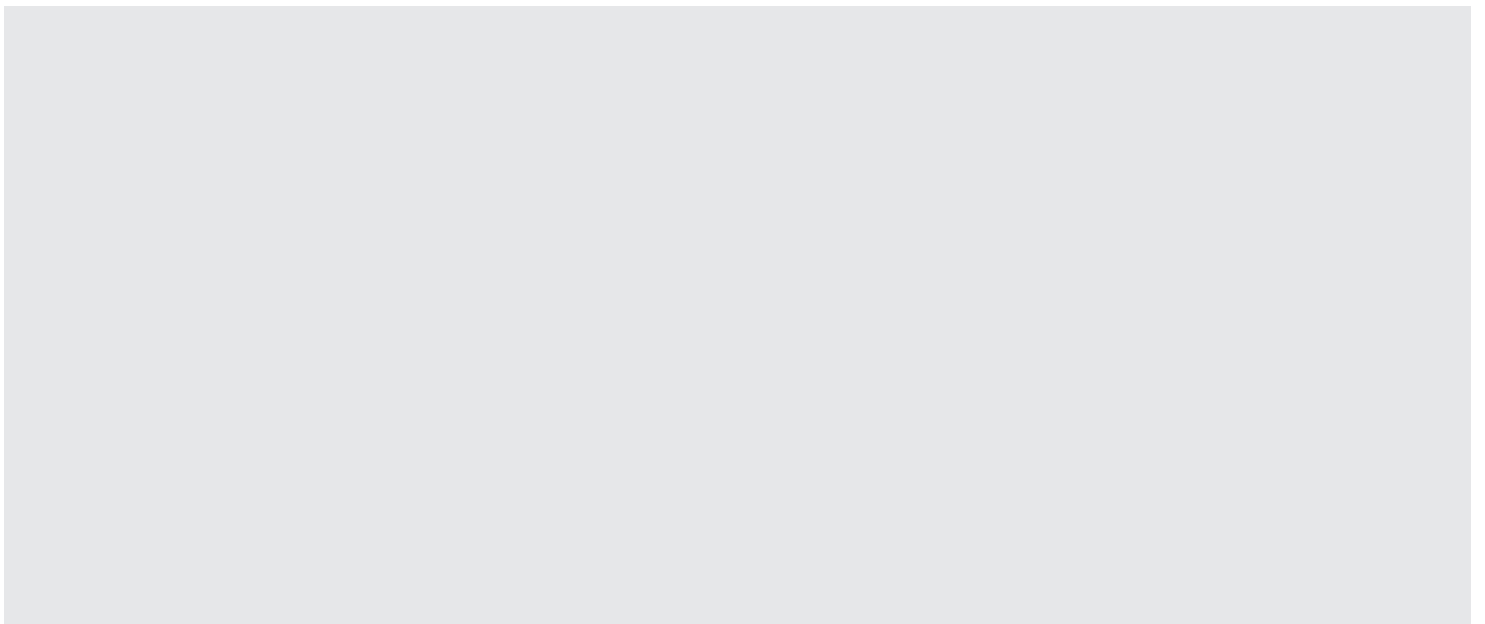


Activate

Vol 12 No 2 October 2017

News, views and support for RCN activists



The results are in from the elections for the RCN Trade Union Committee.

Elections for the RCN Professional Nursing Committee, which will fulfil a vital role in helping the RCN to achieve its purpose as a

The committee will work to ensure the RCN develops as a modern progressive trade union making a positive difference to the working lives of nursing staff.

Those elected are: Carol Evans (Eastern region), Neil Thompson (East Midlands), Karen Sanders (London), Michael Appleby (Northern), Fiona Devlin (Northern Ireland)*, Mike Travis (North West)*, Diane Coleman (Scotland), Liz Jeremiah (South East), Lorrae Allford (South West)*, Gaynor Jones (Wales)*, Tracey Budding (West Midlands), Andrew Bassett-Scott Toogood (Yorkshire & the Humber)*, Karen Pike (health practitioner member) and Katharine Youngs (student member).

Fiona Devlin said: "This is an opportunity for me to continue to influence the agenda at the highest level within the RCN and work to engage more of our members and strengthen our trade union activity."

Andy Bassett-Scott Toogood added: "As a new committee we have such a lot to offer our members as now is such a challenging time for nursing. More than ever we need to be a 'union'."

NHS pay negotiations – where are we now?

Can you help?

Josie Irwin, RCN Head of Employment Relations, answers your questions

What has the Government said about scrapping the NHS pay cap?

On 10 October Jeremy Hunt himself gave a categorical statement to Parliament saying the pay cap is scrapped. The RCN's negotiators will do their utmost to agree the best possible deal. Members will then have their say about any final agreement.

Do we trust him?

He also talked about 'flexible negotiations' and 'the need for a win-win'. The RCN has welcomed Mr Hunt's categorical statement but has also made it clear that the pay offer must not come in below inflation and ministers cannot ask the NHS to make other cuts to pay for it. Services must be given extra funding to cover the cost. Along with the other NHS unions the RCN has asked for an award at the level of inflation – currently 2.5% – plus a consolidated lump sum of £1,000 for all staff to start to make up the inflationary gap that has opened up since 2010. We want an investment for the future to make improvements to Agenda for Change to help retention and productivity.

What do 'flexible negotiations' mean?

We want to explore this with Department of Health officials and NHS Employers urgently. We must also explore parameters for any talks, funding, timescales and the role of the NHS Pay Review Body.

When will we get a pay offer for next year?

The deadline for submitting evidence to the NHS Pay Review Body has been extended to 15 December and the process now looks set to

run well into the new year. If this concludes later than 15 April we will need to secure a backdated award.

What if the cap is lifted but the pay offer is poor?

What are we asking for?

Along with the other NHS unions the RCN has asked for an award at the level of inflation – currently 2.5% – plus a consolidated lump sum of £1,000 for all staff to start to make up the inflationary gap that has opened up since 2010. We want an investment for the future to make improvements to Agenda for Change to help retention and productivity.

Retire and return

New Department of Health guidance provides advice on re-employing staff who've retired and receive an NHS pension. It aims to help employers justify decisions to recruit staff who "retire and return" in terms of service need and value for money. This helps the NHS retain the skills, knowledge and experience necessary to deliver safe patient care. Visit <http://tiny.cc/retireandreturn>

Reps' committees

The RCN UK Learning Representatives, Safety Representatives and Stewards Committees contribute to the development of RCN policies relating to workplace lifelong learning and career development, health and safety, and employment rights. Visit <http://tiny.cc/reps> to find out more about their work and their terms of reference. Email governance.support@rcn.org.uk to contact your local committee member.

VIEWS

You made sure the cap was scrapped

ASK AN
ADVISER



Someone by your side

A lot of my work is about representing individual members who are having difficulties at work, such as warnings over sickness absence. They need someone who is respected and knowledgeable to stand up and advocate for them. While these may seem small issues, this is the kind of day-to-day work that has a big impact on people's lives.

I'm always keen to try to ensure members get the best possible support. I'm always keen to try to ensure members get the best possible support. I'm always keen to try to ensure members get the best possible support.

NHS injury allowance: a steward reflects

It's been four years since NHS injury benefits were replaced by an injury allowance but some employers are lagging behind in properly implementing the change. Steward Phil Noyes reflects on a recent case where he pushed back to get the best outcome

I supported a member who'd fallen on a slippery pavement outside a patient's house. Her injury had long-term consequences and she found herself on lengthy sick leave and facing half pay.

I was disappointed the allowance wasn't immediately agreed, but was confident that we'd see that decision overturned on appeal.

However, the appeal held that she hadn't been clear about what footwear she had on at the time, and that it was a poor decision to have a conversation with the patient's daughter outside the house.

We objected to the line of reasoning, and with my support the member took out a grievance regarding the process.

Fortunately the stage three grievance panel saw the clear arguments we were making and overturned the decision.

They also made recommendations on how NHS injury allowance decisions should be made and for the trust to set up an appeals process involving senior managers from outside the service area.

It's worth checking what process you have in your organisation, and if there's not a specific procedure, ask why not.

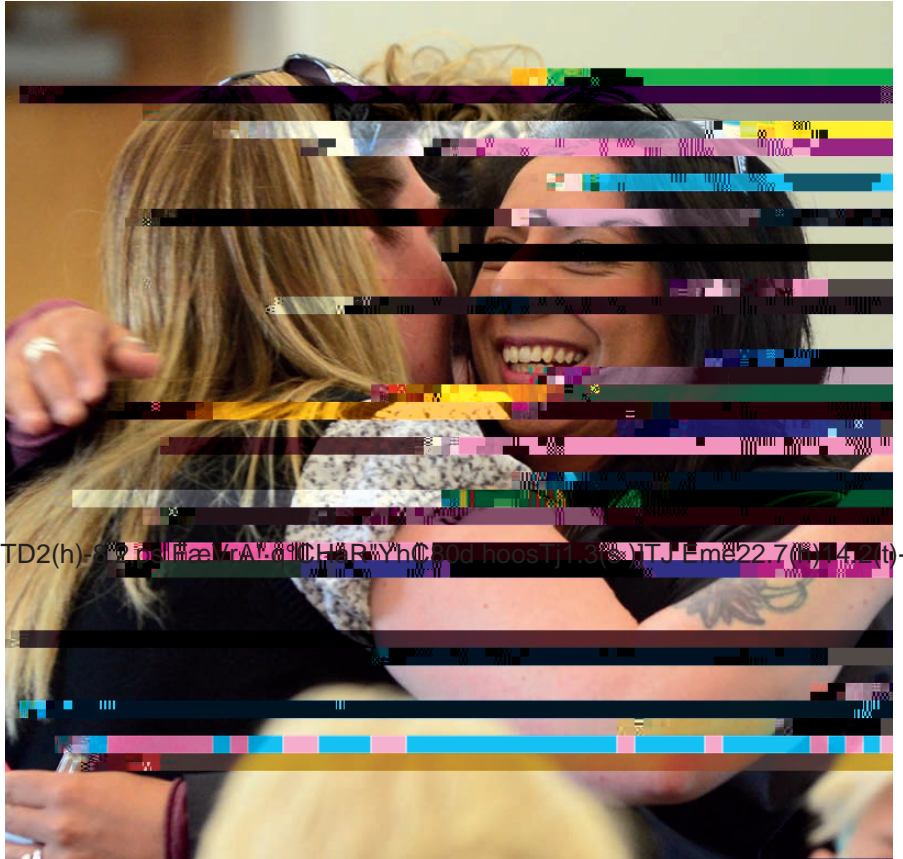
Honouring our unsung heroes

A new book celebrates the huge difference RCN reps make to members' lives

Every day in workplaces all over the country RCN reps are toiling away, often quietly and behind the scenes, to support members and improve their working lives.

Now a new RCN publication aims to put reps firmly in the spotlight, celebrating their many achievements through their own stories, experiences and a variety of photographs.

"We think it's time we honoured our unsung heroes," says Mairead O'Siochru, the staff member who's led the work. "This book helps us to understand much more about what reps do and how important they are."



NOTICEBOARD

Tools of the trade

Taking Industrial Action – A Legal Guide helps reps understand the restrictions on balloting, notice and picketing introduced in the Trade Union Act .

It also looks at other types of action unions take when a dispute arises. Read the LRD Publications booklet at <http://tiny.cc/indaction>

A mobile phone app has been used to improve the way the staff reward package is communicated at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust. Find out more at <http://tiny.cc/mobileapp>

If you have any queries about this information, please email RCN Library and Archive Services at rcn.library@rcn.org.uk