

13 July 2023

Dear Member

I hope that you are well and have been able to enjoy some of the recent good weather.

The NHS turns 75! Here's to another 75 years.

On Wednesday 28th June the BBC episode of the Repair Shop was dedicated to the 75th birthday of the NHS. It featured an item brought in by the former Children's Laureate, Michael Rosen, who was placed in an induced coma and spent seven weeks in intensive care after contracting Covid in 2020. In the episode Michael says: "The NHS was wonderful when it came into existence... my mother had lost a child during the war. They didn't have the care and the medicines around so they had a very emotional attachment to this thing they had always wanted; it was a dream that you could have free health care from the cradle to the grave. It just seemed like a wonderful idea to say that we can all look after each other, these people work for all of us, they combine, work together from all over the world. They come and work for the NHS that's what's powerful about it it's for everyone. We want the NHS to continue for the next 75 years."

On the 5th July several representatives of the NHS Retirement Fellowship joined NHS staff, volunteers, politicians, patients and members of the public at Westminster Abbey to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the founding of our National Health Service. While the NHS has faced unprecedented challenges over recent years, there is much to be proud of and celebrated and we were honoured to be representing the Fellowship past, present and future.

Marking the 75th anniversary of the NHS and the contribution given by our members is very important. NHSRF members and staff have played a key role in planning the 75th anniversary events. Several of our members have shared their personal stories and some of these have been featured by national media, as well as on our website, NHS sites in England, Scotland and Wales, and a number of social media feeds. I'd like to thank all our members who have shared their stories as part of the celebrations. I have found it incredibly moving to hear stories of the camaraderie of young nurses running wards and treating diseases that current NHS staff do not encounter, and the ways in which our members paved the way for better rights for female staff in the NHS.

The 75th anniversary has been a central theme at three major events in which members and staff have represented the Fellowship at during June and July this year. These are:

- The NHS England and the NHS Confederation Conference in Manchester.
- NHS Scotland Event: Recovery and Renewal in our Health and Care Services; and
- The Bevan Commission conference: 'The Tipping Point; Where next for Health and Care?

These events offer important opportunities for the NHSRF to meet and discuss with NHS policy and decision makers, form partnerships with similar organisations, promote the NHSRF as a membership organisation for all retired health and social care staff, and to demonstrate that the Fellowship operates across the three nations of Britain.

Happy anniversary NHS Retirement Fellowship

This year is also a very important milestone in the life of the Fellowship as we begin celebrating our own 45th anniversary. One of the founding statements of Irene James, founder of the NHSRF, was “A Fellowship for retired people especially if given staff and management support would be clear evidence that the health service was playing a proper part in looking after the interests of staff over the long term and not only during their service days”. It seems very appropriate that as we celebrate our 45th anniversary with a variety of events across branches and at the AGM and Conference that we start to plan ahead for our next 45 years in order to support our retirees. We have therefore made an important start on this.

“Celebrate the past, live in the moment, prepare for the future.” This is the title of our new strategic business plan which will run from 2023 – 2028. The Board of Trustees met together on the 9th May to work through it in detail, it was then shared with staff and will be introduced to the wider membership, from the autumn of this year. **I’d be very interested in hearing your initial thoughts and views on these plans – you can get in touch with me via Central Office or your Members Council representative.**

It is shaped around five themes:

Growth	Support the membership focusing on retention, recruitment, and engagement	Implement a financial plan to reduce central costs, lower membership fees and generate new income	Develop the skills of staff and volunteers
Voice and influence	Involve, engage with and listen to our members	Speak and campaign on behalf of our members	Attend key events across the three nations to raise the profile of the Fellowship
Connected	Invest in technology to ensure the Fellowship complies with legislation and simplify key tasks	Expand the use of digital platforms to promote the Fellowship and improve communication	Ensure regular and effective communication with members, donors and supporters
Governance and leadership	Ensure effective governance to protect the long-term future of the charity	Support and equip staff in their roles	Support our volunteers in their roles
Services and benefits	Introduce a variety of membership initiatives	Develop new services and benefits	Work in partnership with organisations with similar values

This is an exciting and ambitious plan that will take time and energy. The first three priorities are:

- a) Communicating and consulting with the membership. The full strategy will be shared with the Members Council in September, then it will be introduced at the first virtual 'coffee drop in' for branch officers in October, and a more detailed presentation will be given at the Annual General Meeting and conference in November.
- b) Realise funding through external funding applications, making savings through reorganisation.
- c) Upgrade the Fellowship's digital capacity, which means buying in new equipment, software, building a new website, developing our social media presence, and training staff.

Annual General Meeting/ Conference

Plans are well advanced for this year's AGM and Conference which will be taking place at the Forest Pines Hotel and Spa in North Lincolnshire from Friday 24th November. Information and booking form attached. Further details can be found by visiting www.nhsrf.org.uk or the Isle of Wight Tours website www.iowtours.com and entering NHFP1123 into the tour search bar. We hope to include details of speakers in the next CEO letter at the end of August and I very much look forward to the chance to get to know members more in this social environment.

Trustees

The Fellowship is delighted to welcome David James as our newest trustee who brings a wealth of NHS and charity experience with him to his new role. David lives just north of Oxford and worked in education before having a career break and embarking on a new challenge within health care. He joined the former Commission for Health Improvement (CHI) which became the Health Care Commission (HCC) leaving before it morphed into the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Whilst at CHI, he was on the board of the North East Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) as a non-executive director. He joined the NHS as a Board Secretary at Ealing Hospital in 2007. He went freelance in 2016 and has since worked as an interim Company Secretary or governance specialist in NHS trusts, Charities, NHS England and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).

He said his first impression of the Fellowship is "that it has got potential because of the nature of the NHS workforce - there are a significant number of older workers in the NHS and it is important that those individuals have the opportunity to join an organisation that will enhance their retired years."

His view of the top three priorities for the Fellowship are: " first, as is the same as all charities - facing the challenge of funding and income, the second is ensuring that the Fellowship has relevance for its membership and the third is to ensure that there is succession planning for the organisation so that ideas can be carried forward."

Trustee vacancies

Serving as a Trustee is a very important way of supporting the NHSRF. The Board is currently seeking to recruit four new trustees, two from among the membership and two external trustees. It is particularly interested in recruiting people with backgrounds in law, Human Resources, communications and marketing and digital literacy. If you are interested or know someone who may be please do get in touch via the office or through the website. The closing date for applications is 28th July 2023.

Postal Members

I am very pleased to welcome Jennifer Sharp and Barbara Kolator as our two postal representatives on the Members Council. The pair were appointed in January and have recently led a survey of postal members, the findings of which have helped inform aspects of the strategic business plan as well as helping to develop plans to make sure the Fellowship can best meet the needs of postal members. They led a virtual meeting of postal members on Monday 10th July, we hope to have more of these events in the coming months. If you are a postal member and are interested in joining - please contact Jen or Barbara at

jenn@nhsrf.org.uk or barbara@nhsrf.org.uk

Members Council – Regional Representative vacancies

A number of regional representatives have recently stood down from the Members Council. On behalf of the Fellowship, I would like to thank them for their service and commitment. I would also like to encourage members to consider putting themselves forward for these roles – please take the opportunity to find out what is involved by contacting the Central Office or having a chat with your local development officer. The vacancies we currently have are: Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire, North East, South East Thames, North East Thames, West of England, Wessex and South Wales. Nomination forms are available from Central Office Tel: 01305361317.

Members/ Branch Handbook

This autumn will see the launch of a new Members/Branch Handbook. If you have any views, please do send them to Chris Kitchin organiser@talktalk.net or post to Central Office by 31st July 2023.

Thank you from John Rostill

My predecessor John Rostill has asked me to sincerely thank all those members and staff who contributed to his leaving presentation which I am very happy to do. He retired on 17th January and a presentation was arranged by the Walsall branch on Thursday, 18th May (and my thanks go to them for all their efforts). The event was attended by the present Chair George Kempton, the immediate past Chair Margaret Moffat and Vice-Chair Chris Kitchin. John says *'It was a genuine shock to see national representatives at the meeting which as far as I was aware, was just a normal branch meeting. George said some very kind things about my time at the Fellowship and I expressed the enjoyment I had over the last decade. I am extremely grateful for the generosity of all those members who contributed to the substantial cheque I received. I remain a member of the Walsall branch and will continue to have an interest'.*

Benevolent Fund

As the cost of living crisis continues I would just like to remind members that the NHSRF has a Benevolent Fund, and to encourage individuals who might need to access it to consider applying. Details are available via the NHSRF website or by contacting Central Office.

Obituaries

"Over the past few weeks we have been sent a number of obituaries. They are extremely humbling to read - not only demonstrating their contribution to the Fellowship, but their commitment, passion and dedication to the NHS. Our condolences go to all relatives, friends and members who have been affected by these sad losses."

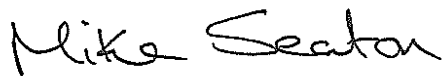
Merle Adams	NW Surrey Branch
Helen Muggerridge	North Herts Branch
Denise Sheppard	Taunton Branch

Thank you

Finally, I would like to close with an extract from the bidding which was read by the Dean of Westminster at Wednesdays service which seems fitting for the NHS and also the Retirement Fellowship.

"We pray God's blessing on our National Health Service, on those who sustain it, and on those who govern and direct it. In the midst of so many challenges and aware of current disagreement may this anniversary remind us of our ability to navigate difficulty and find new solutions. May the hope and ambition out of which the NHS was born be ever renewed". Thank you for the support that you continue to give to the Fellowship, and I am very much looking forward to meeting some of you at the planned events to mark NHS 75 and our 45th anniversary. I am also keen to visit branches over the coming months and discuss our business plan and strategy and find out more about life in the branches. Please get in touch with your local development officer or Central Office and I will try my best to come along.

With warm wishes



Mike Seaton
CEO