I hope that Santa bought you all you asked for. Needless to say, while the rest of the country took a 10-day break, district and community nurses were continuing to provide daily care for their patients. But I’m sure that as with the rest of the year, delivering that care wasn’t easy. Not only do your patients have intensive care needs, but there are fewer staff to deliver it; official NHS figures disclosed that the number of district nurses (DNs) working in England declined from 7,813 in May 2010 to 6,424 in August 2012, an 18 per cent reduction.

Coincidentally, on the 1st January 2013, the Department of Health, the NHS Commissioning Board and the Queens Nursing Institute published ‘Care in local communities – A new vision and model for district nursing.’ The document sets out the foundations of DN services and goes on to outline the developments and innovations that ensure services can meet current and future needs. It also includes a development programme for community and district nursing. The model outlines the DN-led team contribution to providing care and support in the community, including peoples’ homes. The three core elements include:

• population and case load management
• support and care for patients who are unwell, recovering at home and at end of life
• support and care for independence

However, will it be possible to introduce this model if DN numbers keep declining at a rate of 9 per cent per annum? We barely can deliver the service, let alone take on board all the recommendations of this document. Have you made you views known?

A new year, a new set of JCN Exhibition and Study days. As ever, we start in Blackpool at the De Vere hotel and criss-cross the country, taking in diverse places such as Durham, Esher and Norwich. The days comprise sessions on wound care, skin care as well as a clinical exhibition. Delegates have an opportunity to visit up to 20 exhibition stands manned by representatives from wound care and continence companies, charities and others. Representatives at the exhibition provide information on the range of products available and a wealth of written information and samples to take away.

The strength of these events is the chance to network with their colleagues from the private sector, local primary care trusts and the acute sector. This presents an opportunity to exchange information, ideas and skills, many of which may make your life a little easier!

Turn to page 22 for the 2013 schedule and then log on to www.jcn.co.uk to secure your place. I look forward to meeting you there.