

Welcome Note

Well... it looks like the start of Summer is finally here. Let's hope it lasts!

During the last few months, we have been extremely busy which is welcoming given the difficulties in the current economic climate. I hope you find the following pages of interest. We welcome articles for inclusion in future issues of our newsletter and if anyone would like to submit an article, please send them into our offices.

Compliments

The April Team know that the staff on our database are excellent Nurses and Carers, but it is easy to take them for granted. It is therefore appreciated, when those clients who have been pleased with the services provided by April, feel it fitting to put pen to paper in order to praise our staff or the individual they have worked with.

Don't forget, we will reward specific Carers or Nurses with £5 worth of lottery tickets whenever we receive a verbal compliment or £10 whenever we receive a written compliment in recognition of what is often an undervalued yet vital role in the community.

Welcome aboard

We would also like to extend a warm welcome to the following new staff members who have joined April since the publication of our last Newsletter.

- Lisa Beckmann HCA
- Susan Owen HCA
- Mary Pugh RGN
- Eva Richards RGN

Employee of the Quarter

We are delighted to announce that this edition's Employee of the Quarter is Adrienne Walters, Registered Nurse. Adrienne joined April in May 2008 and since that time has proved to be a reliable and dedicated individual who is popular and valued by those clients she cares for. In her spare time, Adrienne enjoys walking her dog, gardening and reading history books.

Well done Adrienne and Congratulations!



Adrienne Walters pictured (left) receiving her certificate from Wendy Duckworth, Registered Manager

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Welcome Note	Page 1
Welcome Aboard	Page 1
Employee of the Quarter	Page 1
In the Spotlight	Page 2
Together we can weather the storm	Page 2
RCN Launches Phone Line	Page 3
Spring into Summer Competition	Page 3
We must stop this immediately	Page 4
Sportsperson of the Year	Page 4
Vetting Scheme Announced	Page 5
RCN Welcomes News	Page 6
RCN Wales Conference	Page 6
A Story about Everybody	Page 6
C.E of CFW hits out at care Auctions	Page 7

In the Spotlight...

'In the Spotlight' this Edition is one of our Health Care Assistants, Lisa Beckmann



Q. What three words best describe you?

A. Dedicated, Reliable, Hardworking

Q. Imagine you were stuck on a desert island, and could take one person and one object, who and what would they be?

A. My partner James Taylor and a survival kit

Q. What is your favourite place in the world?

A. Greece

Q. Which celebrity would you want to play the role of you in a film about your life?

A. Drew Barrymore

Q. What was the last CD you bought?

A. Mesmerize by System of a Down

Q. If you were on death row what would your last meal be?

A. Orecchette Pollo (Italian) and Gamberetti Dampfnudeln (German) with Vanilla Sauce

Q. If you could do any job in the world, what would it be?

A. Foster Parent

Watch Out, Next Time it could be you!

Together we can weather the storm

By UKHCA Chairman

As the recession bites, I cannot help but hope that the homecare sector is well placed to fare better than some. Homecare is, after all, not a luxury item that can be foregone when times are tough.

Indeed, the ageing population and increasing needs of people with conditions like dementia, highlighted in the National Dementia Strategy, and rising expectations of choice of care, suggest we may find ourselves entering a busy period. But with this responsibility comes a duty to make sure our standards are as high as possible. I feel I must sound one large, looming note of caution and that is funding. Against the rising optimism are fears for the public purse, as speculation grows about the effect of the current financial climate on council budgets, and how this will affect both providers' and individuals' ability to pay for care. Inevitably, the financial squeeze will impact on local authorities unless the Government is prepared to support them in the same way that it is supporting the banks. If councils have less and less money they will look to make savings and that could mean less money available for social care. That shouldn't be the case. Sir Peter Gershon recommended to the Government, following his review of efficiency in the public sector, that savings were perfectly possible without harming frontline services. I fear that many local authorities will not reach that conclusion. The crucial question that will become clear is how vital does the Government view social care? It clearly sees the banking sector as vital to the economic recovery and, as we go to press, we wait to see if it will pitch in to support other sectors. The Government, quite rightly, wants to see standards continue to improve in the homecare sector. But if funding for that care is not forthcoming and commissioners are again unable to provide a fair price for care, that continued improvement is compromised. Service provision, staff recruitment and training will all suffer. That

would be a shame because on the face of it social care does offer an avenue to those who sadly will lose their jobs during this economic downturn. Continuing demand will mean a need for people to work in social care and for those who find themselves out of work and willing to consider a change of direction, it does offer opportunities. But unless funding for the sector is protected, recruitment to meet that demand will be done with one hand behind our collective back. Indeed, the pressures on those providers look set to grow – an increase in the number of days’ paid statutory holiday and a rise in the minimum wage being just two things we will have to tackle this spring and autumn.

RCN launches phone line to support whistleblowing nurses

Raising concerns, raising standards

The RCN has launched a dedicated telephone line to allow RCN members to talk in confidence about serious and immediate worries that patient safety is being put at risk in their workplace. This information will be used to support the nurse to raise concerns and, if needed, the RCN will step in swiftly to investigate concerns directly with employers. RCN members can also report their concerns using a form on the RCN website: www.rcn.org.uk/raisingconcerns.

On the subject of whistleblowing, the RCN has previously said:

"It is absolutely vital that healthcare staff at all levels feel they can raise concerns about poor patient care with their managers. Those in charge must put robust systems in place which allow staff to voice their concerns. Just as important is the need for Trusts to ensure that every member of staff is fully aware of such systems and know that they will be supported when raising genuine concerns.

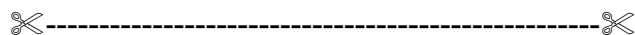
"However, it is clear that there are parts of the health service which do not have such systems or working environments in place. This can put staff in an extremely difficult position and when staff concerns are discouraged or ignored, it can often lead to poor patient care getting worse."

Spring into Summer Competition

This Quarter’s Competition Prize is a Samsung Touch Convection Oven, Microwave and Grill

1. What is the collective name of a group of seventeen hundred islands between Canada and the USA which are popular summer resorts?
2. Where were the 1968 Summer Olympics held?
3. What is used as the filling of a summer pudding?
4. In 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland', what was done all on a summer's day?
5. Which actor, later to find fame in 'It Ain't Half Hot Mum', played the part of one of Cliff Richard's friends in the film 'Summer Holiday'?
6. Which brothers wrote the song summertime?
7. Which duo had a hit in 1978 with Summer Nights?
8. The film Summersby starred Richard Gere and which actress?
9. Who had a hit record in 1961 with Summertime Blues?
10. Which group had a hit with the song "In the summertime"?

For your chance to win this super prize, fill out your answers below, cut them out and send them in to us. First correct entry drawn after the closing date 15 July 2009 will be our winner.



Name:

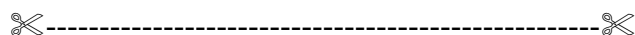
Address:

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Telephone No:

ANSWERS:

1.
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7.
8.
9.
10.



We Must Stop this Immediately!

Have you noticed that stairs are getting *steeper*? Groceries are *heavier*? And, everything is *further* away? Yesterday I walked to the corner and I was dumbfounded to discover how *long* our street had become!

And, you know, people are less considerate now, especially the young ones. They speak in *whispers* all the time! If you ask them to speak up they just keep repeating themselves, endlessly mouthing the same *silent message* until they're red in the face! What do they think I am, a lip reader?

I also think they are much younger than I was at the same age. On the other hand, people my own age are so much *older* than I am. I ran into an old friend the other day and she has aged so much that she *didn't even recognise* me.

I got to thinking about the poor dear while I was combing my hair this morning, and in doing so, I glanced at my own reflection. Well, REALLY NOW - even mirrors are not made the way they used to be!

And another thing: everyone drives so fast these days! You're risking life and limb if you happen to pull onto the road in front of them. All I can say is, their brakes must wear out awfully fast, the way I see them screech and swerve in my rear view mirror.

Clothing manufacturers are less civilized these days. Why else would they suddenly start labelling a size 10 or 12 dress as 18 or 20? Do they think no one notices? The people who make bathroom scales are pulling the same prank. Do they think I actually 'believe' the number I see on that dial? HA! I would never let myself weigh that much! Just who do these people think they're fooling?

I'd like to call up someone in authority to report what's going on, but the telephone company is in on the conspiracy, too! They've printed the phone books in such small type that no one could ever find a number in there!

Unless something drastic happens pretty soon, everyone will have to suffer these awful indignities.

Thank you to Mr Norman Taylor for this contribution.

Sportsperson of the Year

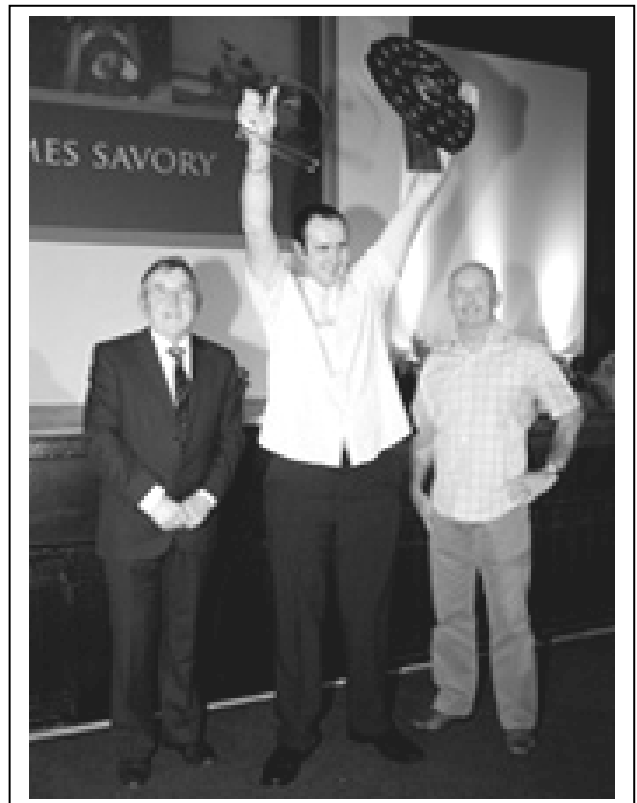
We are delighted to announce that one of our clients, James Savory has been named the Vale's disabled sportsperson of the year.

James is a multi-talented sportsman who competes in several sports including gymnastics, badminton, boccia and judo.

James has been a member of Special Olympics for 20 years and will be competing in 6 events in Leicester this year where he is aiming to achieve gold.

He competed in the Dublin World Games in 2003 and ran with the 2004 Olympic Torch for Athens, through London where he met Colin Jackson CBE and Stephanie Cook MBE.

Congratulations James!!



James Savory holds his trophy and shield aloft after being named the Vale's disabled sportsperson of the year

Vetting Scheme Delivery Announced

Strong safeguards to protect children and vulnerable adults were set out in greater detail by the Government ahead of the launch of the Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS), later this year. The scheme, which is at the heart of the government's strategy to increase the protection of vulnerable members of the society, begins on 12th October 2009.

The UK already has one of the most advanced systems in the world for checking those who work in positions of trust with children and vulnerable adults. Increased safeguards will begin to be brought into effect from 12th October 2009, with around five million more jobs and voluntary positions – including most NHS jobs becoming subject to checks. This will result in many more people that pose a risk to vulnerable people being excluded from the workplace.

Additional safeguards starting in October are:

Reduction of red tape

Two barring lists will be administered by a single organisation, the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA), rather than the three lists currently maintained by two different Government departments: Protection of Children Act (POCA), Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) and list 99

The introduction of barring from 'regulated activities'

People included on the new barred list by the ISA will be barred from a much wider range of jobs and activities than before, particularly in areas of work with vulnerable adults such as the NHS

A new duty to share information

Employers, social services and professional regulators will have to notify the ISA of relevant information so individuals who pose a threat to

vulnerable groups can be identified and barred from working with these groups.

New criminal offences

It will become a crime for a barred individual to seek or undertake work with vulnerable groups, and for employers to knowingly take them on.

From 26th July 2010, all new entrants to roles working regularly with vulnerable groups and those switching jobs to a new provider within these sectors, will be able to register an interest in an individual's ISA registration status to be continuously informed of changes in an employee's registration status. To ensure robust testing and to maximise the safety of vulnerable groups, the mechanism that keeps employers informed of changes in registration status will also be introduced in July 2010 next year rather than October 2009.

So as not to disrupt normal recruitment over the traditionally busy summer period, the legal requirement for employees to register with the ISA, and employers to check their status, will come into force in November 2010.

Home Office Minister, Meg Hillier said: 'the protection of children and vulnerable adults is a priority for the government. The extra safeguards we are delivering from 12th October 2009 and next year will help remove an even greater number of unsuitable people who pose a potential risk to vulnerable groups from the workforce.'

'We already have one of the most comprehensive vetting systems in the world. Once employers start being updated with new information about their employees from July 2010, it will offer even greater protection.'

The VBS is designed to offer a more streamlined, faster system of workplace vetting for those working with children and vulnerable adults building on existing good practices. Good progress has already been made to deliver the Vetting and Barring Scheme, a direct response to the recommendations of the Bichard Inquiry.

RCN welcomes news that infection rates are decreasing

Welcoming the publication of the National Audit Office report, Reducing Healthcare Associated Infections in Hospitals in England, Dr Peter Carter, RCN Chief Executive & General Secretary, said:

"This report rightly recognises the hard work and dedication of those healthcare staff who are helping to tackle MRSA and C. difficile. The innovation and leadership of nurses has been key to driving down infection rates and improving the quality of care for all patients.

"However, despite an overall fall in infection rates, a minority of Trusts have seen infection rates rise, giving a clear warning that more needs to be done. If the Government is serious about reducing HCAs, it must invest in the appropriate training, support and equipment.

"Healthcare staff also need to recognise that fighting infection is about much more than just hand washing. It's about keeping every part of the patient environment, and every piece of equipment, clean all of the time because infections like MRSA and C.diff still pose a very serious threat. Good leadership is needed to foster a culture where excellent infection control is second nature to all health workers.

"The Royal College of Nursing looks forward to continuing its work with the National Audit Office and Department of Health to make HCAs a problem of the past."

RCN Wales Conference 2009

The RCN Wales Conference 2009 will be held in Cardiff on Thursday 30 July 2009. The conference will explore and celebrate nursing leadership in all its dimensions and look at the challenges the nursing family faces in today's clinical environment. The one day event is aimed at all the members of the nursing family across the NHS and the independent sector.

A STORY ABOUT EVERYBODY

This is a story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody.

There was an important job to be done and Everybody was asked to do it. Everybody was sure Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it.

Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought Anybody could do it but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn't do it.

It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

Care Forum Wales chief executive hits out at online care bid auctions

Following a recent Panorama programme on homecare, Care Forum Wales chief executive, Mario Kreft says reverse auctions for care contracts are tantamount to saying people have a cost, but no value.

Online auctions where contracts to care for vulnerable people are given to the lowest bidder should be banned. That's the strong message from social care doyen Mario Kreft who has condemned "reverse e-auctions" as being immoral.

The practice was recently reported in an investigation by the BBC's current affairs programme, Panorama.

Mr Kreft, chief executive of Care Forum Wales, said he was horrified by a number of the revelations contained in the programme - not least the approach of local authorities in commissioning services. - saying the programme had rekindled the debate about the quality of domiciliary care and, in particular, the squeeze on funding to provide care for people in their own homes.

Reverse e-auctions are one of the ways in which local authorities are said to be using to drive down costs, compelling care providers to go online to bid the lowest hourly rate for care - with the contract often going to the lowest bidder. In the Scottish example shown by Panorama, the bids went down by 5p at a time and the successful contractor offered an hourly rate of £9.95. Mr Kreft says this leads to lower wages for staff and compromises standards of care.

"Anyone who watched the recent Panorama programme, 'Britain's Homecare Scandal', will have been appalled by much of what they uncovered," said Mr Kreft.

"The jaw-dropping reverse auction arrangement set by one of the Scottish local authorities featured in the programme is quite simply immoral. It results in human beings

being traded like cattle at an auction - it's tantamount to saying that people have a cost but no value.

"While we need good social care workers and social care providers, the people responsible for commissioning services must not be allowed to cut the cost of purchasing social care without regard to its quality. This does not only apply to domiciliary care but all social care services provided to vulnerable people. Neither the public nor independent providers should be complacent for one moment."

Commissioners and providers share the responsibility

Mr Kreft said that, while the programme highlighted significant failings in the system, the responsibility for the commissioning of woefully inadequate services must be shared between the providers involved and those commissioning the services.

"On this occasion services in England and Scotland were featured but we cannot allow this to happen in Wales," said Mr Kreft.

"Reverse e-auctions should be outlawed immediately.

"This was proof, if any were needed, of why homecare providers should work collaboratively at both a local and national level. "The public has a right to expect a national minimum standard of service that is provided by appropriately trained and competent social care workers who are managed by an appropriately regulated organisation.

"The public also rightly expects organisations responsible for commissioning services to take proper account of the real cost of providing quality services."

April Complete Care Solutions Ltd

If you have any stories or articles you would like to see printed in the quarterly Newsletter – please send them in to Wendy Duckworth, Registered Manager, April Complete Care Solutions, 14 Hendre Road, Pencoed, Bridgend CF35 5NW

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