Bank nurses are entitled to holiday pay

I read the letter you published from the bank nurse asking why she was getting less when she was paid as an E grade than when she was paid as a D grade (Ask the experts August 11). There is one point she raised that was not covered by the answer.

She mentioned that she already lost out on holiday pay. I just want to remind all bank nurses that they are entitled to holiday pay – in my own case this is worked out every quarter based on the hours I have worked.

While on the subject of pay, I am a practice nurse who has not yet received this year’s pay rise. I understand it is not just that GPs need to pay it, but it has to be authorised by the local health authority. It is good to hear that this is being taken to the health department by the RCN.

P A Rawson
East Yorkshire

We can’t ignore problems in mental health nursing

I attended the conference of the practice development network for the Centre for Mental Health Services Development earlier this year and was inspired by Tom Sandford of the RCN.

He pulled no punches in describing the shocking state of acute inpatient mental health services. Despite a few protestations from delegates to the contrary, I felt that his honesty in identifying what we in the health services can often choose to ignore was motivating rather than depressing.

I am glad to be working for a trust that is actively involved in addressing shortfalls and whose staff are not complacent in sweeping problems under the carpet.

Evidence-based care is a living and evolving force within our trust. Even nursing assistants are included in analysis of attitudes and reflection on how care is perceived by service users through weekly training sessions.

As a research facilitator for acute in-patient services, I feel proud to have been given the opportunity to contribute to this climate of honest bridge building. I know that my own experiences as a patient some 15 years ago enable me to see the other side of the fence.

Our task as RMNs is to learn from our mistakes and be humble in our relationships with clients. They have so much to teach us if we are prepared to listen, and can help us to create better, more sensitive services.

I am happy to be working for a trust that has opted out of the game and puts care of clients before politics.

Liz Baines
Lancaster

The Mair Scholarship 2000

The Mair Scholarship was founded by the RCN Occupational Health Nurses Group in recognition of the contribution to occupational health nursing made by Professor Alex Mair when head of the department of community and occupational medicine, University of Dundee.

This bursary is available for first and second level nurses currently engaged in occupational health nursing in Scotland. It was established to further enhance the high standard of occupational health nursing by providing financial assistance. The scholarship may be used to:

- Undertake an evaluation of an OH practice.
- Undertake a study tour in one of the EU countries.
- Assist with the costs of researching into an aspect of occupational health nursing.

Applications for next year’s award must be returned by February 25 2000. Interviews will take place in March.

Application forms are available from:
The Mair Scholarship Trust
RCN Institute Scotland
42 South Oswald Road
Edinburgh EH9 2HH
Tel: 0131 662 1010

The Mair Scholarship Trust

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