IPS Spotlight

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Profile of Debbie Wright, IPS Honorary Secretary

Debbie has been actively involved in the IPS for many years and is currently our Honorary Secretary. This is a profile of her many and varied roles both as an IPCN and as a member of IPS.

What is your background?

I have been a registered nurse since 1991 and worked in acute medicine and the community before going into the field of infection prevention and control in 2000. Initially I worked as a Community Infection Control Nurse and had the opportunity to be seconded part time as a Special Associate to the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement and was involved in the development of *Essential Steps to Safe and Clean Care* (DH 2006).

I have always been an active member of the Society and my initial formal role was as Secretary to the Community Interest Group, which afforded me the opportunity to work on several of the audit tools including the community and dental audit tool.

In 2007 following one of the many changes in the commissioning landscape, I obtained the post of Consultant Nurse in infection prevention at NHS Central Lancashire.

During this time I was Coordinator of the Scientific Programming Committee (SPC) and enjoyed planning and delivering conferences with the invaluable support of members of SPC and worked alongside Fitwise who were then the new conference organising company for the Society.

The majority of my career has been working in Public Health to support commissioning organisations in infection control. In 2013, with the transfer of Public Health departments into Local Authority I also took on a wider health protection role. I became one of the leads for the IPS/RCN Commissioning Network, which produced various resources, tools and briefing papers to inform and promote infection prevention and control within commissioning.

What is your current role and what does it entail?

Twelve months ago my career took a different path and I took up post as the Assistant Director for Infection Prevention and Control at Aintree University Hospital. Aintree is a large acute teaching hospital with A&E services and provides a range of acute and non-acute specialties, serving a population of around 330,000 in North Liverpool, South Sefton and Kirkby. Working in this new setting has brought different challenges and I can't deny it has been a steep learning curve. However, I am thoroughly enjoying the change in my role and other opportunities it brings.

My active participation in the IPS has continued throughout my career and I am now the Honorary Secretary. This role entails supporting the function and business of the Society in order to ensure that the articles of association are met. This includes providing support to other trustees, ensuring that the organisation delivers the IPS strategy that meets the needs of its members.

Why are you passionate about the IPS?

When I first started in the field of infection prevention as a community IPCN, I primarily worked in isolation and found the Society (then ICNA) a vital network to support my development. I can remember a few daunting meetings where I knew no one, but that soon changed and found there was always a colleague to help. The community network and commissioning network provided essential support in

the specific area, and through the contribution of others we were able to develop tools and resources to support the wider membership. Contributing to the activities of the Society takes commitment and time; however, the different roles I have held in the Society and the opportunities that they have provided have positively influenced my professional development and supported me to deliver my day job.

I feel passionate that the Society is a member-based Society and that the contribution of members is vital for us to continue to develop as a professional society and to deliver the IPS vision that no person is harmed by a preventable infection.

IPS London South Branch

By Sheila Howard, London South Coordinator

The London South Branch came into existence following the breakup of one of the largest IPS Branches, that of the London region in 2006, which initially covered an area from Bedfordshire in the North, to Sussex in the South. Now the London South branch covers Surrey, Kent and London South of the Thames, sharing Sussex with the Wessex branch, and has a total of 187 members at the last count. Networking, friendship and collaboration are the key words for our Branch. Although we now may be a smaller branch it has not stopped us continuing strong ties with our London North colleagues and continuing the tradition of providing an excellent joint London conference each year which has just seen us attract over 200 delegates at our April Event at Imperial College. We have also established national ties with our Irish Branch Twinning partners, being the first two branches to seek the opportunity to allow officers from both branches to meet and share ideas and initiatives. Watch out for the twinning initiative review poster, that we hope to present at conference this year with the Irish Branch now our official twinning has come to an end. A further example of our branch collaboration is the forthcoming IPS calendar for 2016 which has seen this project evolve from a three-branch initiative to now an 11-branch and two SIG group project for National Infection Control week.

When we are not out making new friends and connections outside the branch, we encourage networking and peer support at our branch meetings with our Secretary Karen Hawker always happy to help our members. We meet four times a year at rotating venues through the South East to allow attendance to as many of its members as possible. Each meeting includes a number of educational updates by keynote speakers and experienced branch members thanks to our educational lead Esther Dias, together with a business meeting to update members on Branch and

National IPS activities. Our plans for 2015 include promoting and selling our DVD on standard precautions which makes our treasurer Marisa Alexis happy and contributes to supporting members to attend infection prevention related national workshops. The DVD was created by the branch, professionally produced and endorsed by the IPS Education committee. We are also embarking on a piece of branch research around glove use in the clinical area, which will be a multi-centre research study, led by our Research and development officer Ashley Flores.

We are also pleased to announce that on the back of our annual successful nursing and care home conferences run by a sub-committee of the branch, led by two previous branch coordinators Lone Sarosi and Linda Towey and our previous treasurer Lynn Howell, we will be increasing this event to twice a year at key branch locations. So this year will be a busy year for us, and hopefully an informative one for all of our members.

Mental Health and Learning Disability Special Interest Group

By Nicola Sharp, SIG Co-ordinator

We are one of the National SIGs, and our work is specifically aimed at meeting the infection prevention and control needs of staff working or interested in mental health or learning disabilities. We are a very diverse group extending across the whole of the UK and working in a variety of areas including prisons, high secure settings and community homes in addition to specialist community teams. Last year we had our first joint conference with the Ambulance and Surveillance SIGs. The next joint SIG conference will be held in July 2015; this will include Ebola, tuberculosis, cleaning, hand hygiene and wound care. Information will be available via the IPS website. We are also participating at National Conference with a morning session devoted to our specialty: the first session on obsessive compulsive disorder and its effect on hand hygiene and the second on the special requirements needed when caring for people in prisons and high secure units.

Although between us we need to travel far and wide to meet, we held a successful meeting in April with one key outcome being a new piece of joint work looking at one specific area of skin care for our service users and staff. Our meetings offer members an important opportunity to network and share ideas. We will be holding our next meeting in November and anyone who has an interest in MH/LD is very welcome to join us. For further information please contact Nicola Sharp (Co-ordinator) or Penny Criddle (Secretary), our details are available on the IPS website.