IN BRIEF

National standards for the management of sexually transmitted infections have been updated to reflect that most sexual health services in England are now commissioned by local authorities.

The British Association for Sexual Health and HIV and the Medical Foundation for HIV & Sexual Health have updated the standards for the management of sexually transmitted infections this month to acknowledge commissioning changes introduced under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Go to www.bashh.org/STIManagement

A major incident was declared at Belfast’s Royal Victoria Hospital as staff struggled to clear a backlog of A&E patients. Extra staff, including nurses, were drafted in to deal with an ‘unexpected’ surge in demand on January 9, sparking a protest that involved dozens of UNison members outside the hospital the following day. Hospital bosses praised staff for acting ‘professionally and quickly during the difficult situation’.

RCN international committee chair
Kath McCourt has been elected vice president of the Commonwealth Nurses Federation.

The federation is based at the RCN’s London headquarters and works with nursing organisations throughout the Commonwealth to develop international nursing networks, share good practice and influence local health policy.

Health services regulator Monitor has launched an investigation into Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust following concerns that patients were put at risk.

Monitor will examine whether A&E staffing issues highlighted in two Care Quality Commission inspections, carried out last autumn, point to wider problems with how the trust is run.

A guide encouraging healthcare professionals to develop effective communication with the carers of people who have dementia will be launched by the RCN in the House of Commons next week.

The Triangle of Care guide sets out a framework based on six standards, including training staff in carer engagement and providing carer support. The launch will be hosted by All-Party Parliamentary Group on Dementia vice-chair and Labour MP Hazel Blears. Go to www.rcn.org.uk/dementia

The RCN will share best practice with nurses in Zambia as part of a partnership with the Zambia Union of Nurses Organisation.

The two organisations have agreed a memorandum of understanding. RCN general secretary Peter Carter said: ‘This is an opportunity to learn how other nursing organisations work, what challenges nurses in other countries are facing, and share our experiences.’

Awards worth £500 are up for grabs for professionals identifying and managing malnutrition in adults. Funds are open to those who demonstrate examples of best practice and will be put towards a delegate place at an educational event or conference of their choice. Go to tiny.cc/best_practice_awards

HEALTH VISITOR PLAN SEEN AS INFLEXIBLE

RCN Scotland has expressed disappointment that the Scottish parliament last week rejected an amendment to draft legislation that would have given health visitors statutory responsibility for children aged under five.

The amendment, lodged by Conservative spokesperson on young people Liz Smith and debated as part of the Children and Young People Bill, was backed by the RCN, which has been campaigning for more health visitors.

But MSPs said the amendment, which would have made health visitors the named person for pre-school children, would have been too inflexible.

The RCN welcomed news that government statutory guidance accompanying the bill once it becomes law would say that the named person for pre-school children should be health visitors, except in certain circumstances.

RCN Scotland director Theresa Fyffe said: ‘While we understand the Scottish Government’s reasons for wanting flexibility to allow other specialist and appropriately skilled nurses to take on the role, we do think the legislation should be explicit to avoid health boards finding reasons to allocate the role to less appropriate staff.’

Long shifts lead to regrets over critical care decisions

Critical care nurses working 12-hour shifts are more likely to regret clinical decisions than those who do shorter shifts, according to research.

A study of 605 nurses, all members of the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses, considered a link between tiredness and clinical decision regret. It found that of the 157 nurses who said they had regretted a decision, 144 had worked for 12 hours.

The researchers concluded that nurses who are tired or have been unable to recover between shifts are more likely to experience impaired judgement.

They said the number of preventable adverse drug events in critical care units is twice the error rate in non-critical care nurse settings.

The researchers recommend that employers should encourage staff to take naps and breaks to improve patient safety.

To read the study go to tinyurl.com/criticalcarefatigue