

## **Professional Nursing Committee Report to Members – June 2023**

1. This report reflects work done by the Professional Nursing Committee since the last report and an update from our most recent meeting on 27 June 2023.
2. Following our attendance at Congress 2023 in May, our monthly ‘deep dive’ sessions resumed on 8 June for a Congress debrief and discussion on the approach to be followed in prioritising and taking forward agenda items. We also took the opportunity to think about the key messages we wanted to take to the engagement event for members with the Lib Dems. PNC was represented by Colin Baker.
3. Our next deep dive session takes place on 23 August with a focus on the professional framework project, specifically looking at the levels of practice workstream.
4. As previously reported, our monthly podcast ‘Nursing Matters’ was temporarily halted while an evaluation of its reach and engagement was carried out by the Communications Team. Our intention is to resume recording shortly with a series of six episodes focussing on staffing for release in September/ October.
5. The report of our June meeting follows.

### **Chair’s Update**

6. Under this item, we formally noted our approval by email of the name change requests for the Cancer Forum (formerly the Cancer and Breast Care Forum) and the Digital Nursing Forum (formerly the eHealth Forum).
7. We also acknowledged that in April we had commented by email on the final draft of the updated position statement on Nursing Associates extended scope of practice which was subsequently agreed by RCN Council in June.
8. Additionally, following discussion at our deep dive session on 4 April, in May we commented on an early draft of the RCN position statement on substitution. We look forward to having sight of the next iteration in due course.

9. As part of our review of the last meeting we discussed ongoing concerns with regards to a drop in applicants to study nursing, and continuing high attrition rates being seen in many programmes.

### **Chief Nurse's Update**

10. Professor Nicola Ranger, Chief Nurse, updated us on the work of the Nursing Department and on the key issues currently facing members across the four countries. Our key matter for discussion was the result of the NHS strike ballot in England which was announced during our meeting. We heard that Pat Cullen, General Secretary and Chief Executive, would be hosting an online event for members that evening to discuss the result and outline next steps.
11. Nicola also updated us on recent staff changes and we expressed our gratitude to Lisa Elliott for all that she has done to support the work of PNC during her time as Deputy Director of Nursing; Workforce, Professional Practice and Quality.
12. We received an update on implementation of the ELD programme and the launch of the RCNi portfolio in association with RCN Learn in May 2023 to all members who are required to revalidate with the NMC. We discussed the way in which this strategy, and the planned Research Strategy, will align to the plans for the implementation of the RCN Institute of Nursing Excellence.
13. We received an overview of next steps in the development of the RCN Institute of Nursing Excellence and look forward to receiving a more detailed update at our next meeting.
14. We noted that the NHS Workforce Plan for England was expected to be published by the end of the week (30 June). As anticipated the plan fails to acknowledge the investment needed in the existing workforce to make the vision of 170,000 more nurses by 2036/37 a reality. We were clear that investment in the profession is essential, and that patient safety must be the guiding principle for any reform.

### **UK Staffing for Safe and Effective Care (SSEC)**

15. At every meeting, we receive an update from the Chair of the UK Programme Board for Staffing for Safe and Effective Care (SSEC) on activity across the four countries.

16. In June, we received an update on the proposal of the Programme Board to campaign for maximum patients to registered nurse ratio safety standards. We noted that the Board has developed principles level positioning (with input from Professor Jane Ball, University of Southampton) to drive the influencing and harness support from a wide range of audiences, including professional, system, public and political. We supported this positioning.
17. Additionally, we learnt that the Board has commissioned Professor Jim Buchan to compile evidence based on national or international nursing associations who have, or are in the process of, implementing patient to registered nurse ratios.
18. PNC agreed with the direction of travel and that the campaign for maximum patients to registered nurse safety standards should have the same level of priority as the RCN campaign for fair pay.
19. We also reviewed and commented on the draft RCN position statement on maximum patients to registered nurse ratio safety standards.

### **Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)**

20. We were delighted to be joined by Sam Foster who is the new Executive Director of Professional Practice at the NMC for the main item on our agenda. We spent some time considering the issues currently facing the nursing workforce and where opportunities for joint working and collaboration or alignment may arise.
21. We discussed a number of issues including safe staffing, the make up of the NMC register, racism/ discrimination, and fitness to practise as well as the possible future regulation of Nursing Support Workers and our concerns regarding Nursing Associates extended scope of practice. We also discussed the place of simulation in education and learning.

### **Committee Work Programme 2023**

22. We reviewed progress against our 2023 work programme and have agreed to spend some time at our next meeting ensuring it aligns with the [RCN Strategy 2023-27](#) and the strategic goals and objectives of the academies within the RCN Institute.
23. A key part of our role is to monitor and interrogate the Committee's risk register. As at all of our meetings, we spent time looking at this in detail and continue to refine this approach to ensure that we can be assured of the mitigating actions in place for our key risks.

24. We agreed Sue Haines will take the PNC lead for the risk titled 'delivery of the RCN Institute of Nursing' and Paul Trevatt will be the PNC lead for the risk titled 'influencing political decisions'.

### **RCN Strategy 2023-27**

25. We received a presentation on the new RCN strategy and how this is being operationalised. We discussed how the quarterly reports will look and agreed that from 2024, those reports will be a standing item on our agenda to review and scrutinise. In particular we will have a governance role in overseeing the activities that PNC is responsible for delivering (for example the RCN Institute).
26. I am also in discussion with Denise Kelly as Chair of the Trade Union Committee on including an item on the strategy on the programme for our joint meeting in October.

### **Congress 2023 Agenda Items**

27. We received an update on the 16 resolutions passed at Congress 2023 and the 11 matters for discussion that will be reported on. We noted the prioritisation exercise carried out by RCN Council and the Executive Team and that 18 items have been categorised as high impact. 10 of those items have been allocated to PNC to have oversight.
28. At our meeting, we agreed Committee leads for each of those 10 items and discussed the member role in taking work forward. We also noted reporting timelines.
29. Additionally, we agreed that the 4 key items we would hope to engage with the membership on over the summer period are:
  - suicide prevention
  - corridor care
  - student nurses (*the practice of rostering to fill staffing gaps*)
  - Nursing Associates

### **Introduction to the RCN's Director of Policy, Communications and Marketing**

30. Unfortunately Director Phil Ball was unable to join us to meet the Committee but we were pleased to receive a presentation from three members of his team instead illustrating the work of the Policy, Communications and Marketing department. They gave an excellent overview of their work and the way in which they work together to inform the development and communication of the RCN position in critical areas of our campaigning and influencing work.

## **Terms of Reference**

31. In June we reviewed and approved updated terms of reference for the Forums Governance Group and the Fellows Co-ordinating Committee, both of which report into the Professional Nursing Committee.
32. The terms of reference for both Committees have been published on the RCN website.

## **Next Meeting**

33. The next formal PNC meeting takes place on 6 September 2023. As above, however, we will also convene for a deep dive session on 23 August.

## **Committee Membership**

Rachel Hollis (Yorkshire and the Humber – CHAIR)  
Siobhan Donald (Northern Ireland – VICE CHAIR)  
Mary Codling (South East)  
Martha Gill (Scotland)  
Tracie Culpitt (Nursing Support Worker)  
Tim Grace (Northern)  
Ray McMorrow (West Midlands)  
Sue Haines (East Midlands)  
Paul Trevatt (London)  
Carolyn Middleton (Wales)  
Suzanne Davies (Student)  
Alison Paterson (Eastern)  
Sally Young (North West)  
Colin Baker (South West)

Apologies for the June meeting were received from Sally Young, Sue Haines and Suzanne Davies.

**Rachel Hollis**  
**Chair, Professional Nursing Committee**  
[rachel.hollis@reps.rcn.org.uk](mailto:rachel.hollis@reps.rcn.org.uk)