RCN agrees timetable for Hancock’s replacement

By Graham Scott

THE NAME of the next RCN general secretary will be revealed in the week beginning January 22.

Members of the RCN’s governing council approved the timetable for appointment at a behind-closed-doors seminar last week.

Council members hope the new general secretary will be able to work alongside incumbent Christine Hancock for a few months before taking over in June. That would include attending next year’s RCN Congress in Harrogate in May.

Advertisements for the post will appear in Nursing Standard and other national publications within the next ten days, by which time the job description and person specification will have been posted on the RCN website. The only element of the person specification that has been agreed is that candidates will have to be on the UKCC’s nursing register.

The salary for the post has not been confirmed, although Council chair Debbie Murdock said: ‘I would not expect there to be a significant difference from the current salary.’ Miss Hancock received £89,442 last year.

Ms Murdock will lead a group of seven council members who will preside over the selection process. The others are college president Roswyn Hakesley-Brown, congress chair Maura Buchanan and regional representatives Pat Bottrill (Northern division), Jacynth Gillespie (West Midlands), Jill Jarvis (South West Thames) and James McAllister (Northern Ireland).

They will be advised by AT Kearney’s Executive Search, a firm of recruitment consultants, and a team of external advisers, which Ms Murdock said would be appointed shortly to provide ‘a balance of expertise’.

Council members have been sworn to secrecy over possible candidates, and RCN staff have been advised to do the same.

The current general secretary will play no part in the process, but will be available should any candidate ask to speak to her. Miss Hancock announced her departure the day after the RCN annual general meeting in Cardiff last month.

In brief

Press, radio and television advertisements encouraging people to call NHS Direct were launched this week as the service was made available throughout England. The service now employs 1,200 nurses.

The Privy Council has given the RCN permission to modify the conditions of its royal charter and offer associate membership to healthcare assistants (HCAs) and nurse cadets.

Campaign to end needlestick injuries

FOUR OUT of five sharps involved in needlestick accidents at work are contaminated, according to figures published at the launch of a prevention network last week.

Results from the RCN EPINet survey, announced at the Infection Control Nurses Association annual conference in Edinburgh, show that two out of five accidents involve nurses. In a similar proportion of accidents, the injured person was not the original user of the sharp.

The Safer Needles for Safer Healthcare Network, supported by the RCN and Unison, is calling for regulatory changes to ensure the use of safety devices where appropriate to protect NHS staff, in line with practice in other countries.

The EPINet survey, undertaken at 12 sites over eight weeks from July, found 212 reported injuries.

RCN senior employment relations officer Sheelagh Brewer said: ‘Tens of thousands of nurses every year suffer the stress and anxiety caused by needlestick injuries. Worst of all, these injuries do not have to happen and would not happen if a safer system was in place in their workplaces.’

Unison national officer Jon Richards added: ‘The technology exists to protect healthcare workers from needlestick injuries, yet few hospitals use these safer needle devices.’

Police last week interviewed a school nurse over claims she immunised a boy against meningitis without obtaining parental consent.

The nurse, who has not been named, works for North Staffs Combined Health NHS Trust.

The boy’s mother, who claims she did not give consent, asked police to bring an assault charge. The trust has apologised to her, but is standing by the nurse, insisting that she acted in good faith.

The mother when the school and nurse cadets.

Whether to charge her.

Coincidence is president of the secretary. The secretary called standing by the nurse, insisting apologised to her, but is asked police to bring an assault charge. The trust has

Police say there was a misunderstanding between the mother and the school secretary. The secretary called the mother when the school did not receive a consent form.

Alison Norman, who by coincidence is president of the UKCC, is the chief executive of the North Staffs Combined Health NHS Trust.

The nurse, who has not been named, works for North Staffs Combined Health NHS Trust.

The nurse has continued to immunise children. As Nursing Standard went to press no decision had been taken on whether to charge her.

Lisbeth Hockey received a gold medal from the Queen’s Nursing Institute last week for her long and outstanding service to community nursing. She is only the fourth person to receive the honour, which was bestowed at a ceremony at London’s Cafe Royal.

Nursing’s own gold medallist

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