as possibly having additional mental health needs, and the need for all complaints to be seen in that context.

I have sent the weblink of the interview with Ms Stockwell to a group of 50 undergraduate mental health nursing students and I look forward to their feedback.

Joseph Ferris, nurse lecturer, University of Ulster, Magee, Derry

AGENDA FOR CHANGE NURSES ARE NOT THE ONLY ONES FACING CUTS

Further to ‘Under deconstruction – employers chip away at Agenda for Change’ (analysis April 25), my wife is a well-qualified practice nurse who loves what she does.

She has a degree and diplomas in the care of people with asthma, diabetes and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

She worked for many years in NHS hospitals and has nine years’ experience of practice nursing in GP surgeries.

As a practice nurse, she has never received Agenda for Change pay and conditions. Nor does she receive fringe allowances, despite living in a high-cost area.

The practice where she works is attempting to halve her sick pay entitlement and reduce her annual holiday entitlement by four days. It is not only Agenda for Change terms and conditions that are being eroded.

Name and address withheld

ANN McMAHON’S ARTICLE ON INNOVATION IS INSPIRATIONAL

What an excellent article on innovation in nursing practice from Ann McMahon, research and innovation adviser at the RCN’s learning and development institute (features April 25).

I realised from the article that throughout my career I have had opportunities to make changes in nursing – particularly in emergency nursing – that fit well into Ann’s type 1 and type 2 categories of adaptive and disruptive innovation. I hope all nurses who read the article will be inspired to take these ideas forward. Ann is to be congratulated for undertaking this important research and presenting it in such an easy to understand way.

Gary Jones, by email

STAFF WHO SPEAK OUT FOR PATIENTS NEED SUPPORT FROM REGULATORS

Further to Marc Cornock’s letter (April 11) about taking action on poor practice, nurses who confront their employers about poor standards of care can have their lives made absolute hell, as well as having their career prospects destroyed.

It is to be hoped that nurses who do put their heads above the parapet to uphold the Nursing and Midwifery Council code would receive full support from the regulator.

At present, they do not.

Mike Owen, Bolton

PRACTICE EDUCATION FACILITATORS SUPPORT MENTORS, NOT STUDENTS

Practice education facilitator Maggie Bennett says mentors lack the skills and confidence to fail underperforming pre-registration nursing students (news March 7).

As a third-year nursing student, my experience is that mentors do receive good support from colleagues and practice education facilitators (PEFs).

When problems arise, however, PEFs tend to exclude students from their discussions with mentors, colleagues and link tutors from the university. They fail to communicate with students and, when they finally contact them, it is often too late.

I have also experienced mentors wanting to fill in paperwork without students being present and challenging students about this when they have asked to complete it together.

Mentors should be monitored independently to exclude bias. Regular assessments would ensure that they understand the process and the paperwork. I also believe that some nurses should not be mentors at all.

Alexandra Williams, by email

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Obituary

Sue Pettett 1948-2012
Nurse, RCN activist and health and safety advocate

Sue Pettett, who has died aged 63, was a champion for health and safety in the workplace. She was well known throughout the RCN as a committed activist whose compassion and willingness to help members, fellow campaigners and staff contributed to the strength of the college in Grampian.

Sue’s nursing career began as an enrolled nurse in the army. In the 1990s she completed a conversion course at Foresterhill College in Aberdeen, before working as a staff nurse in Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. Sue finished her career as a moving and handling trainer in NHS Grampian, retiring in 2010.

She was passionate about ensuring that staff were safe in the workplace. She encouraged everyone to undertake appropriate training and she assessed the risks to their wellbeing at work.

Sue was an active member of the RCN Grampian branch for many years. She held a variety of offices, most recently as treasurer.

She was a frequent attendee at RCN congresses and a regular contributor at the microphone during debates. Sue was an experienced RCN representative, demonstrating her commitment to nursing and the RCN as a health and safety rep and steward, and member of the Work Injured Nurses Group.

Her commitment extended beyond her retirement. Sue continued to work as a steward and to offer support to new colleagues, who benefited greatly from her experience.

Sue was keen supporter of the Scouts for many years, organising the wardrobe for the gang shows in March every year, as well as assisting at local camps.

Rosie Glass is RCN Scottish Board member for Grampian