

EDITORIAL

The importance of library services to health professionals working in the NHS was officially acknowledged in Circular HSG(97)47 - *Library and Information Services* published by the NHS Executive in November. In order to make its contents more widely known, we include the text in this issue. The circular indicates that funding is still complicated and librarians will have to make sure they get their share of monies allocated. There is no guidance about linking NHS and university libraries. But there is, at least, the promise that further good practice guidance on library services will be drawn up and disseminated. There is mention of NHS net provision but not of other forms of electronic information delivery such as the Internet or CD-ROM. Veronica Fraser (NHS Library Advisor at the Department of Health) would be happy to hear your comments on the Guidelines, as indeed would the *Bulletin*.

Another NHS document (EL (97) 58 - *Education and training planning and guidance*) calls for effective planning between education purchasing consortia and providers, in particular over library provision for students on placements. The document also calls library and information services 'the bedrock of education and training'. They 'are critical to the development of evidence based practice and clinical effectiveness, for general updating and for supporting continuing education and professional development'. It is the responsibility of health service employers to ensure 'that they provide adequate modern LIS support for their staff'.

The circulars recognise the problems about lack of access to libraries which nurses have to endure and which LfN have been banging on about for years. Parallel to this has been the high profile campaign for library access for nurses which has been expressed in a series of articles in *Nursing Standard*. This issue includes a letter from our Chairman to the Editor of the *Standard* outlining some of the problems and thanking the Editor for her support for nursing libraries.

The importance of libraries in the NHS was also noted by the Minister of State for Public Health, Tessa Jowell, at the Conference - *Operating with Knowledge* - organised by the Health Libraries Group as part of National Libraries Week. We have a report on that day in this issue.

The White Paper - The New NHS - was published just before Christmas and we include a brief summary and details.

This issue also includes details about two groups for health librarians in Scotland and Wales so, if you are eligible, please consider joining them if you are not already a member.

The Editors