NEWS

On the move

**PHILIP HUNT**, currently director of the National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts (NAHAT), will be the first chief executive of the NHS Confederation. The new body will be created out of the merger of the NHS Trust Federation and NAHAT, due to take place early in the new year.

**SUZANNE GOODBAND**, who started her career in the NHS as a nurse, has become the director of the NHS Trust Federation. She replaces **Ross Tristem**, who is retiring, and will prepare the organisation for its merger with NAHAT.

**JONATHAN ASBRIDGE** has been appointed chief nurse and director of quality assurance by the St Bartholomew’s and Royal London NHS trust. He is scheduled to move from a similar post at the Oxford Radcliffe hospital trust in the spring, having previously held board level positions at Addenbrooke’s hospital, Cambridge, and Llandough hospital, Cardiff. His clinical background is in intensive care and cardiothoracic surgery.

Little role for nurses in Labour’s NHS plans

**By Kate Williams**

NURSING UNIONS have condemned the Labour Party’s proposal to replace GP fundholding with a commissioning system led by GPs alone and offering only a subsidiary role to nurses.

**Christine Hancock**, Royal College of Nursing general secretary, said: ‘We are appalled that Labour has failed to recognise nursing’s central role in primary health care.

‘By proposing a new system led by general practitioners alone, not by general practice teams as a whole, Labour will not be able to deliver primary health care for the population.’

**Jackie Carnell**, director of the Health Visitors’ Association, said Labour’s proposals ‘totally overlooked’ nurses working in the community who have a wealth of expertise and knowledge.

But the RCN and the HVA did welcome **shadow health secretary Chris Smith’s** commitment to scrap the internal market and cut down on NHS red tape, which he outlined last week.

They also backed Mr Smith’s pledge to reintroduce national pay awards for nurses.

Unison head of health **Bob Abberley** welcomed Mr Smith’s promise of ‘evolution not revolution’ but said he would like to see a firmer commitment from Labour to increase resources for the NHS.

Institute of Health Services Management director **Karen Caines** called on Labour to provide information on how the system will work in practice and on ‘the way in which bureaucracy can be cut, but monitoring and financial controls tightened’.

The National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts said the NHS would be reassured by much of Labour’s policy, especially its intention to retain health authorities to purchase services and trusts to provide them.

**Liberal Democrat health spokesperson Simon Hughes** said: ‘Labour are at least trying to get real about the structures. The big question is whether they will ever get real about the money.’

Permanent funding for nurse-led injuries clinic

A NURSE-LED minor injuries clinic in Scotland is set to become a training base for nurses involved in similar work from all over the UK.

The clinic, at the Western general hospital, Edinburgh, opened as a pilot site in November 1994, since when it has handled more than 20,000 patients. Local purchasers Lothian Health recently promised to fund it permanently, which delighted nurses who had been employed on temporary contracts.

‘We are no longer a project, we are here to stay,’ said outpatient services manager **Carol Crowther**.

Now an independent evaluation report has called for services at the clinic to be extended, including allowing nurses to order a wider range of X-rays, so far restricted to lower limbs.

The report also recommends that the training of existing staff in the extended clinical protocols required should continue apace, and that it should become a training centre for the whole country.

NURSING UNIONS ‘APPALLED’ AT LABOUR’S FAILURE TO PUT NURSES AT CENTRE OF PRIMARY CARE

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