

# OUTER SW LONDON RCN BRANCH NEWSLETTER

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## Nursing Champion Inspires Branch

Dr Joan Myers, OBE, RCN Council member for London and Trustee of the Florence Nightingale Foundation was our guest speaker at the September Branch meeting. Joan shared her nursing background and career motivations, She also spoke of her faith inspiring and helping her through the dark days of Covid19. Joan has championed BAME nurses and support workers. Many have been inspired to follow in her footsteps. Joan also shared a little of her charitable work supporting children, schools and churches in Kenya, where she has made several visits over the years. She challenged Branch members to look for the good in their professional and home lives and be kind and supportive of each other in an uncertain world.

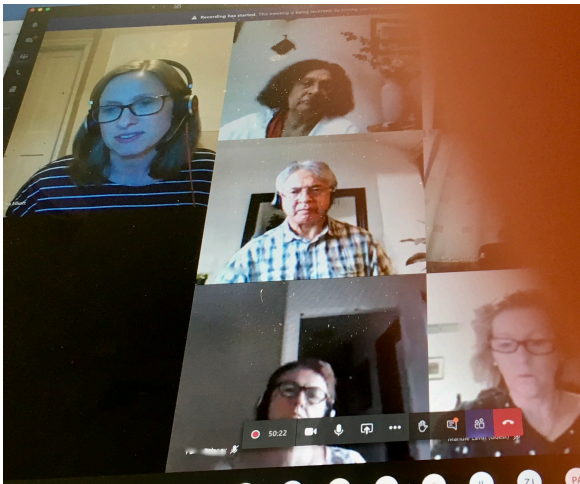
At the last two meetings Branch chair Mike Smith fed back on the issues members had contacted reps about. These included being moved to high risk Covid areas; Fit testing; access to PPE; working from home; access to IT to attend online meetings; high risk staff returning to work; students travelling in community workers cars, where they could not socially distance; overtime and other pay issues. We are also aware that attempts have been made to push through organisational changes under the guise of Covid needs, without proper consultation, which then becomes permanent change. We also know that staffing vacancies are a big issue around our patch with some 250 vacant registered nurse posts at ESTH alone. We have continued to provide local, frontline support to RCN members. In ESTH we have supported 50 local members. Mike Smith has remained chair of staffside (a committee of local trade union rep across all disciplines) and has ensured the collective voice of nursing is heard in the trust.

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# THANK YOU





## Autumn of Learning Success

For the last six years Branches across London have been getting together to put on a free 'Autumn of Learning' event for local members. This year, the restrictions of Covid 19 challenged us to reimagine how we deliver the event. Inner and Outer SW London Branches planned and delivered an online event which took place on November 6. Approximately 40 members attended. London Regional director Lisa Elliott opened the event with messages of welcome.

RCN President AnnMarie Rafferty, spoke of how Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole had risen to the health challenges of their time and how their work still resonates with today's nursing workforce. Specialist Nurse Kelly Kohut gave us an insight into the impact of genetics on exciting medical advances. Specialist Nurse Moira Rowan gave a presentation on caring for patients with delirium. The event was sponsored by Liverpool Victoria who also provided information on their financial services.



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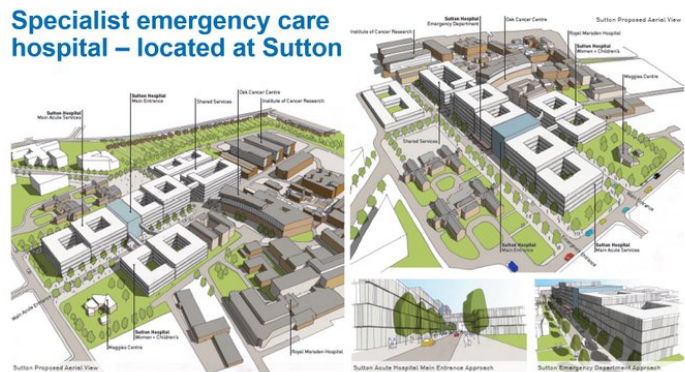
We have been involved in the consultation to open a new hospital at Sutton and feedback comments. The new specialist hospital will be at Sutton, next door to the Royal Marsden Hospital. It has been fully funded according to the Government and if all goes to plan will open in 2025. The picture below shows what the new building may look like.

In October we held our AGM, but by the time the voting part arrived we were one short of being quorate so reconvened that AGM to December 1 where Mike Smith was elected chair, Ruth Kangwa Secretary and Gerry Cotter, Treasurer for 2021.

Congress voting places applications have now closed. RCN Council are exploring whether it will be feasible to move the event to September so that we can meet face to face.

## New Hospital Plans take shape

### Specialist emergency care hospital – located at Sutton



Plans for moving major acute services to one central hub for the Epsom & St Helier area have taken a further step forward with ministers giving the green light for its go ahead at the Sutton/Marsden site.

There are a few more hurdles to overcome before building work can commence but it is hoped to have these in place by January 2022 and the build complete and hospital open by 2025. The pandemic has resulted in the number of single occupancy rooms increasing significantly in the new plans.



**FAIR PAY  
FOR NURSING**



**Join our campaign and tell politicians it's time to pay nursing staff fairly**

[rcn.org.uk/fairpay](https://rcn.org.uk/fairpay)

[#FairPayForNursing](https://twitter.com/FairPayForNursing)

**If you've got a problem ask a nurse**

A challenging situation arose when local midwives were asked to take community students out in their cars to placements. But how do they prevent cross infection of themselves and their vehicles, which are frequently shared by their families? Well quick thinking and plucky RCN activist Ruth Kangwa took up the challenge.

Ruth contacted the Kwik-Fit garage at Sutton and asked where she could procure car seat covers for community staff. When asked why she needed them,

Ruth explained the situation and to her surprise Kwik-Fit offered the team a roll of 400 seat covers absolutely free of charge. Thank you Kwik-Fit and well done Ruth!

**FAIR PAY  
FOR NURSING**



**London Headlines**

London Mayor Sadiq Khan, is considering plans to make a £3.50 daily charge on all commuters driving into Greater London. This is on top of the Congestion charge of £15.00. RCN London are already challenging this given the impact on community staff and recruitment and retainment of staff across London.

London staff are beginning to receive the Covid vaccination as batches of 1000 ampoules have been sent to a number of London Trusts. Frontline staff expected to be offered the vaccine first.

Have you signed the [@theRCN #FairPayForNursing](https://www.thercn.org.uk/petition) petition? Tell the Government why you deserve fair pay. Already signed it? Tell the Twitter-sphere and ask colleagues, friends and family to sign and support nursing staff too.

**Fair Pay For Nursing campaign**

Nursing staff are worse off now than we were ten years ago – a **12.5% increase** for staff in the NHS will recover some of that ground;

Nursing is struggling with record vacancies across the UK – a **12.5% increase** would help keep more in post and bring in the next generation;

Nursing leads care and changes lives – a **12.5% increase** would help show that nursing is valued as complex, skilled and responsible work.



[#FairPayForNursing](https://twitter.com/FairPayForNursing)



## How to build a hospital in 35 days!



**Sarah Langfield, MSc, RN, is Director of Nursing, at the newly opened Seacole Centre, formerly known as Headley Court in Surrey.**

Local RCN member, and registered nurse of 30 years standing, Sarah Langfield was given the daunting task of turning a derelict hospital into a Covid-19 rehabilitation centre in just 35 days, hitting the national headlines in the process.

For the last 20 years of her career Sarah has worked in various senior management and leadership roles. She has built up a reputation as a transformational leader because of her passion for excellent patient care and inspiring others to fulfil their potential, recognising as she does the importance of being a good role model. She is passionate about quality, performance and high patient standards and has built up a reputation as a flexible and transformational leader.

In March 2020 Epsom & St Helier NHS Trust approached her to set up the Covid-19 hospital, now known as the Seacole Centre. Here she shares with Branch chair Mike Smith, what it was like.

*'In March 2020 I was asked to become part of a triumvirate management structure, as the nursing lead, to set up and operationalise a hospital for post Covid-19 patients in response to the pandemic. Whilst I felt honoured and privileged, I was also daunted by the immense challenge; we had very little time, Covid-19 itself was still rife and there were many*

*unknowns surrounding the recovery process, including what care and rehabilitation support patients would need, both physically and mentally.*

*Having proudly served as a nurse in the NHS for 30 years I never thought in my career I would be asked to support the transformation of a disused facility into a functioning hospital in 35 days, in response to a worldwide pandemic. Whilst excited I was also mindful of the enormous challenge this would pose as the facility was to support the whole of Surrey.*

*The hospital was poignantly named the NHS Seacole centre, Headley Court, in memory of Mary Seacole. Mary was a Jamaican born, pioneering nurse who helped soldiers to recover from the Crimean war of 1850, establishing community rehabilitation. NHS Seacole Centre, is the first of its kind in the UK, and is a new community hospital which provides care, rehabilitation and support for patients recovering from Covid -19. Patients are admitted to the centre if they no longer need acute care, or cannot cope with their symptoms from their own homes. The name is a befitting testimony to actively providing an equal and inclusive landscape which as an organisation we are working hard to achieve.*

*The centre was established through close collaborative working between the local NHS, Surrey County Council and the military, as well as with other key partners, to rapidly transform a disused military rehabilitation hospital into a new inpatient facility, with the primary purpose of supporting the Covid response in Surrey Heartlands.*

*One of the biggest challenges for me was recruiting the right nursing and rehabilitation workforce. It was key to engage early on with those across the health and care system, ensuring they understood the clinical model and what staffing was required. All parts of the health and care system are challenged with staffing and setting up Seacole Centre emphasised these pressures. Many staff applying for unregistered positions had never worked in a health or care setting before and that posed many challenges as their training needs were very different. Thus, it was essential the induction and training plan was tailored to meet the needs of all.*

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*We had many other technical issues along the way, from procuring equipment and supplies, to setting up support services on site such as pharmacy and the chaplaincy. Many of our supplies had delivery delays, so we had to look for alternatives and borrow equipment in the interim. One of the proudest moments for me, was welcoming the clinical team to the Seacole Centre and receiving our first patients. With the facility in action, it finally felt real, I would be supporting colleagues from a hybrid of acute and community settings, ultimately providing a facility that could continue to care for the many patients they had already been treated so valiantly during this pandemic.*

*Working at such an intense pace, whilst ensuring you have engaged with everyone was testing at times - I know I could have engaged with various people and services earlier on in the process and this is learning I will take with me in the future.*

*Looking back, working at such an extremely dynamic pace doesn't leave much time for switching off and this can become an issue for me. Thankfully, the grounds of the Seacole centre are amazing and I often used this space to walk and reflect on the challenges and how I would address them. Watching the ducklings and the deer and smelling and touching the herbs and plants was therapeutic and the patients are now getting the same benefits.*

*We had our clinical model planned but were mindful this could change when put into practice, having our first patients arrive clarified this and we were able to identify their specific needs and build on the model. It was essential we all remained focused during the early days to ensure the model produced was fit for purpose whilst maintaining engagement with service leads. We all met regularly to debrief and ensure we were working collaboratively. Safety, quality and performance are also key and have been monitored*



*appropriately from inception with learning taking place constantly.*

*Having a blank canvas to build your workforce from scratch and set high clinical and professional standards was very important to me but I was also mindful the team had differing experiences and skills and worked at different paces. Being adaptive and flexible in the approach to providing a learning and supportive environment where everyone feels safe has been key.*

*It was essential I worked clinically to support the matron, ward manager and therapy lead and their teams - this gave us chance to problem solve together and receive the right support from the practice educators, particularly with a workforce that was new to health or nurses who were on emergency PIN's and needed more support.*

*If I had my time again I would absolutely agree to tackle the same challenges again, but would definitely do a few things differently. I would have liked to have initiated a dummy run with the whole clinical and supportive teams to try and establish a ward routine from the very beginning. I would have liked to see more team building exercises in the induction programme and would have liked more time to match skills and working patterns with the workforce.*

*2020 has certainly been the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife and I am delighted I have been able to use my extensive nursing and leadership skills to make a difference in these unprecedented times.'*



The Branch is grateful to Sarah for sharing her amazing 2020 story with us.

(Main photo Sarah at work and bottom right with Trust chair Gillian Norton @ the Seacole Centre.)

## Dates of meetings plus Useful names & numbers

### Dates for 2021 meetings\*

**Monday 25 January** 2021 Branch meeting  
online 7 - 8.30pm

**Wednesday 24 March** 2021 Branch meeting  
online 7 - 8.30pm

**May 16 - 20** 2021 RCN Congress Liverpool  
(tbc)

**Tuesday July 13** 2021 Branch meeting online 7  
- 8.30pm

**Monday 18 October** 2021 Branch AGM

### Current Branch Executive:

Chair & Publicity:	Mike Smith
Secretary	Ruth Kangwa
Treasurer	Gerry Cotter
Recruitment	
Learning & Development	

### Local RCN Stewards:

Mike Smith (ESH)  
Gerry Cotter (ESH)  
Karen Kilday (ESH\* in training)

### Health & Safety reps

Sheila Gooljar (Independent sector)  
Mike Smith (ESH)  
Gloria Nwajei-Agha (CUH)

### Learning Reps

Jemaima Gubatan - Croydon CCG  
Priya Govender, Community rep

- \* CUH - Croydon University Hospital
- \* ESH - Epsom and St Helier
- \* Community CCG's - covering Merton & Sutton, Surrey Downs

### RCN London Region,

5th Floor, 20 Cavendish Square,  
London W1G 0RN  
Tel. 0345 458 6968

### Director of London Region

Lisa Elliott

**Raising concerns**, raising standards  
(Whistleblowing) helpline for RCN members:  
0345 772 6300

### RCN Member Support Services

0345 408 4391.

The service offers guidance on benefit entitlement, money advice, counselling and careers.

**RCN Foundation** - bursaries, project grants and help for times of need or hardship - go to [www.rcnfoundation.org.uk](http://www.rcnfoundation.org.uk)  
0207 647 3645

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or our page on the RCN website

[www.rcn.org.uk/london/get-involved/  
branches/outer-south-west-london](http://www.rcn.org.uk/london/get-involved/branches/outer-south-west-london)

Find pictures, Branch events and news regularly updated. Contact Mike [michael.smith11@nhs.net](mailto:michael.smith11@nhs.net)



\* could be subject to change - check social media or emails

