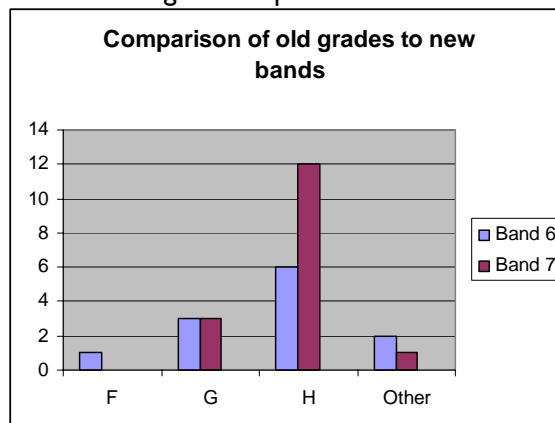


AGENDA FOR CHANGE

Caron Furnival

The UKMSSNA, in collaboration with the MS Society, carried out a survey of MS Specialist Nurses earlier this year to find out about their experiences of assessment under Agenda for Change. 132 questionnaires were sent out and 74 were returned – a response rate of 56%. Of the 74 replies 22 (30%) had not yet been assessed and 52 (70%) had been assessed. Of these 52, 24 were still in progress, 12 had been banded 6 and 16 had been banded 7.

Those previously on G grades were split 50:50 with 3 getting a 6 and 3 getting a 7; those previously on H grade were more likely to get a 7. 13 people agreed with their assessment and 12 didn't, with 7 being unsure and 12 not answering the question. The answers to the question about whether or not they would appeal were similar, with 12 saying they would and 12 saying they wouldn't. Not surprisingly, those who had been banded 7 were also the ones who wouldn't be appealing!



The results of the survey were presented at the UKMSSNA AGM and it was agreed that, as the majority of specialists do not yet know their new banding, it would be worth carrying out another survey. Questionnaires will be circulated again in the New Year by email.

Agenda for Change – the way it works:

Kerry Mutch

The banding for MS Nurses within Agenda for Change (AfC) has caused many problems, with nurses feeling they have been devalued or not banded according to their worth. AfC was never intended to be associated with pay; the aim was to change working conditions so that all staff working within the NHS worked the same number of hours, had the same amount of holiday and that different staff groups were associated on pay bands mainly according to the levels of autonomy and responsibility of their position. National profiles were compiled to help Trusts match ongoing jobs using job descriptions with a similar profile. The job matchers do not know of, or work with, the post that is being matched. This is to prevent bias of perception by the job-matchers to the post. The job matchers do not know the current grade or salary of posts.

Although the government made recommendations and gave training towards the process of job matching, not all Trusts or PCTs follow the same principles *and*, as usual with government documentation, wording is often ambiguous. What the post holder does or the responsibilities they hold are often difficult to explain, e.g. the difference between complex analysis and highly complex analysis.

Once a post (don't get too personal – it's not about how hard you work) is matched to a national profile, the core panel will check for consistency, but this is within their own Trust. Different Trusts have no influence over matching posts even if they are similar work. The banding of the post then goes to Finance and the pay level is matched to the closest current pay scale. Increments will then continue. There should never be a drop in pay.

MS nurses have different roles and names within each Trust and the old scale ranged F,G,H. In the new bands these have generally been amalgamated to two, 6 and 7. (cont'd on p. 2)

If you are not satisfied with the banding you can appeal and ask for a review by providing further information on any one of the twelve sections. However the essential factors knowledge and skills (2) and freedom to act (12) must match the profile otherwise the job needs to be evaluated separately. The information needs to be based upon the original job description and despite moving up some levels one still needs the overall points to move up to the next band.

Once this process has gone through, you cannot appeal any further against the matching unless you appeal against the process, e.g you didn't agree the job description originally.

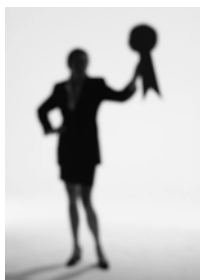
It would be helpful for the UKMSSNA Committee to know what action would be most useful to members:

- **A new generic job description?**
- **Advice on how to appeal?**
- **A statement expressing concern?**

Let us know by contacting your Regional Representative or by emailing admin@ukmssna.org.uk.

BJN Awards

Many Congratulations to Kerry Mutch for her success in the BJN Clinical Practice Awards this year.



Two places, sponsored by Serono, are available to attend the BJN Awards which generally takes place sometime in May. If you're interested in attending this prestigious event, held at the Savoy Hotel in London, you should submit 500 words on evidence-based Best Practice by email to admin@ukmssna.org.uk. The closing date is Tuesday 28th February 2006. Winners will be announced at the meeting in York in March.

Exam – 2006

Nine people sat the MS Nursing International Certification Examination in November this year and we have already started a list of those of wish to take it in 2006.

As usual, it will be held during the MS Trust Conference, so there is plenty of time, but if you are interested in taking the exam next year, please send your details to Mary Fielding and she will send you an application form as soon as they are available.

Making a Difference

We are seeking nominations for the UKMSSNA "Making a Difference" Award for 2005, to be presented at the York meeting next March. The Award is made to the MS Specialist Nurse who, in the judgement of his or her peers, has "made a difference" to MS Nursing in the last twelve months. A Nomination form is enclosed with this Newsletter. Please make your nomination and return it to Mary Fielding at PO Box 63, Little Marcle, Ledbury HR8 2AA. The closing date for nominations is Tuesday January 31st.

UKMSSNA Website

The UKMSSNA website, currently hosted by the MS Trust, is becoming more and more popular for users – particularly accessing the Slide Library, with 1920 hits so far in 2005. The Committee are keen to develop the website and so have taken the bold decision to "go it alone". We are very grateful for the help and support we have received from the MS Trust in setting up and running the website, but now we have our own Administrator we feel the time is right to be more independent.



Work on the website probably won't start until the New Year and it will obviously take some time to set up. We will let you know as soon as it goes "live".

We are keen to have your views and ideas on the website. You can email any suggestions to our Administrator, Mary Fielding on admin@ukmssna.org.uk or to Pauline Shaw at pauline@ukmssna.org.uk

Pauline Shaw

CMSC Conference 2006 Scottsdale, Arizona

The UKMSSNA has been invited to run a workshop at this prestigious event. This is a golden opportunity to present some of the innovative work MS Specialist Nurses are doing in the UK and we are very excited at the prospect of showcasing work in the UK. Further details will be posted on the website in due course.

For details of the Conference, including a conference programme go to www.ms-care.org/2006-Annual-Meeting.aspx

Annual General Meeting 2005

The AGM was well attended, with 65 members staying on to take part at the end of the MS Trust Conference in Blackpool. There were no Resolutions for debate and vote and so the Committee gave updates on the work of the Association during the year. Most of the topics are covered elsewhere in this Newsletter but in summary they included:

- Elections and the Committee
- Questionnaire on support needed by Nurses new in post
- Certification Examination in MS
- Website and Slide Library
- Decision not to plan any more Study Days at present because of the poor attendance at Warrington Study Day and proliferation of other conferences and study days
- Agenda for Change
- Finance – Accounts for 2004-05
- Competences and Skills for Health

Thanks were given for their help and support to:

- the MS Trust and MS Society for funding the Administrator's post and to the MS Trust for support with administration, website and other assistance
- Val Quieros, Honorary Treasurer
- Gail Hayes for her huge contribution to the Association as a Committee member.
- Teva Pharmaceuticals for their help with the Slide Library
- Serono for sponsoring places at the BJN Awards and for their assistance with the Care Manual
- All the pharmaceutical companies for sponsoring UKMSSNA Committee meetings
- Judy Percy for the Minutes of last year's AGM

Elections to the Committee

There were only two nominations to vacant places on the Committee and so there has been no need for an election. Carol Turner was nominated by Gail Hayes, to take over from Gail as the representative for the South West. Carol has worked as an MS Clinical Nurse Specialist for the past 2 ½ years in rural North Devon. She has a BSc (Hons) in Specialist Community Nursing, having previously practised as a district nurse. Her other nursing experiences includes care of the elderly,

Marie Curie nursing and project work within Social Services. Her special interests include carer support and psychosocial aspects of care. Heidi Thompson also returns to the Committee as the representative for Northern Ireland. Heidi has been an MS Nurse for six years and was a member of the UKMSSNA Steering Group and a Committee member since 2001.

The election of both new committee members was ratified by those present at the AGM. The full Committee is:

Nicki Ward (Co-Chair) West Midlands	Nicola MacLeod Scotland
Sylvie Hurst (Co-Chair) South East	Barbara Wingrove North East
Carol Turner South West	Pauline Shaw South London
Rhiannon Jones Wales	Diane Watts South Yorkshire
Vicki Gutteridge Dorset, Hants, IOW, Surrey	Kerry Mutch Manchester, Liverpool & Preston
Heidi Thompson Northern Ireland	

Visit the website (www.mstrust.org.uk/ukmssna) for contact details.



There are still regions of the country that have no representation on the Committee; please discuss this with your regional groups and think about becoming a rep. For more information about what it involves contact Nicki or Sylvie - nicki@ukmssna.org.uk or sylvie@ukmssna.org.uk

Survey of new MS Nurses

We have recently carried out of small survey of MS Nurses who are new in post. Although only a small survey, with seven responses, some interesting points have emerged. Three respondents had been in post for less than two years and three for less than twelve months, one did not state. Five are employed within a PCT and two in Acute Trusts.

The most difficult aspects of the role were reported as :-

personal/professional development issues

- lack of knowledge
- confidence in dealing with volume and complexity of issues
- adapting to sudden change of working practice/ environment
- difficulty in knowing if service provision is correct way
- isolation in role
- planning time to meet all the needs

external/service issues

- lack of training by own Trust and reliance on commercial funding
- politics of PCTs and internal teams
- no clerical support
- difficulty in profiling area
- no confirmation that it was correct service
- funding issues and lack of communication
- patient expectations

clinical issues

- lack of confidence in dealing with complex problems
- lack of clinical knowledge
- remembering all the different treatments.

In terms of support, four said they felt supported, two said they did not feel supported by management and one said they did not feel supported.

Asked how the UKMSSNA could help, the following were mentioned:

- clarification of the MS nurse role/ expectations of the role
- information and educational resources (several respondents)
- advice and support (several respondents)
- advice on the wider political issues to support at local political level
- advice on setting up a new service
- facilitate networking
- don't know what you do

The key issues identified for the UKMSSNA to consider to help new MS Nurses are around support and continuing the network in a much more structured way and possible mentoring of those new in post. Also developing skills that will encourage confidence in clinical practice, and a voice that is heard, and taken note of, in an increasingly competitive market place. The role of advocating for those new in post has also been highlighted by several respondents.

MS nurses are here to stay, but that sense of uncertainty about "getting the service right" (although feeling supported), and confidence in the permanency of the service is difficult to manage in those early days.

The UKMSSNA will look at these issues and consider how we can best support you.

Vicki Gutteridge

Events Diary

Month	Date	Venue	Event details	Further details
January	24 th	Oxford	MS Trust Advanced Study Day	Cathy Garner 01462 476704
	27 th	London	Building Better MS Services: MSS Palliative Care Project	Liane Wimhurst 020 8438 0837
February	20 th – 24 th	Hitchin, Herts.	MS Trust Development Module in Clinical MS	Paula McGill 01462 476704
March	22/23	York	MS Trust Annual Course for MS Nurses	See MS Trust website in due course for details.
April	21 st 22/23	G-Mex, Manchester G-Mex, Manchester	MS Care: International perspectives – MS Society, MSIF & EMSP MS Society National Convention	Paul Crossman 020 8438 0877
May-	16 th	Ayrshire	MS Trust General Study Day	Cathy Garner 01462 476704
June	31 st -	Scottsdale, Arizona	CMSC/IOMSN Conference	www.ms-care.org

Research into referral to SaLT

Rhiannon Leach is a Speech and Language Therapy student at University of Wales Institute in Cardiff and she has contacted the UKMSSNA to ask for help with research for her final year dissertation.



The research will look specifically at the role that MS nurses play in the referral of Multiple Sclerosis patients to Speech and Language Therapy. This will involve looking at their use of referral information and understanding of the role of the Speech and

Update from the MS Society

The MS Society is working with RCN to stage a MS nursing research symposium to consider research priorities. The aim is to achieve a consensus on priorities among key stakeholders and to commission further research. Further information from cfurnival@mssociety.org.uk

Information needs To help provide information and support for people affected by MS, set-up grants of up to £1,000 are available for diagnostic centres. Grants can be used for anything that helps people to have access to quality information when they are first diagnosed. For more information contact Eithne Barry on 020 8438 0705 or ebarry@mssociety.org.uk. (Ref: Rhona MacLean & Andrew Russell on information needs (Br J Nurs 14(14):754-757).

Professional education - February 2006 sees the start of the first distance learning Masters in MS practice at Leeds Metropolitan University which leads to a postgraduate certificate or diploma. Launched at the same time will be *MS Care in the Community*, a distance learning course for non-specialist staff who look after people severely affected by the condition. . More information from ccsenquiries@leedsmet.ac.uk. The Society has also joined with UK Healthcare Education Partnership, a partnership involving City, Leicester and Ulster Universities and the Royal College of Nursing. UKHEP offers a range of online courses for post-registration healthcare professionals. Bursaries are available for all these courses by contacting education@mssociety.org.uk

Language Therapist. Rhiannon would like MS Nurses to answer a short questionnaire which would completely anonymous to protect confidentiality; it will not be possible to trace replies to particular individuals. She will be comparing the nurses' responses to those supplied by a similar group of Speech and Language Therapists in order to obtain broad data on issues surrounding the timing of referrals.

Rhiannon can be contacted via email: rhianna62@hotmail.com
Mobile phone: 07919144834
or through the Centre of Speech and Language Therapy, UWIC, Western Avenue, Cardiff, CF5 2YB

Rhiannon Leach
Student SLT

Alison Murray
Project Supervisor

Publications – the Society has won the Association of Medical Research Charities Science Communication Award 2005 for their publications. They are evidence-based and reviewed by people living with MS and professionals and focus on topics people affected by MS have identified as “must have” information. Six new titles in the MS Essentials series have been published in 2005:

- *Getting the best from social services*
- *Benefits and MS*
- *Mood, depression and emotions*
- *Diet and nutrition*
- *Sex, intimacy and relationships*
- ***Claiming Disability Living Allowance***

Three titles are available on audio cassette and CD:

- *What is MS?*
- *Just diagnosed: an introduction to MS*
- ***Vision and MS***
- *Just diagnosed* is also available in eight languages: Bengali, Farsi, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, Turkish and Welsh.

Professional network conference - MS Care: international perspectives is the title of a professional conference to take place in Manchester on 21st April 2006, in collaboration with MSIF and EMSP. There will speakers from the USA, Canada, Germany, Ireland and Denmark as well as the UK. This precedes the MS National Convention which will take place on 22nd and 23rd April. For more information, contact Paul Crossman on 020 8438 0877 or email pcrossman@mssociety.org.uk

Membership Subscriptions

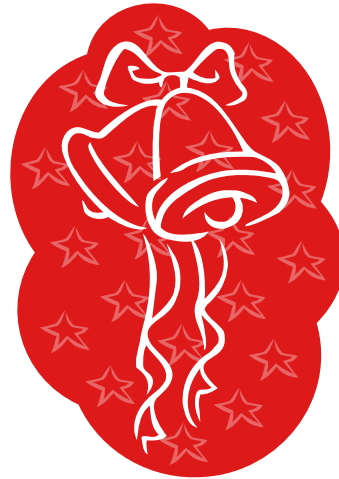
To make life easier for everyone, it is now possible to pay your membership subscription by Standing Order. A form will be included with your next renewal letter. If you do set up a Standing Order direct to your bank or on-line, remember to complete and return the renewal form to me so that my records are up-to-date.

Keeping the membership database up-to-date is surprisingly time-consuming and it is really helpful if you can renew your membership as soon as you receive your renewal letter.

Mary Fielding

Fold here!

A Happy Christmas and a Peaceful and Prosperous New Year to all UKMSSNA Members



Making A Difference 2005

Nomination Form



The UKMSSNA makes an annual award to the MS Specialist Nurse who, in the judgement of his or her peers, has 'made a difference' to MS Nursing in the last twelve months.

Who do you nominate?

I nominate (name).....

because

.....

.....

Your Name

Signature

UKMSSNA Membership No.

NB: UKMSSNA Committee members are not eligible for nomination!

Return form to Mary Fielding, UKMSSNA, PO Box 63 Little Marcle, Ledbury, HR8 2AA