

# The Ageing Nursing Workforce in the UK

Josie Irwin

Head of Employment Relations

# Ageing nursing workforce

- ◆ 25% of all nurses, midwives and health visitors in the UK are over 50
- ◆ Average age of a nurse is 42
- ◆ Higher numbers of older nurses work in the community.
  - 44% of NHS health visitors
  - and 37% of district nurses are over 50
- ◆ 200,000 nurses to retire in the next ten years
- ◆ But the recession may delay retirement of some and attract others back, adding to already ageing profile.
- ◆ Older nurses who stay are less likely to work full-time, meaning a reduction in nursing hours available

# Responses

- ◆ Age discrimination unlawful in employment, training and education since October 2006
  - ◆ Upper age for payment of Statutory Sick Pay removed – people still working after age 65 are entitled to SSP for up to 28 weeks in the same way as other employees
  - ◆ Default retirement Age 65 to be phased out in 2011
  - ◆ NHS Pension Scheme introduced a Choice for existing members of the scheme to retire at age 65 plus additional flexibilities
  - ◆ Age strategies including ‘healthy workplaces’
  - ◆ Lord Hutton’s review of public sector schemes
- ‘Staff will work longer, pay more and receive less benefit’

# RCN research

- ◆ What would encourage nurses to work post retirement?....
- ✓ Good health and well being
- ✓ Feeling that experience is valued
- ✓ Less stress at work
- ✓ Working reduced hours or less intensive work
- ✓ Flexible working and adapted working hours eg annualised hours, graduated retirement, job share.

# RCN Guidance on employment of older nurses

- ◆ Avoid generalisations – some wish to wind-down, others look for challenge
- ◆ Policies should make most of older nurses' experience and expertise
- ◆ Support informed retirement decisions
- ◆ Good OH provision
- ◆ Flexible working options
- ◆ Involvement and engagement