

Leaders in London

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Welcome

With spring arriving it seems a good time for the RCN and its partner unions in NHS Together to reiterate its defence of the NHS and its staff. On March 3rd NHS Together will be holding a national day of action with events taking place across the country. Here in London the coalition will be holding a rally at Friends Meeting House (full details below) with speakers from all the lead unions including our own Head of Employment Relations Josie Irwin.

London has seen massive changes over the last year due to deficits and reconfiguration and the day of action is our way of showing the government that NHS staff should not shoulder the burden of change.

The first three months of 2007 have been a busy one for RCN London. Right at the start of January we had two successful board development days where new members worked with current ones on the future progress of the board. 2006 was a positive year for the London Board and by starting with these training and development days 2007 should be even better.

We have also been very busy politically this year and I have enjoyed seeing the RCN engaging with MPs on local issues. One result of the deficits issue is that from Brent to Whipps Cross, we have seen a large number of local campaigns that have galvanised local activists and brought MPs and local authorities into contact with the concerns of nurses. RCN London has successfully briefed MPs ahead of debates in parliament on Epsom and St Helier, Whipps and South London and Maudsley and we continue to speak to other

change makers in the capital.

'Change makers' also happens to be the title of this years annual RCN Congress in Harrogate in April and the London Region will be hosting two events, I hope to see you there.

Finally I would like to offer my congratulations to the London nurses who were Finalists in the 'Nurse2007' Nursing Standard Awards. Details of Finalists are in Nursing Standard Volume 21, No 25 (28 February - 6 March).



Bernard Bunne

Don't forget...

...Congress 2007!

This year we return to Harrogate, 15 - 19 April at the Harrogate International Centre.

The theme is 'Changemakers - Nursing in the new health age'

RCN London will be holding our annual **Welcome Event** on the Sunday evening - at the Holiday Inn which is adjacent to the conference centre (previously known as The Moathouse). 2007 sees the bicentennial of the abolition of slavery, and this will be our theme for the evening. There will be a poster display of heroes and fighters in the abolition movement, and hot food - as well our annual Merit Awards.

Please join us - we would love to see you there!

Rally round - all Together for the NHS!!

3 March will see NHS Together's National Day of Action with a large number of events taking place across the country to raise the alarm at what is happening in the NHS today, and to show support and unity amongst NHS employees.

NHS Together is a landmark coalition between 16 health organisations, taking in unions affiliated to the TUC, such as Unison and, most significantly, non-affiliated ones like RCN, RCM and the BMA. It is a testament to the strength of feeling about the NHS that this coalition is working so well.



3 March 2007 1.30 - 3.30
Friends Meeting House
173 Euston Road
London
NW1 2BJ

Rally with your colleagues to protect the NHS!
Speakers from RCN, RCM, Amicus and Unison.

Here in London we urge you to come to the rally being organised by the London NHS Together partnership (see box).

London has its own particular healthcare problems, and the work that NHS Together is undertaking in the capital reflects this.

Thanks to the already strong links between health unions prior to the campaign, which have been formed in our Full Time Officers and Partnership Forums, London NHS Together, facilitated by South East Region Trade Unions Congress, has begun to look at 'smart' campaigning.

Already we are beginning to look at some of the unique solutions which could answer London's particular

problems, caused by sheer size of population and the transient nature of much of those seeking healthcare.

The Day of Action is only the start of the work, and we urge you to come and join us.

We plan to use the future work of the coalition to promote nurse leadership as an essential part of the London's healthcare future.

News in Brief

Nurses prepared to take industrial action over proposed pay cut

Nearly two-thirds of nurses would be willing to take industrial action if they receive an unsatisfactory pay deal this year. In an independent poll commissioned by the RCN, sixty-two percent of nurses said they would be willing to take some form of industrial action, such as refusing to work unpaid overtime, taking on extra work or going on strike, provided patients did not suffer in the process.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council reviews its Code of Conduct

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) is currently reviewing its Code of Conduct, due to feedback that it no longer meets registrants' requirements and that nurses and midwives are increasingly faced with situations that challenge their accountability to the Code.

As part of its review process, the NMC is inviting registrants and others to read the new draft Code of Conduct and provide feedback.

The revised Code and the online questionnaire are now available on the [NMC website](#).

What web-based information do you need at the point of care?

The RCN and NHS Connecting for Health are running a project to assess the need for web-based information at the point of care or place of work.

The project aims to build on the many surveys and research papers that

already exist about nursing and midwifery needs for knowledge, which have highlighted the need for online information to be made available at the point of care or place of work.

As part of the project, the RCN has launched an online survey, which will run until March 2007, to poll as many nursing and midwifery professionals as possible, to ensure that it has a solid view of their needs.

The results will be analysed in March 2007 and the findings will be published online from April 2007.

The survey will take roughly 10 minutes to complete - to take part in the survey go to <http://www.rcn.org.uk/surveys/fillsurvey.php?sid=53>

Minister's report on shadowing NHS nurses says staff need help to negotiate change

Health minister Andy Burnham's report on his time spent with NHS staff concludes that they need more support and more involvement in the process of NHS reforms.

The report, [Days out in the NHS: listening to NHS staff](#), charts the minister's seven days spent with NHS staff in 2006, to find out what it is like to work on the NHS frontline. The minister spent time with seven key NHS workers, including an emergency response paramedic, an A&E nurse, a community practice nurse, and a GP.

It offers conclusions that, it is suggested, will help "inform thinking" within the DH. These are:

Staff members are motivated by what the NHS stands for, and have a strong sense of commitment to its values and principles and to helping others.

If left unchecked, rising public

expectations could place staff under increasing pressure and represent a growing threat to a service free at the point of use.

Staff are not opposed to changes in the way services are delivered, but want more explanation at an earlier stage and more involvement in their development.

After ten years of major change in the NHS there is a need to reflect on how talk of reform is perceived at the frontline.

Targets and top-down performance management has served a clear purpose, and were right for the time, but as the NHS moves into a different phase the time is coming for a re-assessment of the emphasis on them.

In a letter to the Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt, Andy Burnham, described his experience as "both reassuring and challenging in equal measure." He states:

"The NHS is changing, but the structures to help staff through changing times have not always kept pace. I hope this report will be the start of a continuing dialogue I hope to have with the NHS about how staff can be better supported through change and we can all work together to deliver a first class NHS of the future...."

Both the report and the letter are available to download from the DH website.

Andy Burnham's report:

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/14/25/54/04142554.pdf>

Letter to Patricia Hewitt:

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/14/25/56/04142556.pdf>

Board Developments

Each year RCN London's elected Board, the region's governing body, hold training and development days in order to review the previous year's work, plan for the future and consider their own development.

This year the days took on increased importance as they were the first ones for our new Board members, elected last October.

Day One was for the newly elected Board members and was facilitated by Debbie Lee, Director Healthcare Standards International and covered; what is a Board, understanding governments and personal development planning.

Day Two brought the whole board together and covered a range of issues relevant to the board and their roles. Jane Clarke, RCN Governance support manager dealt with governance and setting priorities. Steve Cope, Operational Planning Advisor ran a Risk "taster session" and Alison Telfer,

Development Officer, RCN London Region who was instrumental in designing the programme concluded with sessions on communication and moving the board agenda forward. Comments from Board members and staff who attended were in the main positive and they found that the days helped them to start building working relationships with one another and with staff and to consider how they will take forward the London board agenda in the coming months.



New look for the Policy Unit on the web!

A newly revamped policy and consultations section is now available online, offering Policy Unit Briefings, details of consultation documents that the RCN has been asked to respond to and an opportunity for members to contribute to the development of health and social care policy through the Policy Discussion Zone.

The section, along with offering a more user-friendly design and navigation, details the work of the unit, along with contacts for team members, and sources of further reading.

Two new Policy Unit briefings for 2007 are available. The first is an update on the developments in Foundation Trusts and the second is a discussion document on NHS Reforms.

User feedback is vital

Commenting on the new section, Head of the Policy Unit, Howard Catton said: "There is a huge amount of health and social care policy which has a direct or indirect effect on nurses and nursing. And it is now more important than ever for members to have the opportunity to contribute to policy development, which

they can do by accessing the information on the Policy Unit section and sending us their feedback/views."

Spring 2007

This season, the Policy Unit is talking Foundation Trust Developments, NHS reforms and Social Enterprise updates.

Mergers, Markets and Monitor: An update on NHS Foundation Trusts developments

As the numbers of NHS Foundation Trusts passes 50, this update considers the implications of financial failure, trust mergers and the potential for takeovers of and by NHS Foundation Trusts in an increasingly plural healthcare economy.

Go to http://www2.rcn.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/24024/mergers_markets_and_monitor.pdf

NHS Reforms, Que Sera? Whatever will be, will be...

This report takes the form of discussion document and gives opportunity for RCN

members to consider and respond to a range of questions relating to the future design and functions of the NHS, based upon a vision for the NHS of the future which was presented by the Secretary of State for Health in England, in September 2006. This item will remain "live" for members to discuss until 31 March 2007.

Find more details at http://www2.rcn.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/24025/nhsreforms.pdf

Social Enterprise Update

This second Policy Unit briefing on Social Enterprise reviews the announcement made by the Department of Health of 25 "Pathfinder" Social Enterprises in the provision of health and social care and identifies the priorities which the RCN believes must be addressed if the Social Enterprise model is to form a meaningful part of the government's commitment to increasing the plurality of providers in health and social care.

More information at http://www2.rcn.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/28114/03-07_social_enterprise_update.pdf

Capital Politics



The first few months of the year has seen the capital's politicians concentrating hard on local health issues. One of the most useful tools available to backbench and opposition MPs is the calling of an 'adjournment' debate.

These debates are slotted at the beginning or the end of the daily parliamentary agenda, and allow for MPs to speak on a local matter on the national stage. A minister must be present at these debates to answer any questions on behalf of the government.

In January Sutton and Cheam MP Paul Burstow secured a debate in the house on Epsom and St Helier (full text can be found here <http://tinyurl.com/2knwvr>). Later in the month Harry Cohen was joined by Iain Duncan Smith and other MPs to debate Health Services in

North East London, in particular Whipps and the current review of services (<http://tinyurl.com/34gfke>)

In February Simon Hughes was joined by some high ranking government MPs to debate the closure of the emergency unit at South London and the Maudsley (<http://tinyurl.com/35s5xv>), he mentioned the RCN in his opening remarks and said that he would put our concerns around SLAM to the secretary of state for health who was not present at the debate.

RCN has also been working closely with Bexley MP John Austin who has met with Patricia Hewitt after several members in the area raised concerns over the reconfiguration at Bexley PCT. John Austin is also facilitating a meeting between local nurses and the Health Select Committee Chair Kevin Barron MP.



Over at the GLA the RCN continues to work closely with the Health and Public Services Committee who have recently announced their work programme for 2007/08 (<http://tinyurl.com/yv4unf>).

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Dates for your diary

RCN Events and happenings around the Region

3 March - NHS Together rally 1.30 - 3.30, Friends Meeting House

173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ

The London Board meets on 8 March at 4pm at RCN HQ in Cavendish Square. There is an open space forum for guests to address the Board. Please feel free to come along and observe. Tea and coffee provided.

RCN CONGRESS - Join the debate!
'Changemakers - Nursing in the new health age'
Harrogate International Conference Centre,
Harrogate 15 - 19 April 2007

Pay Campaign 2007

The NHS trade unions have asked the Review Body for Nursing and Other Health Professions (NOHPRB) to take the issues of "low morale", "huge hikes in the cost of everyday living", and the "current chaotic state of the NHS" into account when making its recommendation about nurses' pay this year.

In addition, the RCN has asked the Review Body to award a "significantly above inflation uplift in pay" and related allowances to help restore nurses' morale.

What the other parties want

NHS Employers, which represents NHS organisations, has said in its evidence to the Review Body that next year's pay award for nurses, doctors, dentists, and other health care staff should not exceed the Government's inflation target.

The target is currently 2 per cent.

The Department of Health wants nurses and other health professionals to receive a pay rise of just 1.5 per cent next year -

less than half the current rate of RPI inflation. It claims a higher award will lead to further job losses and cutbacks in care.

The RCN believes the Government is attempting to blackmail nurses and their colleagues into accepting a pay award of this size. By the Government's own admission, only a minority of NHS organisations are in deficit.

Nurses deserve a fair and decent pay award based on the economic reality of the day. The reality is that prices are rising and nurses cannot afford to live or support their families with an award that is below the level of inflation.

Inflation

The Retail Price Index (RPI), one of the measures of inflation, rose to 4.4 per cent in December 2006 (Office of National Statistics) - the highest since December 1991.

RPI is seen as a more accurate reflection of price rises because, unlike the Consumer Price Index (CPI), it includes housing costs such as mortgage interest payments and council tax.

Economic experts predict prices will rise even further in the months ahead.

What the Review Body looks at:

When making a recommendation about pay, the Review Body considers the:

need to recruit, retain and motivate suitably able and qualified staff

regional/local variations in labour markets and their effects on the recruitment and retention of staff

government's inflation target (which is currently 2 per cent)

UK health departments output targets for the delivery of services

funds available to the UK health departments as set out in the Government's Departmental Expenditure Limits

Members can now download a new Pay Mythbuster which can be found at http://www2.rcn.org.uk/_data/assets/word_doc/27317/pay_2007_mythbuster_fn.doc.

It explains why nurses deserve pay justice next year not a pay cut. The document also counters the many arguments put forward by the Government and NHS employers who believe nurses should only receive 1.5 per cent next year.