Dear Colleagues

On 1st April 2013 RCM members will receive a pay rise of 1%. This is a welcome increase following two years of pay freezes but unfortunately it is coupled with a further increase in pension contributions and, if you are based in England, changes to Agenda for Change. During the pay freeze inflation has been extremely high and even now is running far ahead of the pay cap of 1% resulting in a real terms decrease in pay for NHS staff and we are likely to see a continued decrease in the value of pay for midwives and MSWs.

Please take the time to help us with our response to the indemnity insurance consultation - full details are on the next page.

The Royal College of Midwives

Agenda for Change Guidance in England

The Agenda for Change consultation in England ended on Monday 4th February, 94% of Branches and 85% of individual members accepted the proposals. The RCM’s view is that these proposals represent the most effective way of providing stability and protecting Agenda for Change as a national system of pay, terms and conditions. The alternative would be for employers all over England breaking away from the national agreements leading to cuts in pay, annual leave, sick pay and unsocial hours payments.

At the meeting of the NHS Staff Council on 26th February 2013 the majority of trade unions accepted the agreement after a vote (21 voted to accept the agreement and 11 voted to reject the agreement, however the 21 votes to accept the agreement represent 85% of union members in the NHS).

Commenting on the agreement, Jon Skewes, Director for Policy, Employment Relations and Communications at the RCM said “Midwives voted in overwhelming numbers in favour of this review of Agenda for Change. The RCM believes that this agreement will help to secure UK wide bargaining in the NHS. It will also fend off the threat of local pay and conditions. The RCM will now be working to implement the agreement through partnership at a local level.”

You can read more about the changes in the following NHS Pay Circular; Equality Impact Assessment - Pay Progression; Equality Impact Assessment - Sickness Absence; Equality Impact Assessment - Workforce Re-profiling; and an updated version of the NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook.

There will be joint guidance about the changes put out to Workplace Reps in due course.

The acceptance of the proposals have had a positive effect on ten of the twenty trusts in the South West Pay Cartel that have confirmed their commitment to the national agreement for Agenda for Change contracts and a return to partnership working and that they would not engage in any further work
Pay Review Body Publishes Report

On 14th March 2013 the NHS Pay Review Body published it’s 27th Report which recommended that all NHS staff on Agenda for Change pay, terms and conditions will receive a 1% rise in their basic pay effective from 1st April 2013 and those NHS staff in London will receive a 1% increase to their High Cost Area Supplement. The Government accepted the recommendations in full.

The RCM submitted evidence to the PRB in Autumn 2012 stating that we do not agree with the overall 1% pay cap for Agenda for Change staff; this is an insufficient reward that is out of line with inflation. Following two years of pay freezes and higher pension contributions the value of NHS pay has significantly fallen in real terms. Combined with a serious shortage of midwives and with increasing pressure on maternity services this means they are effectively working even harder for less pay.

Moreover, the PRB is designed to be an independent body that judges appropriate pay awards based on evidence. However, this is the third year that the Government has constrained the PRB and told them the award they can offer, without any evidence. The RCM would like to see the PRB’s independence recognised and its decisions respected and honoured by the government.

RCM Pay Cards with the new pay levels will be available for Workplace Reps soon.

NHS Pay Review Body Visits

The NHS Pay Review Body (NHSPRB) is an independent body composed of members from a variety of professional, academic and business backgrounds. It makes recommendations on the remuneration of all staff paid under Agenda for Change and employed in the NHS. NHSPRB’s recommendations apply to all staff in the NHS, with the exception of doctors, dentists and very senior managers.

The Review Body receives evidence on pay and related issues from the Government, NHS Employers and Trade Unions. It also conducts its own research on pay and related matters. NHSPRB members visit trusts and health units to meet staff and managers to gather information and views on pay and related issues and to gain a better understanding of the roles of staff within the remit groups.

The Review Body will be conducting visits at the following trusts:

- NHS Grampian, Aberdeen
  - Tuesday 14th May
- Country Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust
  - Friday 31st May
- Hinchingbrooke Health Care NHS Trust, Huntingdon
  - Tuesday 11th June
- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Belfast
  - Monday 24th June
- The Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust, Ipswich
  - Friday 28th June
- Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust, Taunton
  - Tuesday 9th July
- North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust, Stoke-on-Trent
  - Friday 19th July
- Croydon Health Services NHS Trust, Croydon
  - Wednesday 31st July
Francis Report Update

On 26th March 2013 the Government released their response to the Robert Francis’ Report into Mid Staffordshire NHS Trust which can be read here. The RCM responded to the Government’s report and was featured in much of the press coverage on the response.

Cathy Warwick, the RCM’s General Secretary said; “We welcomed the Francis report but are disappointed with the Government’s muddled and piecemeal response. In particular, we are dismayed that it has not adopted the report’s central and integral recommendation that NICE set minimum safe staffing levels for the NHS and this should underpin services the NHS provides, including maternity services. For more than a decade the NHS in England has had a shortage of midwives and this was a huge opportunity missed and wasted to address safe staffing levels.

The RCM also believes the Government has missed another crucial opportunity by not introducing the registration and regulation of support workers. The pilot scheme for nurses to spend up to a year working as support workers lacks detail. We do, however, welcome the pledge to end the practice of using contractual (employment) clauses to prevent NHS staff from raising concerns about safety and quality issues. Overall, the Government’s report raises more questions than it answers.”

The Budget 2013

On Wednesday 20th March in his budget statement George Osborne announced that:

“Public sector pay restraint has been a key part of the fiscal consolidation so far. Budget 2013 announces that public sector pay awards in 2015-16 will be limited to an average of up to 1 per cent. It will be for departments and Pay Review Bodies to determine the level of award based on affordability and individual recruitment and retention needs. Although the majority of the public sector has been subject to pay restraint, some have continued to receive annual pay increases of 7 per cent or more due to progression pay arrangements. In some workforces reforms are already under way. The Government will seek significant further savings through reforms to progression pay in the Spending Round. The Armed Forces will be excluded due to the unique nature of their careers.”

For midwives and MSWs this means that following two years of pay freezes there will be three years of a pay cap of 1% and potentially the Government will also be looking at savings that can be made through pay progression.

Indemnity Insurance for Midwives Consultation

The Department of Health, on behalf of the four UK Health departments has launched a consultation on legislation that would mean all regulated healthcare professionals have to hold indemnity or insurance to practise. The UK wide consultation will run from 22 February to 17 May 2013 on draft regulations on the requirement for all regulated healthcare professionals to hold an insurance or indemnity arrangement as a condition of their registration with the relevant regulatory body.

The vast majority of midwives are covered through their employers’ insurance or via the RCM’s medical malpractice cover. The RCM is continuing to work to find solutions that will enable our members who are Independent midwives to continue to practice after October 23rd. We will do this with the national Governments elected representatives, civil servants and with the regulator, the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

For further information please see RCM Communities by clicking here. The closing date is Friday 3rd May.

If you would like to contribute to the RCM’s response, please send your comments to simon.popay@rcm.org.uk
Labour Research Department Website Access for Workplace Reps

Many of you will be familiar with the Labour Research Department from the booklets used at the training courses. The Labour Research Department is a 100 year old organisation linked to various trade unions that carries out research and issues publications about workplace issues. The RCM has arranged for our Workplace Reps to gain online access to LRD materials. You can access the materials by visiting their website www.lrd.org.uk and entering the username ‘rcmrep’ and password ‘rcmrep’.

Workplace Reps Training 2013

Don’t miss the upcoming courses for Workplace Reps:

New Health and Safety Representatives Course 29th April - 2nd May Coventry

This is an essential course for all newly accredited or inexperienced Health and Safety reps and also open to all experienced Stewards who would like to gain a basic understanding of key features of health and safety at work.

Negotiation for Workplace Representatives Course 20th May - 22nd May Eastbourne

We know that most members join the RCM to benefit from the representation and negotiation we undertake on their behalf. Yet meeting management can be daunting, whatever the issue, and it is important that Workplace Reps develop the practical skills and confidence to negotiate effectively on behalf of members.

New Stewards Course 24th June - 27th June Sheffield

An essential first course for all stewards: new, or less experienced, stewards should attend this course before attending any of the follow on courses.

Union Learning Reps Stage One Course 24th June - 27th June Sheffield

This course aims to give new ULRs the skills to help members identify their learning needs and improve their knowledge and skills at work or in their personal lives.

Make sure you keep an eye on your email for your regional study day.

“More confidence in dealing with issues related to Agenda for Change. Insight into what is happening elsewhere.”

What do reps say about our courses?

“It has energised me to keep on going!”

“I am ready to do more meetings..”

“Really good and worthwhile”

Make sure you save the date in your diary for annual conference...
International Day of the Midwife 5th May 2013
Calling all Bakers!

To celebrate International Day of the Midwife on 5th May and help raise funds for the International Confederation of Midwives, the RCM are asking members to embrace their creative sides and get baking midwifery inspired cakes.

We need your help to spread the word by entering our IDM cake competition on Facebook and selling cakes to raise funds for the cause.

To take part, simply:

**Bake it** – whether you are inspired to bake a bump, a water birth or a baby...... anything you would like, bake either a single cake or multiple cup cakes either on your own or with a team.

**Send it** – send us your best cake pictures (remember to send high quality/resolution shots) by direct message to [www.facebook.com/MidwivesRCM](http://www.facebook.com/MidwivesRCM) or email marketingofficer@rcm.org.uk with the bakers name, your place of work and the inspiration behind the cake.

**Like it** - cakes will be judged by the RCM Facebook followers. The cake with the most “likes” will be announced on May 7th and will win a free ticket to this year’s RCM Annual Conference in Telford.

**Eat it** – sell slices of your cake (or whole ones) to raise funds for ICM. Any money raised can be sent by cheque made payable to The Royal College of Midwives Trust to Midwifery Department, The Royal College of Midwives, 15 Mansfield Street, London, W1G 9NH.