

## NOTICE BOARD

### NHS Health and Wellbeing Staff health the Boorman review Workshops

to help people responsible for staff health and wellbeing to implement the Boorman review's recommendations will be held in London on February 24, York on March 4, Bristol on March 11 and Derby on March 17. They will feature presentations from the public and private sector to help participants develop local health and wellbeing strategies. Email [nhs wellbeing@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:nhs wellbeing@dh.gsi.gov.uk)

**Equality conference** An RCN conference titled Race Equality: Getting it Right will be held on March 1 at the college's London headquarters. Speakers will review progress towards race equality in the workplace in the ten years since the Race Relations (Amendment) Act was passed. Email [diversity.team@rcn.org.uk](mailto:diversity.team@rcn.org.uk)

**Nurse partners** The Queen's Nursing Institute will hold a conference for nurse partners at the Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisations on March 11. It will examine practical issues associated with nurse partnership including finances, profit share and engaging commissioners. The meeting will review the opportunities open to nurses. Delegates will hear from several pioneers of the QNI's nurse partners' network, who will share their business experiences. [www.qni.org.uk/nurses-in-business/nurse-partners-network.html](http://www.qni.org.uk/nurses-in-business/nurse-partners-network.html)



The Dementia Services  
Development Centre

### Dementia The University of Stirling dementia services

development centre is seeking abstracts for its annual conference from professionals working with patients who have dementia. *Coming of Age: Dementia in the 21st Century*, which takes place in London from October 19 to 21, will address themes including early diagnosis and intervention, living well in care homes, and improving carer support. The deadline for submissions is March 10. <http://dementia.stir.ac.uk/London2010>

**Safety in general practice** A 30-minute web seminar hosted by the NHS Institute will take place on March 15 at 1pm, to be repeated on May 2 at 1pm. The sessions are for primary care nurses and GPs and will introduce the safety trigger tool developed by the institute to help practices calculate their rates of patient harm and inform safety improvement decisions. The seminars are free but registration is essential. Go to: <http://tinyurl.com/y94yo9y>

# ESSENTIAL CARE

## Nicola Davies analyses the Boorman review into the health and wellbeing of NHS staff

The NHS grew out of the ideal that good health care should be available for all. Although there have been great efforts to improve the patient experience, few have enquired into the health of NHS staff.

The NHS constitution pledges commitment to the health and wellbeing of all staff, but there is a strong case for change and improvement.

The independent Boorman review into the health of NHS staff, published last year, emphasised that to provide high quality care, healthy staff are not simply 'nice-to-have', but essential.

The review gathered evidence about staff health and recommended improvements.

More than 80 per cent of respondents believed the wellbeing of staff affects patient care. The review also found:

- ▶ Staff sickness absence runs at 10.7 days per person annually.
  - ▶ 10.3 million days are lost to sickness annually, costing the NHS £1.7 billion.
  - ▶ Many staff feel obliged to work when they are sick.
  - ▶ Significant levels of stress.
- Armed with these findings, the review recommends:
- ▶ Regular assessment of staff health needs.
  - ▶ Staff health services should be integral to the goals of the organisation.
  - ▶ Managers should recognise that employee support is their responsibility.
  - ▶ Early support for staff with musculoskeletal and mental health conditions.

The implementation of these recommendations depends on

several factors, including the presence of an occupational health nursing service.

Nurses constitute almost half the occupational health workforce and can have a critical impact on the way OH services are provided.



Occupational health nurses can help improve the wellbeing of staff

For example, the OH nurses (OHNs) in one NHS trust underwent training in cognitive behavioural therapy so they could manage staff with stress and mental health problems.

This example of OHN provision contrasts with previous approaches. Employees presenting with mental health problems would previously have been referred to their GP or counselling service.

OHNs are important for staff health, and it is vital to invest in their continuing development **NS**

Nicola Davies is a health psychologist and writer