On the move

Ken Jarrold (above), the person responsible for ensuring the smooth introduction of local pay bargaining for nurses, is to quit his post on August 1. He has been appointed chief executive of County Durham health authority.

Alison Tierney, currently reader in nursing studies at Edinburgh University, has been promoted to a personal chair in nursing research. She will take up her new position on October 1.

Jane Duncan has been appointed midwife honorary treasurer by the Royal College of Midwives, replacing Yvonne Stone. Ms Duncan, a member of the RCM’s governing council for the past three years, is the acute strategy and contracts manager at the North and Mid Hampshire health authority.

Barry Hartley has been elected unopposed as chair of the National Care Homes Association by the organisation’s board of directors. He takes over from Eunice Paxman, who is retiring.

Union attacked for ‘fundamentally destructive role’ in hospital regimes

Prison officers blamed over special hospitals

By Joy Ogden

Members of the Prison Officers Association (POA) are sabotaging efforts to reform England’s three special hospitals, a mental health expert claimed last week.

Professor Elaine Murphy, vice chair of the Mental Health Act Commission writing in the British Medical Journal, said a hard core of POA members had ‘played a fundamentally destructive role in the struggle to turn the hospitals into therapeutic institutions’.

By contrast, she praised the RCN and Unison for their ‘quite different culture and values’.

But the POA has denied the claims, branding them ‘vitiolic and unbelievable’.

The criticisms appeared a week after a review of Broadmoor Hospital, instigated by the POA, concluded that allegations the hospital was in crisis were unfounded.

Professor Murphy’s editorial says that official inquiries repeatedly blamed a powerful core group of POA members, which managers had been unable to destroy, for an impoverished, overly restrictive regime.

And some POA members are alleged to be behind a wave of hate mail, the intimidation of new staff, the victimisation of non-members, and threats to senior managers at Broadmoor and England’s other special hospitals, Rampton and Ashworth, she writes.

But POA national officer Andy Gossage, chair of the central committee for special hospitals, said: ‘Professor Murphy is so far out it is unbelievable. There are no prison officers in special hospitals, the POA is represented at them by professional nurses.’

He said Professor Murphy’s observations were also at odds with the Department of Health review, which recommended a tightening of security, while ‘impoverished regimes’ were the result of budget cuts.

Ray Rowden, director of the High Security Commissioning Board, said: ‘I find it incongruous that professional nurses in an NHS specialist hospital choose to join a union that represents prison officers.

‘It is a matter of record that the POA has not been a positive, forward-looking force in these hospitals.’

Two-day conference on teenagers to mark Nurses Day

Nurses from all over the UK – and from thousands of miles away – are organising events to celebrate International Nurses Day on May 12.

A series of poster displays, exhibitions and church services will mark the annual event, which always falls on the birth­day of Florence Nightingale and this year has the theme of adolescent health.

Among the events is a service at Westminster Abbey, London, organised by the Florence Nightingale Foundation. A service will also be held in Liverpool’s Anglican Cathedral.

A two-day conference organised by the RCN will look at adolescent problems – investigating such subjects as sexual issues and the large number of self-harming teenagers.

Nurses as far away as the Falklands will also be getting in on the act. Staff nurse Chris Lindsey, who works at the King Edward VII Memorial Hospital in Port Stanley, said: ‘We really wanted to get involved. We have an exhibition in the hospital and we’re having a reception in the Governor’s residence.’

Midwives this week celebrated the International Day of the Midwife. On Monday, book sales and talks were held to promote ‘equity for women’.

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