

3 September 2021

Dear Member

Volunteers needed

As I mentioned in my last letter there is still a need for volunteers to help with the NHS Vaccination roll out. Every day the NHS Volunteer Responders programme needs about 2000 steward volunteers to help at vaccination sites across the country. As you can appreciate, steward support is essential to relieve pressure on NHS staff and helping those coming in for their jab to do so safely and comfortably. They also identify those who might need extra support or a friendly face. I know that a number of our members have already volunteered and they have told me how much they enjoyed helping the vaccination programme.

Seeing your medical records

I was recently asked by one of our members if it was possible for them to view their medical records. The answer is yes and some of the most common reasons for wanting to access medical records include understanding a condition, coming to terms with a medical event or preparing to make a complaint. You have a legal right to see our own records and you do not have to explain why you want to see them.

However, a request could be refused if a health professional thinks that seeing the record would be seriously harmful to your physical or mental health or if the records also relate to someone else.

There is no charge and you can view a summary of your GP records online. You can do this by asking your GP or visiting the surgery website. If you go to the surgery in person, you will be asked for some form of photo identification and proof of address. You can also view your GP records using the NHS App. You can also formally request your medical records in writing and you may wish to do this because you do not have or do not want to use online services or that you want hard copies of records.

Patients Association - Trustees Wanted

The Patients Association, which offers free membership, is looking for Trustees to join the board to help the charity implement its new 5-year strategy, True Patient Partnership. They are looking for someone sharing the vision of empowered patients able to access the health and care services they need to live well.

This is an ideal opportunity for somebody, who shares their values of compassion, inclusivity and empowerment.

If you are interested in the role and would like an informal discussion, please contact the Chair of Trustees, Lucy Watson, lucy.watson@patients-association.org.uk or the Chief Executive Rachel Power - Rachel.Power@patients-association.org.uk or telephone the office on 0208 423 9111. (Please note - calls to this number are being answered by staff working from home, so your call may go to voicemail. However, be assured someone will call you back if you leave a message.)

The closing date for applications is 30 September and interviews are to be held week commencing 18th October.

If you are interested and you think I could be of help with the process, please don't hesitate to contact me. It would be good to have a member of the NHSRF as a Trustee for the Patients Association, an organisation we continue to work closely with.

Facebook

Our Facebook followers continue to increase and we now have over 1820, which is a remarkable increase over the last 12 months. If you are not a follower, I ask you to think about it as it gives lots of information about what branches are doing or have done, there is some humour in some of the posts and it's a very useful way of knowing what's going on within the Fellowship. It also gives members ideas of what other branches are doing.

Conference

Have you signed up for conference yet? Less than two months to go - it takes place 21st to 23rd October 2021 at the Mercure Piccadilly Hotel in Manchester. It would be good to see you but if you are undecided and need persuasion please don't hesitate to ring central office, who will give more details of what traditionally happens at our conferences.

Photography Club

The Photographic Competition is open to all members of the Fellowship please enter your favorite photo to the competition co-ordinator Anthea Zell, Tel: 01520 722951 Mob: 07852 876802, Email: photography@nhsrf.org.uk or via the website www.nhsrf.org.uk



Holidays and travel have been on hold during 2020 and part of 2021. Hopefully there will be increasing opportunities for members to be able to get out and about again, but in case members haven't had many photo opportunities recently, the theme for the current competition is an open one:

'One of my favourite photographs'.

No need to explain why the photos you enter are favourites or special to you; they will be judged on the merits of composition, originality and technical quality (but bearing in mind that this is an amateur photography competition).

Closing date. The competition closes on Friday 30th November 2021

Mirthy

The Mirthy talks remain popular with our members. The forthcoming talks are:-

21 September - 10.45am	A Small Slice of the Big Apple – Neil Sadler
6 October - 10.45am	Kilted Tommy – Simon Waterfield

Some of you will have seen articles from Peter Sykes (retired consultant surgeon) his latest book which he says will be the last that he writes is a "coffee table collection of 35 patient-centred short stories mainly based on personal experience". It is entitled "Laughter is the best medicine" as with all his publications all proceeds go to his two local hospices St Anne's, Stockport and the East Cheshire Hospice. His book is available on Amazon just search for Peter Sykes.

Peter Sykes has suggested that the NHS Retirement Fellowship organise a short story competition. We would be looking for the best short story of any length but up to a maximum of 1500 words. The idea is that the story should be set in any healthcare environment and the story could be dramatic, humorous or educational. We are giving further thought to how this might be organised but I will announce the detailed arrangements at our conference in October. This is an advance notice for all budding authors. I can't wait to read the submissions

In my April letter I referred to Accord Legal Services offering a free will writing service to all former NHS staff in England, Scotland and Wales. A number of our members have taken advantage of the offer and have been very satisfied. If you have not signed up you might feel you should, I was really surprised to learn that 60% of people over 60 have not written a will.

This version of my letter has been sent to you in the post. I am trying to encourage you to give me a copy of your email address. You will appreciate that it is so much easier to be able to communicate by email and it enables speedier communication to take place. I know that some members do not have email addresses but for those who do have them and are reluctant to give permission you can ring central office so they can explain the advantages and reassure you that we will not share your email address with any other organisation, I am very pleased to say that we are now communicating by email to over half our members.

It is very heartening to see our branches starting to hold meetings as we begin to return to normal and enjoy going out again. I am grateful to all of you who have continued with your membership during the last very difficult 18 months and I hope to see as many of you as possible in the months ahead.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely



John Rostill OBE
Chief Executive