



Northern Regional News



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

RCN Foundation Benevolent Fund funding for nurses affected by the floods

Nursing staff affected by the recent floods in Cumbria can apply for hardship funding from the RCN Foundation Benevolent Fund.

Trustee of the RCN Foundation and RCN Council Member Ian Norris joined RCN Cumbria branch Chair Billy Drysdale (pictured right) before Christmas to visit local nurses rebuilding their lives and communities following the storms.



Ian Norris said: "Nursing staff provide essential care for patients all year round, but it is during times of disaster their skills and qualities really shine through. These floods have taken the homes and security of many of our nurses, yet they have dedicated themselves to caring for those in need and helping to repair their communities.



Thousands in Cumbria had to be evacuated from their homes when devastating floods struck on several occasions this December.



Nursing staff were among the victims of the floods, many having to leave their homes while others worked extra shifts helping those affected. They also played a vital role caring for patients and maintaining safety in hospitals left without power, such as at the Cumberland Infirmary (some of whose A&E Department staff are pictured left with Ian Norris) to witness the damage inflicted by the storms and the immense contribution of nursing staff to the recovery efforts.

Among other sites, Ian's visit also took in the Mary Hewetson Cottage Hospital in Keswick (senior staff nurse there Lesley Primrose and receptionist Louise Roscamp are pictured left). "I'm delighted that we will be able to help these nurses to move forward with their lives," continued Ian. "The Benevolent Fund was developed for this exact purpose; to help nurses to rebuild following difficult situations and to thank them for their valuable contributions to society."



RCN calls for halt to closure of Hartlepool's fertility treatment unit

Following the recent announcement that, due to recruitment problems, North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust is closing its IVF and fertility treatment unit at Hartlepool, the RCN can reveal that the trust only has advertised the current vacancy once, in September, and then for only a week, on the NHS Jobs website.

Last week, the trust said: "We have made every effort for some time to recruit, however we cannot continue to provide all aspects of the current service safely due to an inability to recruit embryologists."

RCN Northern regional director Sarah Dodsworth said: "The trust has stated that one of the main reasons for closing the unit is because they are struggling to recruit to the position of embryologist. And yet, they were successful at recruiting to this post as recently as May 2015."

She added: "Since the post became vacant, they have only advertised the position once, in September, and even then it was only advertised on the NHS jobs website for a week. To abolish a successful, high quality unit, and put a number of our members - who are excellent nurses - at risk of redundancy based on a failure to recruit to a post after advertising it only for a week, is clearly unacceptable."

"We know that the NHS struggles to recruit currently, but no attempt has been made to advertise the post for a reasonable amount of time, or further afield, or to recruit from abroad. The trust must put this decision on hold until it undertakes a full and transparent consultation with the broader community and stakeholders."

RCN Northern Board new members appointed



Congratulations to Annessa Rebar (left) and Tracey Anderson (right) who were appointed to the board late last year and will serve terms of office until December 2016. Congratulations also to Gordon Lees who was re-elected as chair of the board and Michael Appleby who was re-elected as vice-chair.



RCN Northern Board vacancy – applications sought by 1 February

A further vacancy has arisen on the RCN Northern region board. The term lasts until 31 December 2018 and nominations are open until 4.30 pm on 1 February. If you are interested in standing for election, please read the election procedure to discover if you are eligible. You need to have been an RCN member for at least three years.

Being an RCN board member provides an invaluable experience with plenty of personal career development opportunities. It also allows RCN members to represent nursing, speak out about the issues that matter, and influence the work of the RCN.

We are looking for someone with:

- A passion for nursing and wanting to make a difference.
- A sound understanding of nursing and health issues within the country or region.
- An understanding of, and commitment to, the RCN, its purpose and its work.
- The ability to listen to, and speak up for, members in the country or region.
- Strategic vision and the ability to focus on practical issues.
- Objectivity, fairness, independence of mind, wisdom, discretion and good judgement.

- Integrity and commitment to act in the best interests of the RCN.
- Awareness of how the world is changing politically, economically and socially.
- The capability to give direct, honest opinions and constructive suggestions.
- A readiness to take and be accountable for decisions.
- To be willing to abide by the RCN's Dignity Charter.

Could this be you? Further details are available [on the 'get involved' section of the RCN website](#).

RCN nursing photography competition 'Care on Camera'

We are looking for a member to join the judging panel of our centenary photography competition, 'Care on Camera', alongside TV and theatre actress Tamzin Outhwaite. The competition marks the start of a yearlong programme of celebrations for the RCN centenary in 2016.



There is also still time to enter a photo into the competition, which aims to record nursing life in its many diverse settings. Entries close on 29 February. Winners will be announced at the annual RCN Congress in June 2016, with the fifty shortlisted entries going on to form a touring exhibition, travelling through schools, libraries, and various health settings around the UK. They will ultimately become part of the RCN archive, providing a historical record of nursing in the 21st century.

Tamzin Outhwaite, actress and mother, said, "I have relied on nursing staff countless times throughout my life – from visiting my GP practice nurse for holiday vaccinations to the nurses and midwives who supported me when I was pregnant with my daughters. Every one of those nursing staff has impacted on my life and the lives of my children. That's why I am thrilled to be supporting the Royal College of Nursing's centenary photography competition as a judge."

Prizes range from £500 to £1000 and there is an under-16s category.

To find out more about how to join the judging panel or enter the competition, please visit <http://www.rcn100photo.org.uk/>

Dates for your diary: forthcoming RCN Northern region events

Please note all events take place at the RCN Northern region office, 2nd floor, Avalon House, St Catherine's Court, Sunderland Enterprise Park, Sunderland, SR5 3XJ unless stated otherwise.

Please email us at northern.region@rcn.org.uk to book your place or find out more about an event.

- 1 February – [Retired Nurses' Group meeting](#), 1.00pm – 4.00pm – all retired members are welcome. Please book by ringing 0191 511 5809 or emailing Colette.ross@rcn.org.uk.
- 3 February [Independent Sector Nurses' Network](#) meeting – 1.00pm – 4.00pm. To book your place, please call Mandy Clark on 0191 511 5810 or emailing mandy.clark@rcn.org.uk.
- 9 February – [Northumberland, Tyne and Wear branch meeting](#), 10.00am – 12.00pm.
- 10 February – [Tees Valley branch meeting](#), 9.30am – 11.30am.
- 11 February – [Cumbria branch meeting](#) – 12.30pm – 2.30pm (preceded by a learning and development session for reps from 10.30am – 12.00pm)
- 23 February – [County Durham and Darlington branch meeting](#), 2.00pm – 4.00pm.
- 3 March – [Northern region board open session](#). Lunch is at 12.00pm and the open session runs from 12.30pm – 3.00pm. Please let us know if you are coming for catering purposes.