

Contents

- 2 RCN General Secretary meet
OH representatives
Warwick Medical School
undertakes training at Antrim
Sign up for e-SOHN Alert!
- 3 So you'd like to be an
independent occupational
health practitioner? Karen
Coomer has the tee-shirt!
- 4 Migration via portfolio to the
SCPHN part of the Register
- 4-5 Roundup of regional and local
groups
- 6 RCN to develop online
communities: But do we have
your current email address?
Collaboration: the way
forward for OH – see you in
Cardiff!
- 7 PROFILE: Meet Beverley
Willie, RCN National Forum
Organiser
More info equals less
“sickies”

Further information

Anything to add?

The next issue of e-SOHN will go online in December 2007. Send contributions as email attachments by Friday, 23 November to bashyr@wlv.ac.uk

National Director spells out the new health, work and well-being strategy

If you were at the RCN annual conference back in November 2006, you will remember the inspiring presentation by Professor Dame Carol Black, who had recently been appointed as National Director for Health and Work. Since that time, Dame Carol has been to the RCN for a frank and informal meeting with the our occupational health advisers and the SOHN Committee.

The *Health, work and well-being strategy* has forged a new, strong partnership between the Department for Work and Pensions, the Department of Health and the Health & Safety Executive. It aims to bridge historical demarcations of occupational health, public health, and the health and health care of individuals. It also seeks to link differing preoccupations and priorities of diverse stakeholders.

Aims of the strategy

An overarching conviction is of the importance of work to personal and family well-being, and to dignity, self esteem and purpose. It recognises the essential social function of work, and more – the



Professor Dame Carol Black is the new National Director for Health and Work

compatibility of work with disability, and living and working with chronic disease and long term conditions.

The strategy emphasises the need for people in different domains and agencies to work together to improve health, to reduce work-related ill health and to support those wanting to return to work.

More information is available at the *Health, work and well-being website* at www.health-and-work.gov.uk

Take the strain out of stress

While almost eight out of 10 people admit that they were stressed in the last year, just 15 per cent would seek help from their occupational health department, says research commissioned by health education charity, Developing Patient Partnerships (DPP).

“Yet occupational health

departments are often an excellent source of support to employees, helping them to understand what stress is and the positive steps they can take to reduce its effects,” says a DPP spokesperson.

Stress can be the trigger for other mental health problems such as

depression and anxiety. To help occupational health departments provide their clients with good quality advice, DPP has produced an information booklet, *Dealing with stress*, which helps people recognise, prevent and manage it.

Find out more at:
www.dpp.org.uk
or call: 020 7383 6824.

RCN General Secretary meet OH representatives

Committee members from RCN-affiliated regional and local groups were invited to RCN headquarters in London on 18 July to meet Dr Peter Carter, General Secretary, along with members of the SOHN Steering Committee.

There were representatives from 10 local and regional groups. Also present were chairs of two national groups: the Association of NHS Occupational Health Nurses (ANHONS) and the RCN Occupational Health Managers' Forum (OHMF).

The meeting was aimed at seeking out ways to improve communications and collaborative working between the RCN and occupational health nurses around the country.

Dr Carter, who had recently completed



his first six months as General Secretary, gave an inspiring and motivating presentation in which he agreed that we have to enhance the connectivity with nurses to reinforce the fact that the RCN belongs to its members.

The group representatives gave short presentations about their activities and

some of the exciting occupational health projects taking place around the country – activities that do not always gain the publicity they deserve.

There was also a presentation by Sharon Horan about the role of an RCN Professional Nursing Development (PND) Adviser, followed by Jane Ingham and Graham Johnson, SOHN Committee members, who spoke about the role and remit of the RCN Society of Occupational Health Nursing.

The meeting ended with the SOHN Committee agreeing with the regional and local officers a number of strategies aimed at promoting improvements in communications and exchange of information. The new online community (see page six) will go a long way towards helping these aims to be achieved.

At the end of last year the Department of Health and Personal Social Services commissioned training for occupational health nurse practitioners on managing sickness and rehabilitation. This was provided to 42 practitioners from across Northern Ireland by the University of Warwick, with operational aspects of the course managed by Educare.

The main focus of the training, which received very positive feedback from delegates, was the importance of early intervention when a member of staff reports sick for work. Modern approaches to rehabilitation were discussed and strategies to implement them considered.

University of Warwick Medical School undertakes training at Antrim



Lecturers from the University of Warwick included (from left) Cynthia Atwell, Dr Rick Norris, Caroline Whittaker and Gail Cotton, being welcomed to Antrim by Kev O'Connor, Occupational Health Manager. Also taking part in the two day event, but not shown in the photograph were Dr Graham Brown and Dr Barbara Kneele

Sign up for e-SOHN Alert!

Would you like to receive an email to give you a nudge when the next issue of e-SOHN goes online? All you need to do is to send an email to bashyr@wlv.ac.uk with "e-SOHN Alert" as subject.

You say you want to leave Megacorporate World Ltd and go it alone – if not now, then at least “some day”? If this is you, read on ...KAREN COOMER has some realistic advice and useful tips on setting up your own business.

So you'd like to be an independent occupational health practitioner ...?

Before you start ask yourself ...

What sort of business are you going to be?

Are you an entrepreneur who has a vision to have an occupational health company which is about building a business? Or do you want to stay small and independent, hired for your skills and competence and perhaps working for the entrepreneur? Or do you want to be both?

What are you selling?

From the outset, you should have an idea of what your product is going to be and research the market. Are you going to offer everything in the land of occupational health or just a few services?

Are you competent?

It's a question that you need to be very honest about. Any consultancy is about selling your knowledge ... will you be trading on a course or skills you did 20 years ago or are you up to date and competent to deliver the services you say you can? It is very easy to operate as Big Job Title for Megacorporate World Ltd. After all, you have the credibility and resources of the company you work for behind you so it is assumed you are competent. It's less easy to appear confident about yourself and your business – which nobody has ever heard of – if you have doubts about your competency.

Can you cope with uncertainty?

Self employment is all about not knowing what is coming next! Do you find this exciting or do you find it very daunting? It is also about feast or famine. Some months the diary will be very full (good for the bank balance!) and other months it will be very quiet (not so good!). Have you the self belief, confidence and bank balance to ride out the quiet times?

Are you multi skilled?

Chances are you will not have admin, IT, marketing and accountancy departments when you start so you will need to do everything and look very professional at the same time. Along with your proven area of competence, you will need to look at what you can do yourself and what you need to buy in (or borrow, calling on the services of spouse, children, friends etc).

Okay. You know what you are going to sell, feel very competent and have the necessary resources. What then ...?

You need to get the work! This is where all the business skills you gleaned from Megacorporate World Ltd come into play.

★ ★ ★ ★ TOP TIPS FOR PROMOTING YOURSELF AND YOUR BUSINESS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ MARKETING

Think about the four Ps (product, pricing, place and promotion).

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ COMPANY IMAGE

Depending on what kind of business you want to be, it is worth investing in good quality stationary, business cards and a good website (more important than a brochure) in order to be taken seriously.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ HOW DO YOU WANT TO PROMOTE YOURSELF / YOUR BUSINESS?

First of all, be prepared to spend at least 20 per cent of your time promoting yourself, but how you do it comes down to personal preference. I like to go to networking events and chat to people face-to-face, aiming to develop relationships rather than go for the hard sell. It has worked so far for me. The whole aspect of networking deserves more than a brief few lines so maybe that's another article ...

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ OTHER METHODS

You could write to companies (zilch response when I did it), advertise (expensive and only worth it if your ad appears regularly), use Internet promotion (definitely worth it as most companies will use search engines or yell.com), try cold calling (I hate it when it's done to me so haven't gone there) and public relations which involves having a story/research to tell and getting it published (like I'm doing now).

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ Great! Your diary is full and you're working hard. Now what?

- Remember to take a holiday.
- Remember to continue to market yourself.
- And don't forget to enjoy the freedom of working for yourself.

After all, these are the reasons why you did it in the first place!

Migration via portfolio to the Specialist Community Public Health part of NMC Register

Registration onto the Specialist Community Public Health Nursing (SCPHN) part of the Nursing and Midwifery Council Register has been taking place in phases. Owing to their qualification, health visitors were automatically registered when the Register opened. School nurses, occupational health nurses and family health nurses in Scotland migrated shortly afterwards, in recognition of their recorded qualification.

However, there remain two further groups eligible to migrate:

Group 1

This includes school and OH nurses working at a specialist level in public health nursing who did not record their qualification. They now have the chance to apply for registration onto the SCPHN part of the Register.

Group 2

This covers nurses working in specialist community public health nursing who hold a qualification that is equivalent to or above level 3 (degree) in public health, including those nurses currently registered on the United Kingdom Voluntary Public Health Register (UKVPHR). Those who have not met the criteria to date will be considered if they present a portfolio of evidence demonstrating that they meet the NMC standards of proficiency for specialist community public health nursing practice. Higher education institutions (universities) will consider the evidence in the portfolios.

Nurses and midwives are advised to contact the university of their choice before applying to discuss their individual position. (A list of participating universities is available

on the website at www.nmc-uk.org) On application you must submit all of your evidence at the same time as the application pack.

The Application Pack and Information will provide you with detail as to what is required and what evidence should be submitted in addition to the evidence of your practice and academic study at degree level or above. You will be asked for a reference to support your good health and good character to enable registration to take place.

Finally, you will be asked for a testimonial from someone on the SCPHN part of the Register to confirm you are using SCPHN proficiencies in your practice. The person signing your testimonial is accountable for verifying you are suitable for registration as a specialist community public health nurse.

Migration via portfolio does **not** lead to an academic award – it just means you are entitled to call yourself a registered specialist community public health nurse. In order to achieve the award you will need to undertake a programme of preparation for SCPHN. You may be allowed exemption from up to a third of any programme through the accreditation of previous experience or study (APEL).

Full details of what should be submitted and the application packs are available on the NMC website at www.nmc-uk.org

The portfolio route will only be available until **December 2008**.

For information about courses leading to SCPHN, visit the Association of Occupational Health Nurse Educators website at www.aohne.org.uk

ROUNDUP OF REGIONAL AND LOCAL GROUPS

Scotland Group

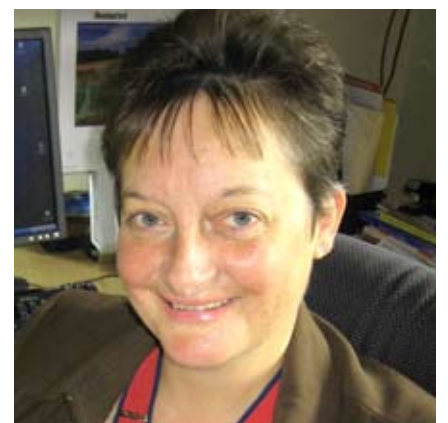
Maureen (Mo) McBain took over as Chair of the Scotland Group at the last annual RCN SOHN Forum Conference in Dundee.

Mo has a background in children's, adult and accident & emergency nursing. She has worked in both the private and public sectors in Scotland and England as well as overseas in Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

Her specialist area of work is occupational health nursing in which she has 12 years' experience as a practitioner and senior nurse. She has worked in a number of different settings including the Channel Tunnel project, the oil industry and the paper industry.

She is currently employed as a research assistant in the School of Nursing and Midwifery at Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen. She held a key role in a small research team there which provided the first demographic and professional picture of where occupational health nurses were in Scotland, what they did in their everyday practice and what they perceived their future educational requirements to be (West et al, 2001).

The Scotland Group has an annual conference which is always well attended and they are frequently called upon to respond to consultations by bodies such as the Scottish Executive Health Department and the Health & Safety Executive. The group also administers the Mair Scholarship, which enables occupational health nurses to develop practice in their particular areas of interest.



ROUNDUP OF REGIONAL AND LOCAL GROUPS

RCN West London Occupational Health Group

The West London Occupational Health Group was fortunate enough to be invited to hold its meeting at the new Wembley Stadium on 24 July 2007. Thanks to Margaret Bailey, Treasurer of the group, who also is occupational health adviser for the stadium, members were invited along for a very interesting meeting which had them enjoying a full tour of the stadium together with a talk about the impact of noise at stadium events.

Group members were taken around the complex, exploring parts of the stadium not usually seen by the general public. They then met in one of the private boxes for afternoon tea, sponsored by Gina D'almeida of Medirite.



This was followed by a talk by Jim Griffiths who has over 25 years' experience in all technical aspects related to sound, acoustics, noise and vibration.

The West London Group is trying to be an innovative occupational health organisation and give its members something different. Membership is on



the increase and organising events like this shows the benefits of belonging to local group.

Southwest Group

Last May, the Occupational Health Nursing Group-South West hosted an enormously successful two day conference in Cornwall which incorporated visits to both the Eden Project and Imerys (English China Clay).

Both companies provide a variety of challenges in safe system management and OH assessment work for their health and safety personnel. Delegates profited from a unique insight into the work of these practitioners as well as creative partnership working with other staff and public health officials.

The innovative programme also included informative talks by Dr



Paul Yarnley and Dr Steve Karmy on the practical aspects of hand-arm vibration and audiometry health

surveillance as well as updates on the new UK resuscitation guidance and the latest news from the Health & Safety Inspectorate.

Their next study day is set for October, when the focus will be on strategies for managing workplace stress.

For information about joining the group and future study days, contact Alison Downing on 01579 351241, Di Sherlock on 07973525620 or Joan Fletcher by email at Joan.Fletcher@Ginsters.co.uk

Is your group registered with the RCN?

As the online community develops, there will be pages with contact details and other information relating to regional and local groups OH groups. Make sure your group is registered with the RCN and that your contact details are kept up to date.

We always welcome news items about regional activities – with photographs if possible. Just email your contribution to the Editor at bashyr@wlv.ac.uk

RCN to develop online communities

But do we have your current email address?

The RCN website is to undergo exciting changes over the next three-to-four months. SOHN, along with other RCN forums, will have new, more user-friendly and interactive web pages which will enable the RCN to keep its members abreast of news and guidelines – and more importantly, enable users to conduct online discussions.

From October onwards, occupational health nurses who are members of the RCN will be invited to register their email addresses so they can take advantage of the changeover. If you have already signed up to “e-SOHN Alert”, then you will have a head start in that you will be emailed a web link, enabling you to do this.

As the new online community develops, the SOHN Committee will be very keen to respond to suggestions from its members who, after all, will decide whether or not this is a success. RCN affiliated groups will also be able to set up subgroups for their own members and provide links to their own websites, where these exist.

This means it's about to become more important than ever before for you to keep the RCN informed of any change in your email address. Every time we send out an e-SOHN Alert, up to 10 per cent of messages are returned as being undeliverable because subscribers have changed jobs or moved their email providers without letting us know.

You can make sure the RCN has your current email address in several ways – you can ring RCN Direct on 0845 772 6100 or update your personal profile yourself at www.rcn.org.uk/myrcn

Or, until the system goes live later this year, you can continue to notify us of changes in your email address by sending an email to Bashyr Aziz at bashyr@wlv.ac.uk with “e-SOHN” as subject.



What is your RCN doing for you?

Find out at the RCN Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, Westminster, London
Wednesday 17 October 2007

Register now!

Text AGM2007 followed by your name and membership number to 88020* to book your place today.

*Text messages will be charged at your normal network rate.

Visit www.rcn.org.uk/agm2007 for further information

FREE
for RCN members

RCN EVENTS

The RCN Society of Occupational Health Nursing Forum and Society of Occupational Medicine joint conference and exhibition

Collaboration... the way forward for occupational health

Monday 3 – Tuesday 4 December 2007
City Hall, Cardiff

We are calling for papers that demonstrate how health care professionals working in the field of occupational health (OH), work together with OH services to improve the health of workers, or have reduced the incidence of work related ill health.

Call for papers:

Abstracts are invited for concurrent sessions, workshops and poster presentations on the following themes:

- **Sickness absence management**
- **Mental health**
- **Evidence based well being in the workplace**
- **Rehabilitation/physiotherapy**
- **Managing disability**
- **Work-related ill health**
- **Substance misuse**
- **Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSD)**

For submission guidelines and abstract information, please visit www.rcn.org.uk/events or call 020 7647 3581

Confirmed speakers include:

Rosemary Kennedy

Public Health and Health Professions Department, Welsh Assembly Government

Professor Mansel Aylward CB

UNUM Provident Centre for Psychosocial and Disability Research, University of Cardiff

For more information please contact Priya Tekchandani on 020 7647 3581 or email occupationalhealth@rcn.org.uk.



PROFILE

Beverley Willie

RCN National Forum Organiser

There cannot be many occupational health nurses who have not come into contact with Beverley Willie at some stage in their careers. For many years, she has been the first point of contact for practitioners seeking information about occupational health practice and scholarship – and also about forums and fields of practice.

However, it is not only practitioners who contact Beverley. In fact, she is more likely to get calls from businesses seeking information about the role of occupational health nurses. Often they will be thinking of setting up or buying in a service and they are looking for a job description or pay scales.

With regard to occupational health, Beverley also gets calls from the Department of Health or other organisations looking for occupational health representatives, either to respond to consultation documents or be invited to events.

What many occupational health practitioners do not realise is that looking after SOHN is just a part of Beverley's job. With 76 different forums and 46 network groups, the role of National Forum Organiser has a lot of autonomy and diversity built into it. Beverley is responsible for organising 15 of the forums, but of course she interlinks and collaborates with the other forum organisers at the RCN.

Bev, whose parents came from Jamaica, was brought up in Newham. She enjoys the arts, visiting art galleries and going to



film festivals. However, until a year ago, she didn't have much spare time as she was a main carer for her mother and a 36 year old brother, both of whom died within the last two years.

In March, she will have completed 18 years at the RCN, but her interest in trade union activities and the rights of workers started long before then, when she worked for NUPE (later incorporated into UNISON) at a time of great change.

She has fond memories of coming into contact with Ken Livingston, David Blunkett and Diane Abbott, all active in trade union work and local government before they became prominent Labour politicians. She

has especially fond memories of Tony Banks putting pressure on government to obtain regeneration funds for Newham.

Beverley Willie enjoys her role at the RCN and her contact with occupational health nurses. She has been a member of her present team for the past two years in a capacity she finds very stimulating and enjoyable. Peter Carter is the fourth General Secretary under whom she has served.

Could anything make it better? She wishes that nurses seeking funding for education did not always leave the application until after starting their course, rather than getting it in well before!

Next issue: The role of the RCN Professional Nursing Development Adviser

MORE INFO EQUALS LESS 'SICKIES'

Want to see a decrease in sickness absence? Then provide employees with information about how to manage everyday health problems, such as indigestion and headaches. That's the

advice from health education charity, Developing Patient Partnerships (DPP).

According to independent research based on interviews with more than 1,000

employees,, almost two-thirds agree that if they had more information about managing common ailments they would be less likely to take time off work. And almost half say they would appreciate health

care information provided directly by their employer.

Now DPP has produced a special booklet, *Better health at home and work*. Find out more at: www.dpp.org.uk or call 020 7383 6824.



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

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