IN BRIEF

- Louise Silverton (below), RCM deputy general secretary, has been made a Fellow of the Florence Nightingale Foundation for her outstanding contribution to midwifery education and practice. The first midwife to receive the award, Ms Silverton was formerly director of education and practice at the college. She trained at Edinburgh’s Simpson Memorial Hospital and completed her teaching diploma and MSc at Edinburgh University.

- Chancellor Gordon Brown will hold down nurses’ pay for the next three years as part of a ‘prudent policy’ to restrain public sector pay. Criticising his plans for public sector pay, RCN general secretary Christine Hancock said: ‘If we don’t invest in nursing we won’t be able to improve patient care and bring down waiting lists.’

- Northern Ireland’s Strategy for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting launched last week stresses the importance of collaboration between health and social services, public involvement and participation. The document identifies how nurses will contribute to primary care commissioning, improve clinical quality and enhance community and individual health.

- Manchester Royal Infirmary nursing director, Ms Davies said she has faced local opposition from nurses and other radiographers. ‘I have sorted out who my friends are. Some people are against what I am doing and I do not know if I can rely on them for support.’

By Nick Lipley

A LONDON hospital has come under fire from the RCN over plans to employ a radiographer to carry out emergency nurse practitioner tasks.

Management at Central Middlesex Hospital NHS Trust intend to employ the senior radiographer, Clare Davies, as a clinical practitioner at its minor injuries unit at Wembley Community Hospital.

According to Graham Morgan, trust nursing director, Ms Davies will perform ‘absolutely the same’ tasks as the 12 existing nurse practitioners in minor injuries who work at the unit on a rota.

‘This will involve following protocols on managing head, eye and knee injuries, cuts, abrasions and minor burns.

Ms Davies has completed a six-month ‘advanced emergency nurse practitioner’ degree module at Thames Valley University.

The move will allow trust management to maintain sufficient staff cover at the unit, which has no radiographer at weekends but cannot afford to employ one without reducing nursing provision.

It has stressed that Ms Davies will need ‘to be more than just a radiographer and pull her weight with the nurses’.

Ms Davies said she has faced local opposition from nurses and other radiographers. ‘I have sorted out who my friends are. Some people are against what I am doing and I do not know if I can rely on them for support.’

A UKCC spokesperson said the trust is acting within the law.

However, Mark Jones, responsible for RCN nurse practitioner policy and practice development, said that to become a nurse practitioner from scratch took about five years. ‘It is an example of management bolting nursing skills onto something else. It is most definitely unacceptable,’ he said.

Wendy Johnson, spokesperson for the Nurse Practitioners Association, agreed: ‘I would be concerned that a radiographer would be able to learn in six months all the skills a nurse practitioner would have after years of training.’

A university spokesperson highlighted the need for nurse practitioner standards, saying: ‘as a term, “nurse practitioner” is used loosely from trust to trust.’

Central Middlesex Hospital NHS Trust is the first trust to make such a move in the UK

Radiographer set to be nurse practitioner

By Nick Lipley

Nurses have been ‘barking up a number of wrong trees’, former Tory cabinet minister Michael Portillo declared last week.

Delivering the Dame Kathleen Raven lecture, he said: ‘If we don’t invest in nursing we won’t be able to improve patient care and enhance community and individual health.

Commissioning, improve participation. The document identifies how nurses will contribute to primary care commissioning, improve clinical quality and enhance community and individual health.

Mike Horgan, BNA managing director, said the move was the latest to ‘address safety issues wherever possible’ in an environment where nurses ‘risk assault on a daily basis’.

Kate Harris, marketing manager at MATCH Healthcare Services, said: ‘Security is an important issue. This may be something we offer in the future.’

Meryem Parker, manager at Reed Nursing Personnel, said: ‘We’ll monitor the progress of the BNA initiative with interest.’

Meanwhile, Aberdeen Royal Hospitals NHS Trust has contracted Securicor Guarding to provide extra security at night after a string of assaults on staff.

Assault cover offered to nurses

HIGH LEVELS of violence against nurses have prompted agencies to consider offering free assault cover for members.

Under a scheme launched last week by the British Nursing Association, nurses injured during assault could receive up to £2,500 per incident.

Other nursing agencies are now considering similar moves.