

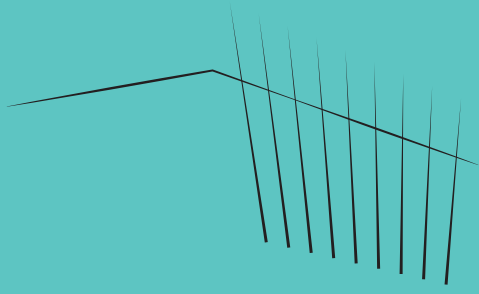
RCN HEALTH CARE

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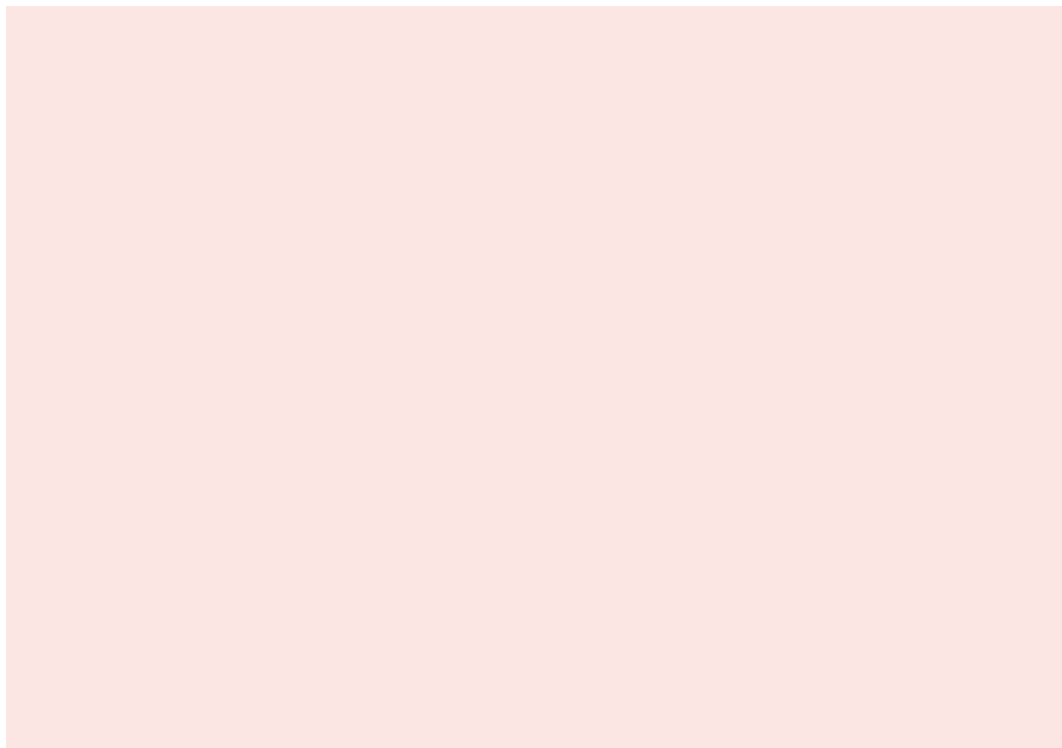
UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD
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UK round-up p
Scrap the Cap p
Modern slavery
Money matters







HP members are encouraged to vote for their representative on a new RCN committee that will shape the College's trade union work.

The candidates for the HP seat on the RCN Trade Union Committee are Tom Palin, Terry Gammell and Karen Pike




▼ Gateshead

RCN supporters of all ages gather beneath the Angel of the North.



Easing fears



Understanding a person's likes and dislikes is key to reducing anxiety when taking blood, according to Cemlyn Roberts, winner of the RCN Healthcare Assistant Award 2017.

Cemlyn is based in Ruthin in north Wales, where he works in the community as a health liaison health care support worker. He provides vital support to people with learning disabilities who may be worried about the process of having blood taken.

“A lot of people with learning disabilities can be quite scared about having their blood taken – they may have had a bad experience in the past or it's too unfamiliar,” explains Cemlyn. “Our desensitisation programme gets them used to the process until it becomes a safe thing. We take it one step at a time.”

Shaping the service

Cemlyn joined the community liaison health team in 2010, when the HCSW role was in its infancy, and helped shape the eight-week programme into what it is today.

“Lots of people were not having their blood tests but it's a powerful and important test to have, giving crucial information about a person's health. It's even more important when someone might struggle to communicate when something's wrong.”

Cemlyn now carries out the majority of blood desensitisation referrals to the team. He says there



It's empowering to know
I'm helping people



programme, people are usually a lot less anxious about future blood tests.

So what does the future hold? As well as plans to publish his blood desensitisation work, Cemlyn hopes to expand another area of his work – a health promotion programme he has produced for men with learning disabilities. “I love my job and want to continue supporting the community to have better, healthier lives,” he says. “It’s empowering to know I’m helping people.”

Join the RCN Learning Disability Nursing
Forum at www.rcn.org.uk/forums



- Make sure the person has someone they know and trust on duty.
- Easily accessible clothes such as a short sleeved blouse or shirt and a cardigan are best.
- Stress balls or spongy items can be used to squeeze while waiting to help palpitate the veins.
- Use distraction techniques such as the cough trick – ask the person to look away and cough while you stick the needle in. If they can’t cough, try simple visual or verbal distraction across the other side of the room.
- Consider using coping strategies such as deep breathing.



Ann Norman, RCN Professional Lead for Learning Disability Nursing, says: “HCSWs like Cemlyn provide critical support to people with learning disabilities. It is wonderful to see he has gained the recognition for his work he so justly deserves. Once again, we are seeing the evidence of the real impact people like Cemlyn are providing. I’m delighted this year in particular we are recognising the real champions in learning disability care.”

The number of men, women and children being trafficked and forced into modern forms of slavery is on the rise.

Although modern slavery is illegal in this country, it's estimated more than 13,000 people have been trafficked for exploitation in the UK. With one in five victims reported to have come into contact with health care services, nursing staff – and especially support workers – have a crucial role to play in spotting the signs.

“Human trafficking and modern slavery is everybody's responsibility,” says Carmel Bagness, RCN Professor

Money matters

RCN Senior Welfare Adviser Claire Cannings shares some of her top tips from the guide to help make your money go further:

1. **Leave the credit card at home.** Only use credit for planned purchases, after you've had time to think about how you'll pay it off. Try to avoid taking it on nights out and shopping trips.
2. **Become bank-wise.** Many banks offer attractive introductory offers to tempt you to switch. Some will even give you up to £150, so it pays to check out different options. Visit

With pay for many health care staff falling in real terms, and living costs on the rise, there has never been a better time to re-address your relationship with money.

Becoming savvy with your spending will help you to cut costs where possible and make the most out of your pay packet each month. In tough times, even small changes can make a big difference and help reduce the stress of making ends meet.

The *RCN Money Guide for HCAs, HCSWs, APs, trainee nursing associates and nursing apprentices* will help you take charge of your finances.

Leading the way

When an opportunity to work for the RCN developing resources for health care support workers came up, assistant practitioner Lorraine Hicking-Woodison didn't have to think twice.

Lorraine has been involved with the RCN for several years, including as the HP Committee member for the South East region, and so was intrigued by the chance to see it from a different angle.

As the first health care support worker to be employed by the RCN in that type of role, she was shocked and delighted when she got the job.

“It was such a fantastic opportunity,” she says. “It’s a ground-breaking role. I’ve always felt well supported by the RCN, but the staff I’ve worked with have always been registered nurses as far as I’m aware. It’s great that they’re actively looking for support workers with the potential to reach that standard.”

The main focus of Lorraine’s work is improving the RCN’s learning and development offer for HCAs and APs. She realised that while the existing First Steps e-learning tool was good for new HCAs, there was a gap in terms of what was available for more experienced support workers.

To address this, Lorraine revamped the HCAs and APs section of the RCN website, which now signposts members to a range of online resources, including tools for developing fundamental skills such as maths and English. She’s also involved in developing a digital

capabilities framework, which will identify key digital skills for support workers and how they can be developed.

Lorraine says going from RCN member to staff has given her a different perspective on the College.

“It really amazed me to see how hard everyone in the nursing department works. I was astonished when I saw how much they do,” she adds.

One evening, after a tough day at work, a taxi driver asked Kelly what she did in the hospital he'd just picked her up from. After explaining that she worked as an HCA on a surgical ward, he commented: "Oh. You're just an assistant."

Kelly admits it took all her willpower not to react negatively to the all too common misunderstanding that her job is not one that deserves respect or recognition. But she says it's hard, because so many of her peers would make the same comment themselves.

"We're not 'just' anything," she says. "While we're not always recognised, we should be, because we are the skilled eyes and ears on the wards."

Kelly has been



I love my one-to-one time with patients and I want to be there to support them

A conversation with...
Maive Coley, HP
Committee Member for
the East Midlands

**So Maive, tell us about
your day job?**
I'm a clinical support

