England's chief nursing officer, Yvonne Moores, addresses the RCN's annual paediatric nursing conference in Manchester last week. She said she was against the concept of the 'generic nurse' and wanted to see the retention of nurse specialisms.

**BABY FRIENDLY INITIATIVE DISCUSSED AT TOP LEVEL MEETING**

- Breastfeeding policy's future under scrutiny

**By Kate Williams**

HEALTH DEPARTMENT officials joined nursing and midwifery organisations last week at talks on the future of the Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI), the worldwide campaign to promote breastfeeding.

The meeting, hosted by the BFI's director Andrew Radford, discussed claims that the initiative is being implemented in a 'heavy handed' fashion in some parts of the UK.

The RCN's deputy director of nursing policy, Pippa Gough, who was nominated to speak on behalf of the meeting, said concerns raised by nurses in Nursing Standard were discussed. These have included claims that nurses have been told to withhold information on bottle feeding from mothers.

Ms Gough said the meeting, also attended by representatives of the Royal College of Midwives and the Health Visitors' Association, discussed how such practices, reported by nurses up and down the UK, could be avoided in the future.

There was general agreement that the UK needed a 'realistic' and 'achievable' policy, she said. 'We don't want this initiative to fail, because it's too important.'

The RCN, RCM, HVA and the health department plan to meet Mr Radford again on October 9.

The first full meeting of the BFI advisory panel is set for October 17. It will be the first time it has met since Mr Radford's appointment last October.

**DOH to clarify prescribing law**

THE GOVERNMENT is expected to reveal this week how it will overcome the legal pitfalls of nurses administering drugs under protocol.

Earlier this year it was revealed that nurses who administer medicines, such as vaccinating children or giving holiday jabs, could be breaking the law.

This week the health department is set to clarify the confusion following talks with professional organisations.

**Thousands in back pay won in grading appeal**

NINE NIGHT nurses in Wales are to share £33,000 in back pay after winning a clinical grading appeal dating back to 1998.

The nurses, eight ward sisters and a charge nurse, were graded F when clinical grades were introduced eight years ago, but last week successfully appealed that they should have been graded G. They were represented by the RCN.

The nurses were employed by South Glamorgan health authority when the grades were set, but their current employer, the University Hospital of Wales trust in Cardiff, will foot the bill.

Meanwhile, three palliative care nurse specialists at Morriston trust, West Glamorgan, also won appeals. The nurses, upgraded from G to H, will each receive £20,000 back pay.

**IN BRIEF**

- Nine new Thorn initiative training centres for mental health nurses are to be set up across the country following research highlighting the scheme's success, a professor of mental health has announced.
  
  Kevin Gournay from London's Institute of Psychiatry said the study showed that patients cared for by Thorn initiative trained nurses had better social functioning and a lower total symptom score after a year.

- Campaigners have urged the government to set up a task force at ministerial level to investigate key issues for people with learning disabilities. The recommendation is included in a report of the UK's largest ever inquiry into community care for people with learning disabilities, carried out by the Mental Health Foundation.
  
  Building Expectations, priced £12, is available from the foundation by phoning 0171 580 0145. An accessible version, suitable for people with learning disabilities, is available for £5, or both reports together cost £15.

- The Cancer Research Campaign and the health department launched a national campaign this week to give people from ethnic minorities better cancer care. The campaign follows a report in the British Journal of Cancer which shows health professionals do not properly recognise cancer as a major problem for ethnic minority groups.