It's been another busy time for the Branch with numerous meetings, events and of course Congress up in Liverpool. Seven members of the Branch attended and voted on behalf of outer South West London. With senior political figures attending and after an indicative membership vote in favour of taking some sort of industrial action the #scrapthecap campaign is starting to take off and get noticed. Of course many nurses are concerned that patients will suffer if industrial action is taken or the professions reputation will be tarnished, but we all know we cannot go on working with chronically staffing shortages, taking successive pay cuts and being expected to do unpaid overtime. So the College is promoting a summer of action where members can start to take action that will benefit patients in the long term and help nurses get the pay award they so desperately need given inflation is around 2.9% now. On page two you will find some of the shocking statistics that nursing now faces. We want members to help us with the next steps in the campaign. Whether it be to sign the #scrapthecap picture petition which has already started to take shape. Talk to the newly elected MP's in our area about the state of staffing and the effects of pay restraint on you. Consider working to your contract - so always taking your break, not working unpaid overtime, going home on time. When staffing is poor not taking on audits, clerical roles or non urgent tasks that take you away from patient care. If you have any links with celebrities try and get them to sign up to the campaign. If you have any good ideas please let Branch chair Mike Smith know.
Branch News

We were privileged to receive an excellent update on Diabetes from CNS’s Sarah Jupp and Priti Chauhan-Whittingham at our April Branch meeting including some very useful practical sessions on controlling diet.

STP’s Following on from our last Branch meeting Mike Smith, Branch chair has continued to try and contact our local CCGs about the Sustainability Transfer plans (STPs) but after two emails Mike still await a response. The RCN have officers involved in various sectors. Mark Farmer is our rep and Mike contacted him for more info. Mark says in London there is the Pan London partnership made up of employers and unions which is our regional social partnership forum. Some while ago an agreement was made that each STP footprint would have a full time officer assigned to its local workforce action board. Mark has the SW seat on behalf of London health unions and other STP ’footprints’ have officers from the BMA/SOR/RCN and Unison attached.

What the Local Workforce Action Board (LWAB) isn’t is a body that takes away the need for local consultation and engagement nor should it override local Staffside bodies. In time Mark suspects we may need to look at policy disparities across the sector and bring local reps and employers together to discuss and we have been clear there needs to be some form of local body in place to do this. The LWAB will have a number of work streams and at each of the two meetings so far it’s been stressed that these need engagement to underpin them and hopefully now the national picture is a little clearer things will improve.

Mike did manage to speak to Daniel Elkeles CEO at Epsom & St Helier to raise our concerns and Daniel hoped more public information we be forthcoming after the ‘snap’ election.

#Scapthecap Campaign The RCN nationally and locally are preparing to take a summer of action to address our concerns about safe staffing levels and its impact on patient care. We also know that many members are struggling to pay their bills after eight years of pay restraint. In London 1:6 or 13,000 nursing posts are vacant. Post Brexit EU NMC registrations are down 96%. The removal of the bursary has led to a 25% decline in university applications for nursing courses and far fewer mature candidates are coming forward because they can no longer afford to do so. Average flat rental prices in Epsom and Carshalton are around £1,000 pcm and nurses are travelling further and further away to find affordable housing. The RCN membership have indicated that enough is enough and we want you to get involved. We are holding an extra ordinary joint branch meeting with inner south west London branch on Thursday 22nd June at 7.30-9pm in the Nonsuch room. We are fighting for nursing and not just pay. Please join us on the 22nd if you can and follow the campaign on social media #scapthecap to find out what you can do to help.
Jahmena Wilson, Branch voting member reports back from Congress 2017

I attended my first RCN Congress in 2015. Back then I walked in an innocent student nurse and walked out an empowered, bright pink t-shirt wearing member of the Nursing Family.

Now a newly qualified registered nurse, I attended RCN Congress 2017 in Lovely Liverpool, and no ‘Surprise Surprise’ - it was MOMENTOUS. The debates and discussions were well chosen by the amazing Agenda Committee; Parity of esteem, Agenda for change, People trafficking and many more. The professional manner in which even the most difficult and controversial topics were discussed at Congress, was admirable.

There was an inspiringly high number of first-time speakers this year. Overcoming their fears of public-speaking they made their way to the mic and with eloquence they made sure their voices were heard - each received a well-deserved round of applause.

During the breaks, many delegates attended the learning (fringe) events. These workshops covered a wide range of topics based on improving current practice and leadership. This year there were workshops tailored for Healthcare Assistants and other sessions focused on health and wellbeing - I hear the yoga session were very popular.

The keynote speakers evoked an array of emotions, from tears to cheers; Jonny Benjamin and Neil Laybourne, opened our eyes to the state of our mental health services from a service users point of view; highlighting the urgent need for funding and change. The future of the NHS was discussed by Andy Burnham (Mayor of Greater Manchester), Tim Farron (Leader of the Liberal Democrats) and Jeremy Corbyn (Leader of the Labour Party). It was unfortunate that Prime Minister Theresa May (Leader of the Conservative Party) did not attend RCN Congress 2017.

The final keynote speaker, Dr Jane F. McAlevey, shared her dynamic and powerful approach to achieving meaningful change. Through highlighting her struggles and successes as a community and union organiser, we were enthused to fight for all that the NHS stands for and the care our patients deserve.

So, RCN Congress 2017 ended I went back to work enthusiastic, spreading the word amongst my colleagues; The NHS is in its most vulnerable state. The NHS needs us! Your patients need you!

To my family and friends, I explained that by the unions, health and social care professionals, patients, carers and relatives working together; WE CAN and WE WILL save the NHS!

Picture Gallery include London Council members Cynthia Davis, Matthew Hodson (top left clockwise round) London voting members. Jane McAlevey, key note speaker and union activist from the States, Jonny Benjamin & Neil Laybourne, local learning rep Nicki Parry, who won rep of the year, Inner SW London Branch members, National committees, Students, Branch get together and meal, Florence lamp, Mike Smith with London regional director, Bernell Bussue, 1960’s themed night out, Caterers serve up well, Helen Kerslake, voting member & star of the #scrapthecap campaign, appearing in many of their photos.
All political party leaders were invited to attend Congress but PM Theresa May turned down every invitation choosing instead to speak to a small group of mechanics. In response to the PM’s lack of engagement Congress put in an Emergency resolution asking CEO Janet Davies to write to the PM expressing our dissatisfaction with her continuing non-engagement. This was Janet’s response:

Dear Mr Beckingham (assistant to Theresa May)

Thank you for your response to my two letters of 21st April and 14th May. I shared your letter with Congress this morning, who were extremely dissatisfied in your response on behalf of the Prime Minister.

Our members are disappointed and saddened, and feel disrespected by the Prime Minister. Nurses were keen to hear from the Prime Minister personally about her plans to alleviate the difficult, and sometimes impossible situation, in which they are working.

Whilst we are pleased the Prime Minister states that she recognises the value of nursing, this does not reassure us, and feels like empty platitudes when we see no real action being taken to improve the lives of both patients and nurses. This week, our members have spoken passionately about their own personal experiences, working both with insufficient resources to do their job safely and effectively, and insufficient resources to live their lives well, pay their bills and care for their families, or even travel to work to do the job they love so much.

Our members have taken the unprecedented step of voting for a summer of planned protest. Many never thought it would come to this and are now looking for guarantees that this government will listen and act on the voice of nurses who keep our NHS going in the most difficult times.

I enclose a copy of our manifesto, which I urge the prime minister, should the Conservative party win the next general election, to enforce in full.

Yours sincerely,
Janet Davies,
Chief Executive and General Secretary,
Royal College of Nursing

Picture Gallery top clockwise
Mayor of Manchester Andy Burnham, Croydon steward Selven Arman with RCN President, Cecilia Anim, London region chief nurse, Assembly member and London region staff, Croydon members (or boyband?) Recruitment stand, Free learning events, CEO Janet Davies with Council Chair, Michael Brown, Cynthia Davis, Professor Oliver Shanley, Daniele Tiplady receiving the London Award of Merit, Lib Dem leader, Tim Farron and Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn.
Over 100 nurses, midwives, Trust Executives and guests attended Epsom & St Helier’s Nurses’ Day Event at Epsom on May 11th. Professor Oliver Shanley, Senior Nurse for London was a special guest and Rachel Staff pictured holding the certificate, was named Nurse of the Year. The event included a fiercely contended ‘Bake off’ competition with tasting session afterwards! We also heard songs from the newly established Trust choir. Thanks to ESH Library and local businesses for their generous support of the event and to event organisers Rachel Addy, Charlotte Hall and Mike Smith.
Here to Help ~ Useful Names + Numbers

The Branch is run by volunteer local nurses and the current branch team are:

Chair & Publicity lead - Mike Smith (07930 410386) RN (ESH)
Secretary – Ajay Boodhoo - Neurology Nurse Specialist, (CUH)
Treasurer – Gerry Cotter (01372 735279) (ESH)
Recruitment - Joan Chappell (ESH)
Learning & Development - Sheila Gooljar

Local RCN Stewards

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<td>Mike Smith (ESH)*</td>
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<td>David Simpson (Independent Sector)</td>
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<td>Helen Kerslake ()</td>
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Health & Safety Reps

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<td>Sheila Gooljar (Independent sector)</td>
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<td>David Simpson (Independent Sector)</td>
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<td>Lynette Drakes (ESH)</td>
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Learning Reps

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<td>Ajay Boodhoo (CUH)</td>
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Full time officers

Paula Delaney, Judith Janes, Trish Davis & Julie Mulvey based in London Regional Office covering Merton & Sutton, Croydon & SW London

RCN Council Members for London

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<td>Cynthia Davis, Dr Matthew Hodson</td>
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Regional Board Member

Selven Armon

*CUH - Croydon University Hospital

*ESH - Epsom and St Helier

* Community CCG’s - covering Merton & Sutton, Surrey Downs

RCN London Region, 5th Floor, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN Tel. 0345 458 6968

Director of London Region

Mr Bernell Bussue

Raising concerns, raising standards (Whistleblowing) helpline for RCN members: 0345 772 6300

RCN Member Support Services

0345 408 4391.

The service offers guidance on benefit entitlement, money advice, counselling and careers.

RCN Foundation - bursaries, project grants and help for times of need or hardship - go to www.rcnfoundation.org.uk 0207 647 3645

Branch meeting dates for 2017:

Thursday 22nd June - Extra-ordinary Branch meeting re safe staffing and pay restraint
Monday 3rd July - Branch meeting postponed
Monday 9th October AGM and Branch meeting Epsom 19:00 - 21:00hrs
Friday 24th November joint AOL event with Inner SW London Branch - all day at Croydon Hospital PGMC

We welcome feedback from local members and the contribution of short articles for this quarterly newsletter. Please contact Mike Smith, Branch chair on his work e-mail address michael.smith@esth.nhs.uk