



Keeping RCN members up to date with what's going on across the Northern Region

International Nurses' Day 2013

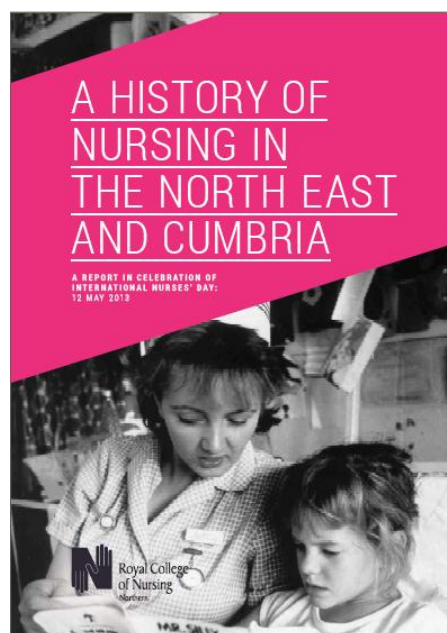
International Nurses' Day takes place this year on Sunday 12 May 2013, and is an opportunity to celebrate all that's best and brightest about the nursing profession, to share experiences and to reflect on all that nurses achieve.

As part of our celebrations for Nurses' Day 2013, the RCN Northern region has produced a warm and frank tribute to local nurses and their history. Our publication, *A History of Nursing in the North East and Cumbria*, chronicles the memories and experiences retired nurses have of working on the frontline of care, from across the region.

Nurses have played a vital role in the development of the NHS and patient care. Our members reflect on the pre-NHS years and the impact of establishing a health care service free for all, the poverty and social changes the region has faced, the rise of new drugs and new technologies, and the challenges facing the nursing profession today. Most importantly, they reflect on patient care, and how people's needs and expectations have changes across the years.

To read *A History of Nursing in the North East and Cumbria*, please [click here](#).

Nationally, the RCN has launched a new website to celebrate this year's Nurses' Day, which features information about events happening locally, as well as patient and nursing stories. You can visit it [here](#).



Focus on: A&E pressures

In his latest column, RCN Northern Regional Director Glenn Turp writes about the pressures faced by those working in Accident and Emergency departments.



The RCN Northern region is concerned that Accident and Emergency (A&E) department pressures are affecting the most vulnerable members of our society, including the elderly, those with mental health needs and the very young.

Patient safety and dignity is being compromised due to the tremendous pressures faced by A&E departments across the region. RCN members are telling us that patients are facing long waits in ambulances and in corridors, and that patients are being treated in inappropriate settings and often being moved or discharged in the early hours of the morning.

Latest figures show that in the week ending 14 April 2013 just three trusts out of nine in this region met the government target of 95% of patients being seen within four hours.

We also know that ambulances have queued outside A&E departments because they were unable to transfer their patients into the department as it was already full. Pressure on A&E has increased as hospitals are unable to discharge patients into the community, meaning there are no spare beds for emergency departments to move patients into. We are also hearing that the chaotic introduction of the new 111 system has resulted in many more patients turning up at hospital.

Overall factors affecting A&E departments include the management of patient flow, seasonal pressures, bed and discharge management, in-patients capacity and the availability of appropriate alternative community services.



We believe that these constant pressures are threatening to drive down standards of care which is not only disastrous for patients but also demoralising for nurses and other hard-working emergency staff, who are doing their best to manage systemic problems beyond their control and influence.

Department of Health figures show that 27,247 patients spent more than four hours in a major A&E department in the week ending 17 March 2013; this is a staggering 14,000 more than in the same week last year.

In England alone A&E attendances are increasing at a rate of over one million a year, from 16,244,934 in 2011 to 17,286,648 in 2012.

If you work in A&E and are experiencing any of the problems described in this column please remember that the RCN is here to support you. If you have a problem at work then please speak to your local workplace representative or get in touch by calling the RCN on 0345 772 6100. You can also get in touch with [Frontline First](#) if you think cuts are impacting on local services.

Are you currently employed by County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust?

You may recently have received correspondence from County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT) regarding the fact that the clinical commissioning groups are proposing to review the scope and nature of CDDFT's community services contract. CDDFT are currently contracted to provide these services until March 2014.



The RCN Northern Region is currently pursuing urgent meetings with the lead Directors of Nursing from both the Provider and Commissioning arms, to ensure that both your, and patients' best interests are represented throughout this process.

You may be aware that two years ago, the RCN Northern Region board took a position statement that made it clear that we believe that NHS vertical integration of community and acute services for trusts in the North East and Cumbria is in the best interests of both patients and staff, because it ensures a seamless and integrated care pathway for patients, and is the most efficient way to deliver accountable services.

The RCN board also took the position that vertical integration should also ensure that

services remain within the NHS family, and are not cherry-picked by a myriad of private providers who may be motivated by profit, not quality.

The board also took the view that there was a serious risk that if community services were further opened up to wholesale privatisation, there would be a risk of services becoming fragmented, resulting in a poorer service to patients, with less information sharing and less sharing of best practices.

There would also be a significant potential risk that, with a greater range of private providers delivering potentially lucrative community contracts, the cost efficient operation of existing NHS providers would be undermined. In terms of employment terms and conditions, we also believe that our members are best served by remaining within the NHS Agenda for Change framework.

We do, however, support the principle of NHS trusts being able to clearly evidence that they are delivering clinical excellence on behalf of their patients.

While it is relatively early in the review process, we wish to provide you with reassurance that the RCN Northern region will continue to work in partnership with you, our members, as well as the broader health stakeholders and the local community, to ensure that the best interests of patients and staff are protected.

In particular, we will continue to hold commissioners and providers to account, and will not hesitate to campaign vigorously to protect the core values of the NHS, its services in the North East and against the backdoor privatisation of community health services.

New NHS 111 helpline calls NHS Direct for backup

RCN Officer Greg Canning writes:

Despite many NHS Direct services being scheduled to 'switch off' in March 2013 as the new 111 service is introduced, a memo from NHS Direct to staff has revealed that a staggering 50% of CCGs in England have requested further assistance from them.

The contents of this memo is extremely concerning, and I fear that the safety and quality of the new 111 service has been compromised in some areas. Over the Easter period, we were shown data across all regions, which detailed the number of calls dropped, and the fact that in some cases, patients were waiting over eight hours to receive a call-back. It's hardly surprising that, in this context, patients are choosing to go straight to A&E, putting additional pressure on a system that is already under strain.

Here in the RCN Northern region, we have been warning for many months that the 111 service is a pale imitation of NHS Direct – it will not be able to provide the same level of expertise or support to the general public, as patients' calls will be taken by mainly non-clinical staff instead of trained nurses.

As well as replacing NHS Direct, regional out-of-hours services are also being handled by a myriad of private local providers under the 111 contract. Again, the quality of this service has been completely unacceptable in some parts of the country, putting other parts of the service under strain. The RCN Northern Region will continue to campaign to demand that the Government addresses these failings in quality.

Meet Greg...

Greg Canning is the RCN Officer for the Northumberland, Tyne & Wear and Cumbria patch.



Greg previously worked as an Interim HR Consultant at the Black Country Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

Janet Davies visits the Northern region



RCN Director of Nursing and Service Delivery, Janet Davies toured the Northern region on 30 April 2013, meeting with nursing staff, health care assistants and RCN representatives. She was accompanied by RCN Northern region Operational Manager Stephanie Dunn.

Janet visited the Nuffield Hospital, South Tyneside NHS District Hospital, and St Oswald's Hospice, touring a number of wards and clinical areas, learning about care provision, and also

discussing key strategic issues with management teams.

Janet said: "Nationally, the NHS is facing some significant challenges currently, both structurally and financially, and during my visit, I enjoyed learning more about how South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust is continuing to deliver patient care in this context. I also gained a better understanding of the Nuffield Hospital's vision for the future of healthcare provision, and how they work in partnership with existing NHS providers in the region."

Janet added: "St Oswald's Hospice historically has had a very special place in the hearts of the people of the North East, providing care to both children and adults with life-limiting conditions. The personal stories of every one of the children and adults who are cared for at the Hospice are

both heart-breaking and inspiring in equal measure. I also very much enjoyed meeting with those nurses, the health care assistants and staff at the Hospice who provide care and learning about the hopes and challenges facing them too."

Operational Manager Estephanie Dunn said: "It was inspiring to meet so many hardworking NHS staff and members with Janet, and to discuss how the changes currently affecting the NHS nationally will impact on care provision here in the Northern region. We were delighted by her visit."

Pictured left – right [previous page]: Angela Egdell (Director of Care), Joanne Nicol (Staff Nurse), Janet Davies, James Ellam (St Oswald's Chief Executive), Carole Irving (Auxiliary Nurse), Heather Walton (Staff Nurse), Jackie Bowan (Auxiliary Nurse), and Estephanie Dunn (RCN Operational Manager).

North Tees u-turn over redundancies



Officer Sandra Bullock writes:

At the RCN Northern region we have welcomed North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust's decision to halt their proposals to break away from nationally agreed Agenda for Change terms and conditions.

In October 2012 the trust issued redundancy notices to their 5,500 staff members, who they planned to re-engage on inferior contracts. However, after extensive lobbying by the RCN Northern region, representatives, and North Tees and Hartlepool staff, the trust confirmed their withdrawal from the process

at a meeting with the RCN and staff side on 18 March 2013.

We regret that so much staff and managerial time, resources and NHS money have now been wasted on this futile pursuit. Local pay can quickly become a race to the bottom, which damages staff morale, and can undermine the quality of care, as clinical staff leave to work with employers who are still honouring the national agreement on pay, terms and conditions.

It was always going to be wrong for a nurse employed in Teesside to be working on less favourable terms and conditions compared to a nurse doing exactly the same job in Tyneside. There is a very important lesson here for other NHS employers who may be tempted to break away from national NHS terms and conditions.

Friarage Hospital update

The future of paediatric and maternity services at the Friarage Hospital in Northallerton is currently being decided by Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt. The Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP) have now made their report to the minister, after being asked to provide an initial review into proposals to downgrade the hospital's paediatric and maternity units.

The Health Secretary is set to announce in the coming weeks whether the IRP will conduct a full investigation into the plans or whether Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby clinical commissioning group (CCG) should launch a public consultation exercise. If a full IRP inquiry is launched, it is expected to take between six and nine months to complete.

This review follows on from advice by the National Clinical Advisory Team in 2012 that the inpatient paediatric service was unsustainable and should be converted to an outpatient only service. Concerns had been



previously raised by hospital employees, after the Trust struggled to adequately staff both units. Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) also undertook a three month public discussion on the future of maternity and paediatric services at the hospital, from April – June 2012.

Changes to the paediatric service would directly affect maternity unit services, as without consultant paediatricians on duty 24/7, the unit would only be able to handle straightforward deliveries. This could lead to hospital births falling from around 1,200 a year to only 500.

Image copyright of North Yorkshire and York Primary Care Trust 2008

RCN Congress 2013



RCN Congress was a great success this year, running from 21 – 25 April at the Liverpool Arena and Convention Centre. There were a wide range of debates, with topics ranging from infectious disease prevention to the future funding of health services, as well as events that encompassed all sectors of the nursing profession.

You can watch the Congress debates [here](#).

In addition to the great debates and events going on at Congress, the RCN also released a series of surveys about issues concerning nurses. You can read about these here:

Mandatory safe staffing levels urgently needed

The number of staff on hospital wards and in the community is regularly falling to unsafe levels, in some cases on a daily basis, according to a survey of over 8000 RCN members.

89% of nurses surveyed reported that staffing levels were not always adequate to provide safe patient care, with almost a third reporting that they were rarely or never safe.

Ensuring safe staffing levels across the health service was a key recommendation of the Francis report into failures at Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust. 91% of nurses said they supported the introduction of mandatory staffing levels, but over two thirds fear the Government will not deliver on the report's recommendations.

For more information, please [click here](#).

Nursing staff facing paperwork overload

Nurses are being prevented from caring for their patients because they are spending a disproportionate amount of time filling in paperwork, according to an ICM survey of over 6000 RCN members.

Nurses now spend an estimated 2.5 million hours a week on non-essential paperwork and clerical tasks. Worryingly, 81% of survey respondents said that having to complete non-essential paperwork prevented them from providing direct patient care.

For more information, please [click here](#).



RCN warns that nurses are still afraid to blow the whistle

The RCN has expressed concern about the “culture of fear and intimidation” in some workplaces, as a survey of over 8000 RCN members reveals 24% of nurses have been discouraged or warned off raising concerns.

44% of nurses surveyed said that worries about employer reprisals would make them think twice about blowing the whistle on poor patient care.

For more information, please [click here](#).

We are always interested to hear feedback from members – please get in touch with the RCN Northern region office if you'd like to tell us about your experiences at Congress. If you didn't attend this year, we're also keen to hear why not, and if this would be something you'd consider in the future. Please email helen.apsey@rcn.org.uk.

Government must act on health service warning signs

The RCN's latest *Frontline First* report has revealed that **68,880 posts will be axed** across the UK by April 2015, of which 24,836 have already been lost. **4,800 registered nurse and 4,042 health care assistant posts** will be cut as part of these reforms.

Dr Peter Carter, Chief Executive and General Secretary of the RCN, said: "Tens of thousands of posts have already been cut with even more expected. The effects are already being felt on the ground, with hospitals and emergency departments unable to cope with soaring demand."

The report also found that the combination of

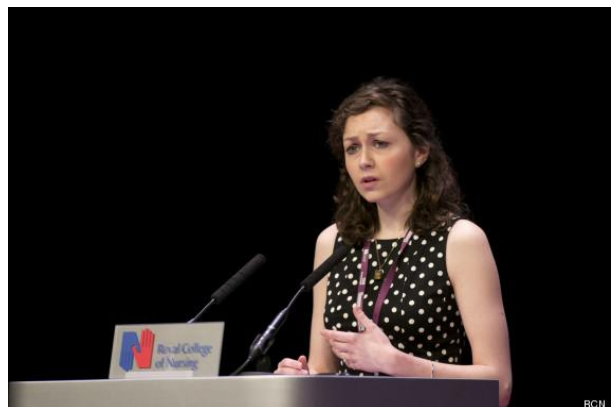
cuts to nursing student places and an ageing workforce could lead to a massive nursing shortfall in the future if the Government does not act now.

The RCN has made eight "calls for action" needed to avoid a nursing crisis in the future, including boards regularly monitoring up-to-date information on their workforce, such as staffing levels and ratios of registered to unregistered staff. The RCN is also calling for greater investment in community and specialist nurses, who manage long-term conditions and reduce consultant appointments and hospital visits.

Read the [Frontline First report in full \(PDF 895KB\)](#) or access the [Frontline First website](#) for more information.

RCN member's poem goes viral

A poem read by a second year nursing student at RCN Congress in Liverpool this week has gone viral on the internet, racking up more than 86,000 views in less than 48 hours. The poem, written and read by Molly Case, touches on the recent media criticism of nursing and has received overwhelming praise online.



The poem was originally posted on the [RCN's Discussion Zone](#), before being spotted by users. Molly was quickly invited to Congress and asked to read the poem ahead of a speech by Lord Willis of Knaresborough, who spoke positively about the value of nursing students.

Molly received a standing ovation from delegates and a recording of her reading was posted on the [RCN's Facebook page](#). It has been 'liked' more than 800 times and shared by more than 700 people.

Watch Molly reading the poem at [RCN Congress](#).

Essentials of Care

Are you a health care support worker? The RCN Northern region has an exciting a learning event opportunity for you, designed to give you the chance to discuss the principles and clinical practices that support the delivery of high quality, compassionate care.

The Essentials of Care event will run from 10am – 3.30pm on 23 May 2013, at the Open University in Gateshead. Entry is £5.00 for members and £10.00 for non members, including lunch.

The Francis Report shone the spotlight on the central importance of compassionate care delivery, and the need for all health care professionals to put this at the heart of everything we do. This learning event will allow you to look in detail at the sometimes

complex issues around dignity, empathy, and compassion during caring activities. The contribution made by health care support workers to care delivery will also be explored, together with the changing nature of this role.

Places are limited for this event, so please book early to avoid disappointment. For further information and application forms please contact northern.region@rcn.org.uk or 0191 511 5809.

We've created a new section on the RCN Northern region website pages to keep our health care assistant and assistant practitioner members up-to-date with what's going on in the region, and what the RCN is doing for you. Visit the new RCN Northern region HCA and AP web page here:

www.rcn.org.uk/aboutus/england/northern/health_care_assistants_and_assistant_practitioners

Northern region Retired Nurses Group

The Northern region Retired Nurses Group is going from strength to strength. We now hold meetings on a quarterly basis, which reflect our retired members' nursing interests and concerns, as well as featuring topical discussions and presentations. At the last meeting, on 17 April 2013, the Francis report was a key issue for debate.

The next meeting is on 1 July 2013, from 1:00 – 4:00pm at the RCN Northern region, Avalon House, St Catherine's Court, Sunderland Enterprise Park. For more information, or if you'd like to attend, please contact Colette Ross at colette.ross@rcn.org.uk or on 0191 511 5809.

The RCN recently launched a national network for retired members, giving them the opportunity to influence the work and direction of the organisation. Over 500 members have already signed up, and we are encouraging more members to join to help strengthen our retired members' voice. All members over the age of 55 who receive a pension are eligible to join.

For more information, please click [here](#).

Thank You and Good Luck!

Our thanks and very best wishes go out to our Modern Apprentice Janice Taylor *[pictured left, with Personal Assistant Colette Ross]*, who has finished working at the RCN Northern region after two years of service, to begin her training as a midwife.



Regional Director, Glenn Turp said: "Janice has been a fantastic Modern Apprentice, and a wonderful member of the team here at the RCN Northern region office. We will all miss her and we wish her the very best with her future career – we hope she will pop in from time to time to keep us updated with her news."

RCN Foundation Bursary Scheme

The RCN Foundation Bursary Scheme provides individual bursaries of up to £5,000 to support nurses, midwives and health care assistants in the UK, to develop their practice.

Applications are welcome from those who wish to focus on primary care nursing and/ or long-term/ chronic conditions, including obesity, mental health, paediatrics and dementia. Bursaries can be used to support course fees, travel and accommodation costs, research and project costs, and in certain circumstances, replacement staff costs.

Applications are now open and close on 23 May 2013. For more information and to apply, please visit the [RCN Foundation's bursary schemes page](#).

New online learning from the RCN

The Royal College of Nursing's award-winning Learning Zone now includes updated information in two key learning resources for RCN members.

Stress in the workplace explores the causes of stress, its symptoms, what nursing staff can expect from employers, what we can do to help ourselves, and where to look for support if needed.

Understanding how teams work looks at how teams work within a health care context to help identify ways to contribute to making your team even more effective.

To access these resources, please visit the [RCN Learning Zone](#).

Northern Regional Media Watch

Catch up with media coverage of the RCN Northern Region and local healthcare issues

Staff welcome top health boss's visit

(8 May 2013)

The *Shields Gazette* reports on RCN Director of Nursing and Service Delivery, Janet Davies' recent visit to the Northern region.

<http://www.shieldsgazette.com/news/health/staff-welcome-top-health-boss-s-visit-1-5641186>

New deal for NHS workers on Teesside

(3 May 2013)

The *Evening Gazette* reports that North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust has agreed to implement national AfC terms and conditions, following pressure from unions including the RCN Northern region.

<http://www.gazettelive.co.uk/news/teesside-news/2013/05/03/new-deal-for-nhs-workers-on-teesside-84229-33277981/>

Bursary Chance (3 May 2013)

The *Evening Gazette* reports that a bursary scheme for nurses, midwives and HCAs has been launched by the RCN Foundation.

<http://www.gazettelive.co.uk/news/teesside-news/2013/05/03/bursary-chance-84229-33276845/>

Salaries continue to rise at top of NHS

(23 April 2013)

The *Northern Echo* reports that the number of hospital managers and consultants in the region earning over £100,000 is on the rise, despite a two year pay freeze for nurses.

http://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/10371720.More_NHS_hospital_managers_paid_over_100_000_a_year/?ref=nt



NHS bosses defend pay rises

(24 April 2013)

The *Shields Gazette* reports that South Tyneside hospital has defended management pay rises, while frontline nurse wages are capped.

<http://www.shieldsgazette.com/news/health/nhs-bosses-defend-pay-rises-1-5611652>

Dozens of NHS staff in north Cumbria paid over £100,000 (23 April 2013)

The *News & Star* reports that a survey has revealed that dozens of NHS staff in north Cumbria were paid over £100,000 last year.

<http://www.newsandstar.co.uk/news/dozens-of-nhs-staff-in-north-cumbria-paid-over-100-000-1.1051194?referrerPath=2.880/home>

Outrage at merit payments to north east medics (14 April 2013)

The *Evening Chronicle* reports that £60,020,490 has been taken out of the region's NHS budget to provide performance-based top-ups to senior hospital staff, over the last four years.

<http://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/60m-bonus-north-east-nhs-2594225>

Northern Regional Events

Find out what's going on across the Northern Region

12 May 2013: Nurses Day

Nurses' Day is for everyone who cares whatever their position in health care. For more information about the day and what the RCN is doing to celebrate it, please visit <http://nursesday.rcn.org.uk/>.

23 May 2013: Essentials in Care event

Time: 10.00am – 3.30pm

Venue: The Open University, Gateshead
RCN Northern region and OU learning event for Health Care Support Workers. Entry is £5.00 for members and £10.00 for non members, including lunch.

For more information, and to book a place, please contact northern.region@rcn.org.uk or 0191 511 5809.

11 June 2013: County Durham and Darlington Branch Meeting

Time: 9.30am

Venue: RCN Northern region, Avalon House, St Catherine's Court, Sunderland Enterprise Park, Sunderland, SR5 3XJ.

11 June 2013: Tees Valley Branch Meeting

Time: 2.30pm

Venue: RCN Northern region, Sunderland.

12 June 2013: North of Tyne Branch Meeting

Time: 9.30am

Venue: RCN Northern region, Sunderland.



12 June 2013: South of Tyne and Wear Branch Meeting

Time: 2.30pm

Venue: RCN Northern region, Sunderland.

13 June 2013: Cumbria Branch Meeting

Time: 10.30am: Learning and Development Meeting, 12.30pm: Branch Meeting.

Venue: Cumbria University, Newton Rigg, Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 0AH.

27 June 2013: Northern Board Meeting

Time: 10.00am

Venue: RCN Northern region, Sunderland.
To book a place to attend, please email northern.region@rcn.org.uk.

1 July 2013: Retired Nurses Group

Time: 1:00 – 4:00pm

Venue: RCN Northern region, Sunderland.
For more information, or to attend, please email northern.region@rcn.org.uk or call 0191 511 5809.

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