A new format, but with quality still to the fore

Welcome to the first ever issue of Nursing Standard in its 27-year history to be produced in digital format only. I hope you enjoy the additional features that have been made possible as a result, notably greater use of video.

The Issue of 12-hour Shifts Polarises Professional Opinion Like Nothing Else

We are aware that our print subscribers love their print copies – and normal service will resume next week – but the thousands who have already made the switch to the digital version say they like it even more. The use of technology has allowed us to ensure this week’s issue contains all the usual news, features, comment, reviews, clinical articles and careers advice, with some extras thrown in. Please email me (graham.scott@rcnpublishing.co.uk) with your feedback.

You are also invited to comment on the issue of 12-hour shifts, which seems to polarise professional opinion like nothing else. There are many supporters who like the flexibility they offer to them personally, and the continuity of care that should result. Fewer handovers should save time and reduce the risk of important information not being passed on.

On the other hand, opponents of the system point to over-tired staff flagging at the end of their shifts, and being more likely to make a mistake on the ward or on their journeys home. Sceptics will argue that longer shifts with fewer handovers are being introduced to save money, not improve outcomes.

England’s chief nurse Jane Cummings is committed to studying the pros and cons of 12-hour shifts, and her colleagues at NHS England are in the process of determining the scope and timetable for an investigation. Such an inquiry would be welcome.

What is the evidence? Do patients benefit or suffer? Are there some settings where longer shifts make sense, and others where they do not? Are they being introduced to save money, or to enhance care? Let us know what you think, and we will pass on your comments to Ms Cummings and her team.

See 12 hours: the long and the short of it

Air your views on @NSComment

Have your say by joining our weekly Twitter debate. Every Thursday from 12.30 to 1.30 use #NSComment and share your views with other nurses on a hot topic of the day.