

Council

Date of meeting:	23 April 2015
Title of Paper:	Report back from Membership and Representation Committee
Appendices:	<i>None</i>
Presented by:	Anne Wells, Chair of MRC
Is a decision required? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

1. The committee met on 18 March 2015.
2. We contributed to the position statement on international recruitment and a guidance note for employers.

Pay, Terms and Conditions

3. We discussed the successes and continued challenges facing the 'pay for excess hours worked' campaign. We agreed that early signs had been encouraging but that members still seemed reluctant to put their head above the parapet and submit their claim forms. We discussed how nurses continued to feel that they are not worthy of what is contractually owed to them and the effects of weathering on nursing. We welcomed the unforeseen benefits of the campaign in uncovering poor practice, which had opened up opportunities to discuss safe staffing with employers.
4. Josie Irwin updated us on the pay offers across the four countries for 2015/16 and informed us that all four governments were looking for a conversation about Agenda for Change going forward.

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5. Claire Cannings spoke to us about the increase in cases about paying back overpayments. We were appalled to hear some of the tactics employed by Trusts and agreed that a Task and Finish Group should be set up to pull together good practice and formulate a 'good practice' overpayments policy document. Josie agreed to take the issue back to the Staff Council to gain the support of the other trade unions in the fight.
6. Howard Catton briefed the Committee on the new codes of conduct from the NMC, which included powerful statements on speaking up and raising concerns. We noted that the latest Francis Report on speaking out recommended that ambassadors should be placed in Trusts to make speaking out easier. The Committee hoped that this environment would help nurses to speak out on safe staffing and patient care and also make them feel safe to submit their forms for payment of excess hours worked.

Pay Review Body Evidence

7. Josie Irwin informed us that the NHS Pay Review Body had been asked to make observations on the barriers and enablers within the AfC pay system, for delivering health care services every day of the week in a financially sustainable way, i.e. without increasing the existing spend. The RCN had already challenged attacks to unsocial hours payments and pay progression and we requested that this continue.
8. It was reported that pilot sites had been set up around the country for 7 day services but that no evidence had yet been reported from these sites.

Role of the Representative

9. Janice Smyth updated us on work on the role of the rep. We agreed that one size does not fit all. We reviewed the different types of work a Rep might do outside of case work and we agreed the paper with one amendment.
10. It was noted that only 50% of Stewards did case work and the paper seeks to recognise all of the other important work undertaken by Stewards and ensure that there was a process for branches to record this work.

Mentorship and Supervision

11. We were briefed on a workshop that had taken place on mentorship and supervision and we agreed the next steps in the project.

RCN Steward Compliance with Case Management Policies and Procedures

12. We received a paper on RCN Steward Compliance with case management policies and procedures. We emphasised the importance of Reps using the case management system if they undertook case work.
13. We felt it was important to ensure that all Reps that required equipment had received it before circulating a communication making it clear that failure to comply with case management policies and procedures could result in dis-accreditation as an RCN Steward.
14. The Committee agreed that the emphasis should be on the importance of using the system as an audit trail and that the intention was not to dis-accredit good Reps.

Trade Union Lobbying Act

15. Simon Hiscocks briefed us on the requirement for the RCN to produce a member assurance certificate under the new Trade Union Lobbying Act and how the RCN was required to appoint an Assurer to undertake this work. It was noted that the Governance Support Committee had agreed the requirement for a new regulation to provide for the appointment of an assurer.

Equality and Diversity Update

16. Wendy Irwin gave a very interesting presentation on weathering. Being afraid, not claiming your rights and becoming less resilient as a result of continued stress were all considered to be 'weathering'.
17. The Committee quickly made links between aspects of the presentation and how nurses currently feel and how nurses avoid putting their heads above the parapet, being too afraid to claim their contractual rights. It did not surprise members of the Committee that there was a direct correlation between health outcomes and individuals affected by weathering.
18. The Committee considered how the RCN should build capacity in its case workers, staff at RCND and member support services to identify and respond to these issues.
19. Wendy also gave an update on the 'Is that discrimination' project, which had been reconfigured to focus on building the RCN's internal capacity and raising awareness. Wendy is continuing to focus on identifying good practice.

Congress

20. The Committee noted the final reports for the Congress 2014 items.

Return to Practice

21. We considered a paper on members who were undertaking return to practice courses. We noted that the current terms of membership act as a barrier to members undertaking both the return to practice and adaptation courses.

Policy and Political Issues

22. Will Hardy gave us a round-up of current parliamentary issues and updated us on the general election campaign. We wished him well in his new job and thanked him for all of his support over the past 6 years.