

**the role of the
continence adviser**



**Royal College of Nursing
Continence Care Forum**

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The working group and authors

Dr Brenda Roe
Lecturer in Nursing
University of Liverpool
Honorary Continence Adviser
Crewe Health Authority

Mr Ray Addison
Senior Nurse Continence Adviser
Croydon Health Authority

Mrs Jane Clayton
Nursing Projects Specialist
Goldsbrough Ltd, Leeds

Workshop facilitators and continence care forum committee

Ray Addison
Jane Clayton
Hilary Duffin
Judy Hakin
Hilary Oliver
Brenda Roe
Sue Sutherland
Phyl Taylor
Kim Tester

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introduction

Introduction	1	It has been estimated that some 3 million people within the United Kingdom suffer from incontinence (Smith 1982). The last decade has seen widespread developments in nursing to improve both the management of incontinence and the promotion of continence. More than 300 continence advisers have been appointed (Mandelstam 1990). The development of these posts and continence advisory services vary around the country, due to the way in which the posts were initially created and funded (Roe 1990).
The Role of the Continence Adviser	2	The recent health service reforms recommended in the <i>Working for Patients</i> (Department of Health 1989a) and <i>Caring for People</i> (Department of Health 1989b) <i>White Papers</i> , has made it very timely for continence advisers to identify and document their role and functions, in the light of these changes. This is imperative so that continence advisers and their services are included in the purchasing contracts negotiated by district health authorities and fund holding general practitioners. Identification of the role and functions of the continence adviser is the necessary first step in developing new standards of care and approaches for quality assurance.
The Workshops	3	The RCN Continence Care Forum favoured a 'ground up' approach to assessment and a series of workshops were undertaken around the UK, in which continence advisers drew on their current practices to identify the key elements of their role and functions.
Mission Statements	4	This document provides a brief review of the development of the role of continence advisers and further information about the approach used in the workshops. It is followed by sections that present the findings from workshops regarding mission statements of the continence advisory service, its principal functions, monitoring of the service and the strengthening of the role of the continence adviser. The implications of these findings are discussed in each section and a number of conclusions drawn and recommendations made.
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