REFORMING CARE
NURSING IN A SUPER PRISON
NEWS

Congress submissions now open

Members can now submit agenda items and events to be considered for inclusion at next year’s RCN Congress at Belfast Waterfront Arena (pictured above).

The agenda forms the backbone of the RCN’s annual flagship event, which sees delegates debating a wide variety of topical issues affecting nursing and health care. This year’s Congress took in everything from nursing pay to Brexit to cycle helmet legislation.

So if there’s a burning issue you want to see discussed at a national level, now’s your chance to make that happen. Find out more about what makes a good agenda item and how to submit one at www.rcn.org.uk/congress

RCN Congress 2018 takes place from 12 to 16 May. Apply for funding to attend as a voting member before 1 November at www.rcn.org.uk/congress/about/funding-to-attend-congress

Let’s be ballot ready

We need members’ correct details in case a ballot on industrial action is called as part of negotiations over pay. Update your details at www.rcn.org.uk/myrcn or call 0345 7726 100.

New standards response

Proposed changes to nursing education, which include replacing mentors with separate practice supervisors and assessors, have been welcomed by the RCN following consultation with members.

In its response to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) review of new standards for pre-registration education, the College said creating two distinct roles for overseeing and evaluating the work of students would address concerns around some mentors being reluctant to fail those on placement.

The RCN approves of plans to ensure newly qualified nurses are ready to prescribe straight away, and able to conduct a full assessment of any patient regardless of their field of practice.

While welcoming the new standards’ potential, the RCN said more funding for CPD would be needed to help current nurses support students. The College also called for the number of simulated practice hours to double, from 300 to 600, and for the NMC to update its medicine management standards.
Urgent action needed to tackle staffing crisis

RCN calls for new legislation as thousands of members reveal chronic nursing shortages

Ballot could be called if cap remains in place

The RCN will move towards balloting members on industrial action if the 1% cap on NHS pay is not lifted in the November budget.

The decision to continue the campaign for fair nursing pay was made by Council after the College condemned the Government’s “vague” signals that there will be increased wage rises from next year.

Chief Executive Janet Davies said the move to give prison and police officers more than 1% puts another nail in the coffin of the public sector pay cap but vowed to pile pressure on the Government until there’s concrete proof the cap’s been lifted for NHS staff.

It comes after thousands protested outside the House of Commons last month in the biggest Scrap the Cap rally to date. Members travelled from all over the UK to get their voices heard.

Teifion Woodward, a staff nurse from Caerphilly in south Wales, said he had made the journey to London because the cap was “blatantly not fair”.

Now the campaign’s focus turns political with members encouraged to lobby their MP. The College had representatives at both the Labour and Tory Party conferences and continues to hold meetings with senior politicians.

The RCN, alongside 13 NHS trade unions, has demanded to see wage increases that match inflation and an additional £800 consolidated lump sum for all staff to make up for the years of lost pay. Visit www.rcn.org.uk/scrapthecap

Hospitals and health care providers must examine whether they have enough staff to deliver safe patient care this winter as the RCN discloses the concerns of frontline nursing staff.

More than 30,000 members responded to a survey seeking to gain a snapshot of their experiences on the last shift they worked. The results, published in a new RCN report, paint a perturbing picture of staff stretched to the limit and compromised patient care.

More than half said there were fewer nursing staff on shift than planned and that care quality suffered as a result. “I drove home from work sobbing today, knowing the patients I cared for didn’t get a fraction of the care I would consider acceptable,” said one respondent.

More than a third said they had to leave elements of patient care undone due to a lack of time, while two-thirds reckoned they worked at least an hour over shift unpaid.

“This situation was entirely predictable,” said Janet Davies, RCN Chief Executive. “Successive governments have failed to commission enough training places and kept vacancies unfilled to balance the books. These findings are a direct result of years of failings in workforce planning.”

The RCN is calling for new legislation across the UK that guarantees safe and effective nurse staffing. It would give clear accountability and responsibility for workforce strategy, policy and planning and must lie at ministerial level.

The College has also repeated its calls for increased funding for health and care services to meet the real demand.

It plans to launch a safe staffing campaign next May and is inviting members to get involved in consultation events. Find out more and read the full report at www.rcn.org.uk/safestaffing
Know someone exceptional?

Each year the RCN elects a small number of new fellows in acknowledgement of their experience, accomplishments and dedication to the nursing profession.

Awardees are mostly put forward by peers who’ve been blown away by their exceptional commitment to advancing the science and practice of nursing and how they’ve helped improve health care.

Nominations are now open for you to acknowledge someone you feel deserves to join this prestigious group of members.

Ruth Oshikanlu (pictured) received her fellowship earlier this year. “It was lovely to be nominated,” says Ruth. “There are so many unsung heroes. I don’t know why we, as nurses, don’t celebrate what we do. We’re doing amazing things, from before conception, throughout life and to the grave. It’s such an honour to help inspire.”

Ruth, a nurse and midwife, wrote and published a book while working with first-time teenage mums in Tower Hamlets. Tune into Your Baby, written in 90 days as a self-help guide for anxious clients, kickstarted a change in career and led Ruth to set up her own business specifically supporting women who’ve conceived through IVF.

“The anxiety many pregnant women feel following miscarriage or fertility treatment can be crippling,” says Ruth. “It’s my aim to help them enjoy their pregnancy and bond with their baby before birth.”

Members have until 26 January to nominate colleagues for RCN fellowships, honorary fellowships and awards of merit. Visit www.rcn.org.uk/fellowship to find out more.

Nomination checklist
You’ll need three other people, from a range of nursing backgrounds, to support your nomination and show how the nominee has made an exceptional commitment to advancing the science and practice of nursing and the improvement of health care. It’s wise to start your application early and keep it a secret from the nominee to avoid possible disappointment.

Casting call
Ever wanted to see yourself on the silver screen?

The RCN is making a film to show all the ways it supports members – and it wants you to be the stars. So if you’ve ever used an RCN service, this is your chance to grab your 15 minutes of fame.

Filming will take place from late October. The RCN will cover your travel costs and lunch and refreshments will be provided. Email james.warnock@rcn.org.uk including your membership and phone number by 16 October to get involved.

The RCN is hosting a remembrance ceremony at its London headquarters on 8 November to honour the nurses killed or wounded while caring for victims of conflict. The service is free to attend and open to all but advance booking is required.

Major Chris Carter, Chair of the RCN Defence Nursing Forum, says: “Remembrance is a time for the profession to come together to contemplate our achievements but also to recognise and remember our losses.”

Visit www.rcn.org.uk/remembrance
Each month RCN Bulletin asks a member to share a little bit about themselves.

Name: Graham Mummery

Details: Theatre nurse, Basildon Hospital

Describe your job in three words: Rewarding, challenging, stressful.

If you weren’t a nurse, what would you be? Maybe a counsellor – something which still involves helping people.

What item can’t you do without at work? My phone. As a team leader I have to be in regular contact with my staff.

Who would play you in a film? Jason Statham. It could be a disaster in a hospital film.

If you could have a superpower what would it be? Invisibility. You could go places you shouldn’t.

Why did you choose nursing as a career? I was going to go into forensic science but didn’t get the grades. I started dating a student nurse and she said I should.

What would you take with you to a desert island? A bottle of rum and a good book. I’d eat fish and coconuts – it sounds like a dream!

Where is your ideal holiday destination? Sorrento in southern Italy.
What you’ve been saying

Where are the thanks?

Last week I found myself in that uncomfortable position every nurse dreads – a night shift as the lone nurse with responsibility for the ward.

Thankfully the shift went OK – just one unwitnessed fall and all the care and paperwork that ensues. All HCAs had their breaks – I used mine to complete incident reports. I very gratefully thanked staff at the end of the shift and provided cake and biscuits the next night as a thank you.

But where is the thanks from our employer? Who was it that had to apologise to patients for the late medicine round, delayed personal hygiene care and sleep being interrupted or disturbed?

Dare I suggest Mrs May and Mr Hunt that perhaps you don gloves and lend a hand?

Julie, by email

Attitudes are contagious, are yours worth catching?

As nurses working in very busy and stressful environments we must never forget the impact our attitudes can have on our colleagues and patients. Negative situations don’t necessarily require a negative response. If we try to create an air of positivity, we have the ability to really change others’ perspectives. If we’re to meet the needs of our patients and be supportive and friendly towards our colleagues, then we must be kind, sensitive and compassionate at all times.

Donato Tallo, RN, by email

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

You are the heart of our nation when it’s suffering. When we’re confronted by pain, disease and death it’s you who care for us.”

Actor Sir Tony Robinson speaking at the RCN Scrap the Cap rally in Parliament Square

4 THINGS TO DO IN OCTOBER

2. Seek a meeting with your MP as part of our campaign for fair nursing pay. www.rcn.org.uk/scrapthecap
3. Think about a nursing issue you feel strongly about and put it forward to be debated at RCN Congress next year. www.rcn.org.uk/congress/agenda/submit-an-agenda-item
4. Appear in a film about how the RCN has helped you. Email james.warnock@rcn.org.uk and include your membership number to get involved.

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?
The RCN Bulletin team is always looking for members to contribute to the opinion pages. If you’re keen to share your views, email bulletin@rcn.org.uk
Why are we still talking about this?

As October marks Black History Month, Cecilia Anim, the RCN’s first black president, questions why inequality still exists in nursing

I recently attended an event where we discussed the issue of racism and its impact on nursing. There were some interesting reflections and it was good to highlight the issue, but I was frustrated by the apparent lack of progress.

Though attitudes have changed, it seems the programmes and initiatives we’ve seen to eradicate inequality have done little to improve experiences and outcomes. Only 2% of top nursing jobs in the NHS in England are filled by black and minority ethnic staff and yet a quarter of the band 5 nursing workforce are from BME backgrounds.

What’s going wrong? Why have we got this saturation of BME staff stuck on band 5 and why is there still a disproportionate number of referrals of BME staff to the NMC?

It shouldn’t still be that you walk into a room and feel different because of your colour. Or that it’s assumed you’re not the nurse in charge because of your race.

We have thousands of talented, highly skilled and dedicated black nurses and yet somehow they’re being inhibited from reaching their potential. There can be no room for racism in nursing, tolerating it or avoiding action to tackle it only makes our profession poorer.

Janet Davies
RCN Chief Executive

The debate around NHS staffing can at times feel at risk of stagnation. But when 30,000 members give you an account of their own last shift, they cannot be overlooked. These are personal experiences – too often desperately sad – and their truth will have its own power in driving the debate forward.

It is the personal detail in these accounts that matter. They range from the seemingly minor complaints of missed tea breaks – a situation I remember well – to those saying that some patients are no longer afforded enough dignity, dying alone and even in corridors.

On the back of this work and all the studies that support it, the RCN wants to see – enshrined in law – guarantees on safe and effective nurse staffing in each country of the UK. The ambiguity and uncertainty that exists for our nurses and patients cannot continue.

Legislation alone will not improve patient safety but it would give clear accountability and responsibility for workforce strategy, policy and planning. Ministers across the UK must have responsibility for it if patient safety is to receive the prominence it deserves. But they must also increase funding so that health services can meet the real demand and nurses’ pay can be increased.

www.rcn.org.uk/safestaffing
Setting up a fully integrated health service from scratch in a brand new “super prison” is no mean feat. But that’s just what Simon Newman (pictured far right), Head of Healthcare at HMP Berwyn, has been devoting himself to for the past few months.

“To have the opportunity to set things up from the start has been exciting,” says Simon, who started his role in October last year, ahead of the prison’s opening in February.

“Since opening there have been some challenges around the complexity of the men and receiving them into a new prison with a new system, but it feels like the way Berwyn wants to be different is slowly coming into force.”

The category C facility on the outskirts of Wrexham currently houses around 600 men, but by the time its full capacity of 2,106 is reached it will be the biggest prison in the UK and one of the largest in Europe. But it’s not just its size that makes it unique.

A different approach

While some of the on-site health care facilities, such as primary and dental care, are widely found in prisons, Berwyn also has its own integrated pharmacy, audiology, radiology, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, substance misuse, mental health and learning disability services.

This is all provided by Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, which administers NHS services in North Wales. As Simon explains, this is very different to how prison health services are provided in England, where he previously worked at a number of facilities.
“The prison’s health and wellbeing services are all delivered by the local health board and staff are all employed by the health board. This is not the case in England.

“The main benefit of the Welsh system is services are more joined up, because you don’t have multiple providers. It also means communication with local hospitals and community services is really good, and from a staff perspective you don’t get the professional isolation which can come from working in a prison because we link in with the health board’s wider training and development plans.”

It’s not just the staff who benefit from the services, however.

“HMP Berwyn has a clear rehabilitative focus,” says Simon. “We’re doing things a bit differently here with the aim of preventing men coming back to prison.”

First name terms
Central to the prison’s ethos is “the principle of normality”, the idea, advocated by Nelson Mandela, that making prison feel as normal as possible helps make the transition back to the community easier.

HMP Berwyn has a clear rehabilitative focus
To this end, staff do not refer to “prisoners” or “offenders”, but “men”, and there are “rooms” rather than “cells.” Everyone, staff and men alike, is encouraged to call each other by their first names, and all name badges have a word or phrase on them to trigger a conversation; Simon has the RCN’s motto, tradimus lampada (Latin for “we carry the torch”), on his.

The principle of normality also extends to the on-site health care facilities. The waiting room in the dedicated health and wellbeing centre is designed to look as much like an ordinary NHS surgery as possible. As one of the prison’s core values is to embrace the Welsh language and culture, signs are bilingual and pictures of local landscapes adorn the walls.

The health care services have only been fully operational since July but the early signs have been positive, despite some initial teething problems.

Signs of success
“The main health care challenges have been around medicines management,” says Simon. “Some of the men come to us on multiple medications and might not have had a medication review for several years. Our medicines management process is aimed at recovery and reducing dependency on prescribed drugs, so we review all medication to ensure the men are only prescribed the medicine they need. It’s a very robust approach.”

Aided by the on-site pharmacy and a range of state-of-the-art dispensing, storage and administration machines, which improve efficiency and accuracy, the health benefits have been noticeable. The prison is also smoke-free.

“We’re getting good feedback from the men,” says Simon. “They’re saying how much better they’re feeling, more awake and alert. Their families are also saying they are more positive during visits.”

He’s also quick to point out that the general public benefit indirectly from the kind of health care facilities available at Berwyn, and uses the on-site x-ray facilities as an example.

“At most other prisons, if a man had a suspected fracture you’d need to take him off-site to get it checked out, which would require a minimum of two prison officers to accompany him,” he explains. “Here, an x-ray can be taken on-site and our staff can send it electronically to Wrexham Maelor Hospital for a consultant to look at. So it not only saves time and manpower, but it also keeps services in the community available for the public.”

He adds that he hopes Berwyn will become a model for other prisons to follow.

“It’ll be a year or two at least before we can say if it’s working or not. No doubt we’ll make mistakes along the way, but hopefully it’ll be something others can learn from.”

The RCN view
“It’s great to see RCN members like Simon and his team making such progress at HMP Berwyn. We see so much negativity in the press so it’s really good to hear about some of the hard work being led by nurses to care for those in prisons.”

Ann Norman, RCN professional lead for justice and forensic nursing
Influencing change

This year’s Mary Seacole awards will be presented later this month. Sophie Lowthian interviews two previous winners about their work with black and minority ethnic (BME) communities and what they’ve gone on to do in their careers.

The knowledge that three people are dying each day waiting for an organ transplant, with a high number of those being from a black and minority ethnic (BME) background, is the driving force behind Angela Ditchfield’s work.

RCN member Angela (pictured below) received the Mary Seacole Leadership Award in 2014 for her work with BME communities. At the time she was working as a specialist nurse for organ donation at East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust and joined forces with a community group to launch an organ donation campaign directed towards the Asian community. As part of the campaign Angela helped produce a film to raise awareness of the importance of donations.

Angela is now working as Diversity Lead Nurse for Organ Donation for NHS Blood and Transplant, which she’s been doing since April of this year. It’s a role that has UK-wide impact.

“Getting the Mary Seacole award was the highlight of my career really,” she says. “It brought me to the role I’m in today, opening doors and deepening my understanding of the NHS. It’s such a privilege working with the community. Ultimately the reward is saving people’s lives.”

Angela says her current role is all about educating and increasing consent within the BME community.

“Education is key for all communities and cultures, of course, but with 27% of the waiting list being South Asian people, there is particular need for a focus in this area. As only 1% of people can become organ donors, it’s an ongoing challenge,” she explains.

Angela’s focus at the moment is working with specialist nurses to get the message out there. “We are looking at developing resources to raise awareness. Sometimes people are hesitant, perhaps due to cultural reasons, but starting the conversation is vital – if people fully understand it’s giving the gift of life to someone they can make an informed choice.”

Despite the challenges, Angela says that organ donation is becoming less taboo and she’s enthused by how the topic is being embraced by the community. However, she says it is crucial to keep talking about it.

“In today’s climate we need to learn about each other to live together well,” adds Angela. “This goes beyond organ donation, it’s about engaging with different communities and reaching out to individuals from all backgrounds.”

Ultimatey the reward is saving people’s lives

Transforming care

When midwife and RCN member Marsha Jones (pictured right) began her Mary Seacole award work in 2011 at Newham University Hospital, she didn’t foresee just how big a mark it would make on her nursing and midwifery journey.

“I’ve always wanted to make people’s lives better. Patients are at the heart of what I do,” says Marsha, whose award work

Picture by John Behets
focused on improving postnatal care for BME women. “The award inspired me to want to do more to influence the system as a whole so I can make quality improvements a reality, and enhance patient and staff experience.”

Adapting strategies

“My award project was driven by seeing first-hand the challenges women from BME backgrounds present with, as well as the evidence that health care outcomes for these women are not as good as for women from other backgrounds,” says Marsha. “This has got to change, but remains a challenge.

“The biggest challenge is that we’ve labelled this group hard to reach. But this just isn’t true. What we need to do is adapt our communication strategies to reflect diversity and inclusivity. We need to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach.”

Marsha, who is currently doing the Nye Bevan programme for aspiring directors, has been the lead midwife for maternity inpatients and outpatients at Whittington Health NHS since 2014.

In 2013, Marsha had the opportunity to go to the Institute for Health Care Improvement in Boston to learn about quality improvement and patient safety. And in 2015, she became a Darzi Fellow to focus on delivering care closer to residents’ homes.

Marsha says all the learning and development opportunities that came out of the Mary Seacole award shifted her thinking. “I’ve been developing my leadership skills ever since. It opened my eyes to the realisation that as a clinical leader I can make a real difference,” she adds. “The award work was challenging but also a great experience for practising resilience.”

So what does the future hold for Marsha? “My aspiration is to become a board member to influence change that reflects the demographics of the population and is in line with the NHS Constitution,” she says. “We need to engage with citizens, patients and staff to co-design and co-produce services that will deliver the best possible health care outcomes with finite resources. If we don’t, how can we give timely care and help reduce risks?” she adds. “We’re getting there but there is still more work to be done.”

Did you know?

Mary Seacole was a Jamaican Scottish nurse and businesswoman, celebrated for her bravery in nursing soldiers during the Crimean War (1853–56). The Mary Seacole Awards were created in her honour and provide the opportunity for individuals to fund a project that aims to improve the health outcomes of people from BME communities.

On 23 October, this year’s awardees will graduate and next year’s awardees will be announced. Visit www.nhsemployers.org/maryseacole

Celebrating Black History Month

The RCN is co-hosting a free Black History Month conference with Health Education West Midlands and the MERIT Vanguard – an alliance of NHS trusts in the West Midlands – on 17 October in Birmingham. Visit www.rcn.org.uk/bhm-con-17
Bursary brilliance

Five different RCN Foundation bursary schemes are currently open for applications. Sharon Palfrey looks at how funding can help further your career in a practical way.

As Nabeel puts the final touches to his dissertation, he’s keen that others should get the funding benefits he’s received.

“Staff shortages mean there’s no time for training and there’s certainly no funding in the NHS to pay for courses. On the wards people are even struggling to get their mandatory training. But changes are happening every day and long-term conditions are getting more challenging so I’d urge other members to consider their futures and remember these bursaries are here to help you.”

Deepa Korea, Head of the RCN Foundation, agrees. “These opportunities help nursing staff keep up-to-date and use their knowledge and skills to transform the care their patients receive,” she says.

Top tips when applying for a bursary

• Apply early so you can prepare for any interviews and ensure you complete your application accurately.
• Type your application and submit it electronically.
• Read the eligibility criteria carefully. Make sure you meet the requirements.
• Estimate your costs accurately. The budget you provide will be used to calculate the amount awarded.
• Sell yourself and the activity you’re applying for. Include the benefit the funding will have for patients and identify the challenges you may face and how you’d overcome these.
• Fully complete the form and use the guidance notes to help you.
• Prepare for an interview. Think about likely questions and how you could answer these.
• Be persistent. If you’re not funded first time, try again.

Nursing staff know the importance of keeping up to date, but in these days of austerity, education is often the first in line for cuts.

RCN member Nabeel Durgahee (pictured above) was determined to stay ahead of the game. “As a nurse, you can’t afford to sit back,” he says.

The diabetes specialist nurse at Addenbrookes Hospital in Cambridge faced financial challenges when he applied to study for his MSc in Diabetes in 2015. Although he continued to work full-time during his studies, there were still other significant costs to be met, especially as the course was based miles away at Leicester University.

“After searching online for funding I applied for the RCN Foundation Professional Bursary Scheme. Specifically I was looking for help to pay for travel, accommodation for some residential weekends and to buy some annual leave from my employer to give me study time,” he says.

“It wasn’t too difficult to apply but I had to provide a detailed explanation of why I needed the money and get my application endorsed by my manager.”

Patient benefits

He was awarded £2,500 to put towards funding his study and he’s now reaping the rewards of his hard work.

“The course helped me improve my teaching skills which has enabled me to better support other health care professionals, including student doctors and GPs. I also have access to the most up-to-date research and knowledge which helps me apply a patient-centered approach to managing diabetes.”
Discounted Car and Home Insurance for RCN members

Car Insurance from £201
10% of new car insurance customers paid £201 or less May–Jul ‘17.

Home Insurance from £97
10% of new home insurance customers paid £97 or less May–Jul ‘17.

0800 756 8125
LV.com/RCN

Travel Insurance 0800 756 8143
Pet Insurance 0800 022 3819
Motorbike Insurance 0800 028 5180

Research from YouGov BrandIndex using ‘Recommend’ measure conducted online between August 2016 and July 2017, sample size 27,129. More information go to LV.com/rcn

The Royal College of Nursing acts as an Introducer Appointed Representative to the Liverpool Victoria group of companies for General Insurance and Life Insurance.
Mental health matters

This issue of Forum Focus is promoting best practice in mental health care across all nursing specialties as the RCN gets set to mark World Mental Health Day on 10 October.

Leanne Taylor, a second-year nursing student and Mental Health Forum member, was one of 100 people chosen to develop a project as part of the RCN’s centenary Celebrating Nursing Practice initiative.

Leanne submitted a proposal aiming to improve mental health care for patients attending general hospital settings, saying: “When I was working as an HCA in a trauma unit, I found that it was all too often the case that, while a patient’s physical health was well looked after, their mental health needs weren’t really addressed.”

Leanne cites the example of a young man being treated for a broken leg who was known to have a diagnosed personality disorder but didn’t receive his specialist medication for four days. “The patient’s leg was on the mend but his mental health was massively deteriorating,” she says. “Only dealing with mental health conditions once they’ve reached crisis level is no good for patients and no good for staff.”

The first step of the project was a survey, which revealed an overwhelmingly positive response to the idea of increased training and awareness of treating patients with mental health needs.

Leanne’s plan now is to create a set of questions to be added to all general hospital admission forms asking patients about their mental health history, current needs and medication, which will trigger a pathway for staff to follow if needs are identified.

“How are you feeling?”

Some areas of nursing are particularly likely to cross over with mental health care.

Ismalia De Sousa, a committee member of the Neuroscience Forum, is a stroke clinical nurse specialist who implemented a campaign in her workplace to address the mental health needs of patients who have suffered a stroke.

“How are You Feeling?” has helped encourage staff to ask patients about their emotional wellbeing after a stroke, resulting in more patients receiving the psychological support they need. “It’s important that we reinforce the idea that a stroke will not only have physical impairments. The emotional effects, those you can’t see, are as important to recognise and address,” she says.
IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Mental Health Forum

Who's the Chair?
Ed Freshwater, a community mental health nurse with the Perinatal Mental Health Service in Birmingham. He first became a forum member as a student and progressed to a committee member and then Chair in January of this year.

Recent highlights?
An online webinar resource addressing the physical health needs of mental health patients (read more below), and a supportive role in the debate on places of safety at RCN Congress this year, alongside the Emergency Care Association.

What's coming up
A social media campaign addressing the stigma attached to patients with mental health needs presenting at emergency departments. The #oneofyours campaign aims to create solidarity among nursing professionals and encourage appropriate care for service users’ physical health concerns. The forum also has goals to improve the morale of mental health nurses and solidify the identity of the specialty.

Why join?
Ed says: “The forum is all about promoting mental health nursing and it has something to offer everyone working within the discipline. Our membership is so broad that there’s no way you won’t learn something from your colleagues or find something to get passionate about. It’s the perfect way to stay at the forefront of your specialty and meet a lot of great people doing it.”

Find out more about the Mental Health Forum at www.rcn.org.uk/forums or visit its Facebook page.

#OneOfYours

Physical health in mental illness

People with severe mental health conditions are at higher risk of developing physical health problems, yet research shows they tend to receive less medical intervention.

The RCN Mental Health Forum, with support from the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust, has created an online resource consisting of three short videos presented by forum committee member Dr Sheila Hardy.

The resource aims to provide health care professionals with a toolkit to help improve patients’ physical health.

Access the resource at www.rcn.org.uk/clinical-topics/mental-health

An unshakeable travel companion

Travel can be stressful for anyone but perhaps more so for those with existing mental health needs. The journey can bring its own concerns and adapting to a new culture and environment, especially where language creates communication difficulties, can exacerbate anxieties.

Sandra Grieve, who leads on travel health for the RCN Public Health Forum, recommends that a pre-travel risk assessment addressing both mental and physical health needs should be performed for each traveller. The forum supports the FCO’s Travel Aware Campaign, which includes a resource explaining what help can be offered to travellers with mental health needs. Find out more at https://travelaware.campaign.gov.uk/
EVENTS

Society conference and exhibition

Challenges and innovations in orthopaedic and trauma care

14 November
Crowne Plaza Chester
Trinity Street
Chester CH1 2BD

The Society of Orthopaedics and Trauma Nursing annual conference and exhibition is the event to attend to share innovation and best practice with colleagues working in orthopaedics and trauma, rheumatology, acute, emergency and critical care. The conference features speeches from professionals at the top of their field and will include workshops, research and discussion on the challenges and innovations in orthopaedic and fracture trauma care for patients at every stage of life.

Delegates can attend a choice of 12 concurrent sessions on the themes of:
- musculoskeletal care of the child and adult
- orthopaedic and trauma knowledge and skills: across the lifespan
- contemporary approaches in education for the musculoskeletal practitioner.

Attending will earn members seven hours of CPD towards revalidation and provide unrivalled opportunities to network with nurses, health care assistants, occupational therapists and physiotherapists in both the NHS and independent sector.

To book your place or find out more information visit www.rcn.org.uk/sotn or call 02920 546460.

RCN Wales

ExpertTeas: meet a therapy dog

9 Nov from 11am-1pm
Royal College of Nursing
Ty Maeth, King George V Drive East
Cardiff CF14 4XZ

Meet a four-legged therapy friend at this free drop-in session at the RCN library in Wales.

Learn about how pets can enhance health and wellbeing in the community and improve the lives of people living with mental and physical health conditions and illnesses. Come along for a cup of tea, pet therapy and talk to experts about how you could adopt and deliver this form of treatment in your care setting.

Visit www.rcn.org.uk/events for more information

Ophthalmic nursing

Seeing is believing

4 November
RCN HQ
20 Cavendish Square
London W1G 0RN

Modern ophthalmic nursing is changing with ocular health care taking place in a greater variety of settings than ever. The profession faces the challenge of maximising capacity, embracing new technology and treatments and utilising ophthalmic specialist skills, while also providing value for money and the highest standards of care.

Whether new to this niche field of nursing or an experienced eye health professional, this event will provide an unrivalled learning opportunity to reflect on how you can improve your practice and the patient experience.

For more information visit www.rcn.org.uk/on17