newsletter by 18 February 2009 to:

Barbara Richardson-Todd
Email: barbara.rt@virgin.net

Letter from the Chair: Joy Winks

Challenges met, more to come ...

As per normal, school nurses all over the country have new challenges for the new year. Many are commencing the new human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccination sessions, which has meant lots of hard work, planning, recruiting and training. Some are learning to practise as providers in the commissioner/provider split in primary care trusts (PCTs) across England. Many have to mentor new staff as new investment increases capacity (what an enviable challenge that is!). Congratulations to all school nurses who have just completed their degree. Now your challenge is to put theory into practice, and let us know how you are doing it!

What the RCN can offer

The forum also has challenges to engage with on your behalf. The RCN has a new strategic plan, there is now a new nursing department and we are involved in a consultation on the RCN's professional membership management structure and rationalisation of forums. There has been some controversy about how many forums you will be able to join, but we are assured that this will remain multiple. You can keep up to date with all the changes and consultations on the RCN website.

School nurses remain high on the agenda and vital as part of the multi-agency team to deliver

the Government's targets for children in the five outcomes of *Every child matters* and the equivalents in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Our numbers are small nationally, compared with some other disciplines and it is this steering group's challenge and privilege to represent you on as many national professional groups as possible to maintain that high standing. I hope being an RCN School Nurses Forum member supports you in all your challenges!

Conference

In August we held another national conference that was well attended and evaluated very well on the day – full evaluation from attendees will be published on our online community, plus speakers' presentations. Our next conference will be on 14 March 2009 at RCN HQ Cavendish Square, London, but we would welcome your comments on holding a conference outside London in 2010 – Birmingham has been suggested.

PS: Ask your colleagues if they receive this newsletter – if they don't, then they are not in this forum, and can join by ringing RCN Direct on 0845 772 6100 or via the website, www.rcn.org.uk. Watch out for the School Nurse Toolkit that will be launched soon on the website.

Letter from the Editor: Barbara Richardson-Todd

I'm sure we are all well and truly involved in the HPV programme at the moment – let me know how you are all doing. We cannot forget the National Child Measurement Programme either, so our teams are exceptionally busy.

A great result

I would like to share some good news: following a document I wrote last summer as well as a great deal of haranguing senior managers, the school nurses in my area have been allocated three quarters of a million pounds which will

ensure one full-time year-round band 6 (or equivalent) for every cluster. We are delighted and now need to push for more nurses to gain the specialist community public health nurse (SCPHN) qualification in school nursing. Perhaps the tide has now turned for school nurses and we are getting the recognition and resources that are needed for us to do our jobs.

Do share your news, good or bad, with the rest of us. My email is barbara.rt@virgin.net – please check out our new online community for school nursing: www.rcn.org.uk/schoolnurses

Conference place winner – outreach in Guernsey

The winning entry for the free conference place goes to Christine Jewell, of St. Peter Port, Guernsey, who writes about the Guernsey School Nursing Service's new nursing unit for excluded and school-refusing students.

Increasing nurse availability

Until 2006, the Guernsey School Nursing Service ran a weekly drop-in at the Education Centre for Excluded and School-refusing Students. Concern was raised that these students could fall through the school nursing net, resulting in serious health issues being missed. This client group frequently engage in un-monitored, risk-taking behaviours, and health care is often not a priority.

It was decided to base a school nurse in the unit for several sessions weekly, allowing the chance of opportunistic encounters and an ad-hoc health advice. The Education Department, when approached with the plan, offered to fund a nurse for 15 hours weekly.

A fine welcome ...

The teaching team within the unit were welcoming, providing a room for the nurse. There were no funds available to decorate or equip the room; the nurse approached various local firms and received several generous donations. The room was decorated to create a relaxing, non-medical environment; tactile fabrics and artefacts were added to allow students the opportunity to 'play' and not be in trouble!

The school nurse gained an NVQ in hand massage and was allowed to offer this therapy to students, following written consent from parents/carers. Heart Math, a computer-based relaxation programme, was also learnt by the nurse and offered as another therapy.

How it works

The nurse shares the tutors' timetable and is allocated set sessions with the students. The timetable is flexible due to the nature of the clientele; some students may not attend their sessions; spare time can be optimised to see others, talk to tutors or update notes.

Each student is seen for an 'MOT' when they first join the unit. This deceptively simple medical checklist is completed using a conversational approach. Students are assured confidentiality unless their personal safety is at risk. Frequently, risk-taking behaviours are discussed and at this point subtle, keeping-safe work can begin.

The nurse works closely with the personal, social and health education (PSHE) co-ordinator and plans teaching sessions aimed at specific health topics. External agencies have been invited to the unit; family planning, smoking cessation and drug concern workers have proved invaluable.

Using alternative methods

Not all students are easy to engage; the nurse will frequently wander into a class and work obliquely by discussing issues with the tutor who then draws the student into the conversation. Many fruitful interactions have occurred in the reception area or sitting on the stairs alongside students. By attending at least one staff briefing weekly, the nurse is updated with the tutors' concerns. If a student needs extra time with the nurse, this will be timetabled into her schedule.

Continued success

This multi-agency initiative is proving effective and is still developing. A staff nurse has been employed to share some of the caseload and has also been trained in hand massage. The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service is keen to work in the unit and plan a regular drop-in.

Perhaps most significantly, the nurse's room has never been damaged despite its many disruptive clients.

Congratulations to Christine!

Conference competition 2009

Would you like to win a free place at next year's forum conference? Simply write a short article up to 500 words for this newsletter or our online community (www.rcn.org.uk/schoolnurses), showing how you or your team has improved school nursing practice and produced better outcomes for children, young people and their families. You must be an RCN member, and please include your name, membership number, address, work title, place of work and email address. Please send to Barbara Richardson-Todd, at email: Barbara.rt@virgin.net, before 31 March 2009.

Bookshine and Booktouch

The Bookstart range now includes Booktouch, a pack for children who are blind or partially sighted, and the brand new Bookshine pack, specifically designed to suit deaf children's needs. Any deaf or blind child under five years of age is eligible, and can receive their free Bookshine or Booktouch pack in addition to the existing Bookstart packs. Each pack contains two high-quality books, together with advice, booklists and resources specific to the relevant audience. Visit www.bookstart.org.uk for further details.

Parent Know How

Information on helplines and websites where parents can access help – www.dcsf.gov.uk/parentknowhow/services.shtml

Pre-conception screening for sickle cell and thalassaemia

Screening importance grows

Once the preserve of a few inner-city specialists, sickle cell and thalassaemia are increasingly mainstream issues for the NHS. With newborn screening now well established and antenatal screening expected to be available throughout England later this year, the NHS Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia Screening Programme is already onto the next challenge: can we screen for these diseases effectively before conception?

Obviously, early knowledge of carrier

status puts couples in a far stronger position to understand the risk of passing a disease to their baby without the pressure of making difficult choices as a pregnancy develops.

Conference planned

On 4 and 5 November 2008, the NHS Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia Screening Programme will be hosting a conference in Greenwich, London for national and international experts to explore the options for pre-conception screening in the UK. Through two days of

intensive workshops and discussions, the programme will be seeking to identify and develop sensible policy recommendations on how and when it could be most effective to screen pre-conceptually for genetic disorders. The conference will specifically consider how we could provide information and screening in schools – drawing on evidence from innovative projects in Australia. It will also look at other settings such as primary care, pharmacies and sexual health clinics.

The programme is very keen to get input on these issues from nurses. If you have an example of best practice work you have already undertaken, would like to find out more or attend the conference, please contact the team at email: haemscreening@kcl.ac.uk

Contemporary Community Children's Nursing:

Developments in service delivery for the child with health needs

- **Thursday, 12 March 2009**
- **RCN headquarters, 20 Cavendish Square, London, W1G 0RN**

With every twist and turn, the NHS seems to throw out a new challenge for the community children's nursing (CCN) workforce. The RCN CCN Forum Conference 2009 will provide an opportunity for delegates to hear about and share experiences of how a number of those challenges are being met across the UK.

Speakers will discuss the challenges of discharging children with complex technology dependence from children's and neonatal intensive care unit settings directly into the community, as well as the development of nurse-led minor injury and minor illness services. Delegates will have the opportunity to examine innovative approaches to meeting the educational needs of CCNs and also to consider the challenges presented by the need for a multi-skilled/multi agency children's workforce.

Healthy weight, healthy lives update

An update on progress since the publication of the Government's obesity strategy, *Healthy weight, healthy lives: a cross-government strategy for England* earlier this year. It includes progress towards the ambition of enabling everyone in society to maintain a healthy weight. The Government is inviting all parts of society to join a national movement called Change4Life to help people maintain a healthy weight by helping parents make healthier food choices for their children and encouraging more activity. It will work in collaboration with other government departments, the NHS, schools, voluntary groups, and commercial and media partners. The newsletter can be found at www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_086464

Adolescence: boundaries and connections

This new RCN guide is available to download only from the RCN website at: www.rcn.org.uk/publications. An RCN survey highlighted the need for person-centred, adolescent care and has resulted in this useful and insightful resource for practitioners. The guide aims to support the care of young people as they move into the adult world. It includes practical tips that nurses can use in their daily work and addresses issues such as adolescent development, confidentiality, consent and local resources. It also includes comments from young people.

Let's grow with Nisha and Joe

This new comic from the Family Planning Association (fpa) enables teachers to gently introduce 6–7 year olds to the concepts of growth and physical change. It also helps children to develop confidence and to listen and think about feelings and relationships with friends and family. It comes with teachers' guidance notes, meets curriculum guidance for Key Stage 1 and is priced at £15 for 50 (including one copy of teachers' guidance notes). Available at: www.fpa.org.uk/information/detail.cfm?contentid=120

Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC)

Transforming Services Conference to be held 15 May 2009. Presentations are available on: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00330

Seeing the bigger picture

The Big Picture is a Booktrust campaign to put picture books in the public eye. In 2008 Booktrust selected 10 Best New Illustrators as part of the campaign. This new generation of talented illustrators is bringing a fresh and vibrant approach to picture books. Visit www.bigpicture.org.uk to find out more.

Expert epilepsy information

This new service by the National Centre for Young People with Epilepsy provides an expert source of information and education about childhood epilepsy, including: an enquiry service, study days for health care and educational professionals and quality information from accredited sources. For further information, telephone: 01342 831342, email: enquiry@ncype.org.uk, or visit: www.ncype.org.uk/information

Drug prevention

The Mentor UK Youth Involvement Project Report is now available online at www.mentorfoundation.org/uploads/UK_YIP_Final_Report.pdf. This report summarises the work done by Mentor UK to actively engage young people in drug prevention policy development.

Teenage pregnancy

The Teenage Pregnancy Independent Advisory Group has published its fifth annual report. Whilst acknowledging the significant reduction in teenage pregnancy rates nationally, it warns against complacency and outlines a series of new and re-stated recommendations which it urges the Government and its partners to take forward. For further information, visit: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/_files/TPIAG%20Annual%20Report%202007-8.pdf

Independent School Nurses news

Conference success

The RCN Independent School Nurses Annual Conference and Exhibition held at Thistle Marble Arch Hotel, London on 28 August 2008 was a huge success.

John Hubbard from the Department of Children, Schools and Families gave the keynote address, reminding us about children's health policy to improve outcomes for children. Look out for the Children's Strategy, which should be published soon. Next up was Nikki Hale from Skills for Health who described how competencies can be used to ensure a safe workforce and to develop staff. Anybody can access the National Occupational Standards on the website www.skillsforhealth.org.uk

HIV and school-age children

Jason Warriner gave us an insight into the burden some young people carry around with them every day. Jason (who some of you may know as chair of Congress) is matron for sexual health and HIV at Guys and St Thomas's. There are approximately 1,200 children and young people (0-19 years) living with HIV in UK and following treatment, the majority reach teenage years and adulthood. Jason highlighted some

cases where schools' responses after a disclosure of a child's HIV status was inappropriate. Jason said: "HIV doesn't discriminate, so why should we?"

Well-received workshops

The four workshops were very well received by delegates and covered a new resource for personal, social and health education (PSHE), managing attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and endometriosis. The fourth workshop was facilitated by Ross Gillanders, a community psychiatric nurse. Ross gave an insight into using cognitive behaviour therapy with children through humour, working models and case histories. For further information, visit: www.babcp.co.uk

High times ...

Bob Tait from Drugs Education (DRED) UK finished the day with a fantastic update on new trends in drugs, changes in legislation, and poly drug use. Ever heard of 'legal highs'? They are hallucinogenic, mind-altering drugs that produce euphoria but which don't have any laws against using them. One such drug is a member of the sage family called salvia divinorum. It made many of us realise we don't know enough about this subject to offer support to young people.

Forum Chair Sarah Day finished with a summing up of an inspiring day, with a reminder to join us for the next conference on 14 March 2009 and again in August 2009.

Living with autism

- Is your partner on the autistic spectrum?
- Are you having problems communicating or understanding their behaviour?
- Are you feeling confused or isolated?

A self-help support group for adults trying to understand the challenges of their autistic spectrum/non-spectrum relationship has been set up. Find out more on: www.whyydoesmypartner.co.uk



This newsletter is published by the Royal College of Nursing, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN.

Tel: 0845 772 6100 Website: www.rcn.org.uk

For details of forthcoming **RCN EVENTS** go to www.rcn.org.uk/events

The RCN represents nurses and nursing, promotes excellence in practice and shapes health policies