

Report to members of the meeting of RCN Council held on Wednesday 22 and Thursday 23 July 2015 at RCN HQ, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN

Congress and AGM

1. We began our two day meeting with a review of Congress 2015. We all agreed it had been a good week. We have now begun the important process of taking forward the actions arising from the Congress agenda items and will be posting regular updates on the website.
2. We have also started our preparations for Congress 2016 which will be held in Glasgow. Arrangements for booking travel and accommodation will be available on the website shortly.

Council priorities for 2016 and financial strategy

3. We approved our priorities for 2016. These have been set following feedback gained from members via our standard consultation process.
4. The priorities will be circulated to you shortly. Thank you to everyone who contributed.
5. We also agreed the financial strategy and the budget assumptions that we will be using for the 2016 budget and planning exercise.
6. As we announced earlier in the year, our budget in 2016 is being based on a 0% increase in the subscription rate.

Management accounts, performance reporting, and risk.

7. We discussed the mid-year review of the annual operational plan and key performance indicators (KPIs) and noted the exceptions.
8. We were pleased to see that we are still continuing to exceed our membership targets.
9. We also reviewed the management accounts for the RCN for the period January to May 2015.

10. We noted the current financial position of the RCN Foundation and RCNi and updated our corporate risk register was updated.
11. We noted that reporting on equality and diversity will begin in 2016 when the new customer relationship management system (CRM) is implemented.

Business Committee

12. When the Business Committee met on 28 May 2015 it agreed not to propose a subscription increase in 2016. It also had an update on the performance of our investment portfolio.
13. The RCN staff pension scheme was discussed. It was noted that the next triennial valuation will be in 2016 and, ahead of that, there would be a review of the investment strategy and funding assumptions with the Pensions Trust and RCN professional advisors.
14. The committee also had an update on progress on the new CRM (customer relationship management system) and the website project.
15. The RCNi company strategy was discussed by the Committee ahead of it being presented to Council in July.

RCNi Company Strategy

16. We approved the RCNi company strategy.
17. Michael Chamberlain, Chair of the RCNi Board, described the Directors vision for the company and its major strategic goal of becoming the lifelong nursing partner for the whole nursing team. We noted that central to achieving this goal was to move from being a traditional print based company to a global online provider of information and services.
18. You can find out more about RCNi's new products at www.rcni.com

Council Review

19. We were updated on the latest progress from the Council Review Group. This review of RCN Council is the final stage of our governance review.
20. We heard that all the workstreams were on track and that an external perceptions audit is being undertaken by YouGov. A member survey is to be sent out to all members in the next week.
21. The evidence to date will be considered at a workshop in August in advance of the development of a consultation document which is to go out to members in the Autumn.

Council Executive team

22. We were updated on the meeting of the Council Executive team on 16 July. CET had focussed on the impact of the Chancellor's budget announcement and the impact of the 1% cap on public sector pay increases as well as the implications for the NHS Pay Review Body.
23. CET also discussed its work programme for the coming months and agreed to recommend the calendar of meetings for 2016 to Council. This will be published on the website shortly.

Governance Support Committee

24. Chair of the committee, Kevin Bell, updated us on the discussions at the meeting of the Governance Support Committee held in May. The committee focussed on the issue of member engagement, following the item on the April Council agenda.
25. The committee has put forward a number of ideas including developing specific roles at branch and workplace unit level to foster better links with members; setting specific targets or objectives for engagement, identifying examples of good practice, and also identifying areas of current activity where engagement will be critical.
26. The committee stressed that there are no easy answers on this issue but will continue to monitor and develop these ideas.
27. The committee was also updated on the work of the Council review, as well as the current branch and congress consultations.
28. Kevin explained that the committee is also putting together a new policy and process for developing policy and the draft documentation for this would be brought to Council in December.

NHS pay

29. We had a wide ranging discussion on pay in light of the Chancellor's Summer Budget and the publication of the report from the NHS Pay Review Body (PRB).
30. We set up a working group to start work immediately and to look in detail at our future pay strategy and campaign.
31. We also agree to convene a special meeting of the Membership and Representation Committee on 18 August to discuss the three consultations on the Trade Union Bill.

Branch consultation

32. We discussed the very helpful feedback from the member consultation on the new branch regulation and constitutional documentation.
33. We agreed the new documents subject to a number of amendments based on the feedback. We also received some really useful suggestions for additional sections and these will now be developed and added.
34. However, there were a number of comments made during the consultation that we would like to discuss further with members and so will be coming back to you in due course for your thoughts on those.

National Pensioners Convention Elections

35. We approved the timeline and procedure for the election of the members who represent the RCN on the National Pensioners Convention Council and Executive Committee.
36. We also agreed to change the name of the existing network which elects these members to the RCN National Pensioners Convention Network.
37. We are looking for members who are over the age of 55 and in receipt of a pension and have joined the RCN National Pensioners Convention Network to put themselves forward for election. The term of office will be for two years and begin on the 1 January 2016.

Communications update

38. We noted the excellent media coverage of Congress together with our strong showing on social media throughout the week and the new RCN Congress App.
39. With the party conference season approaching, we discussed our attendance at the conferences. We noted too that in Wales and Scotland work is underway to consult members on our key priorities for our manifestos ahead of the elections in those country.
40. We also heard that the new website, previewed at Congress, had received good feedback. Work on the website will continue in preparation for the public launch at the beginning of 2016.
41. Our presence on Twitter and Facebook has gone from strength to strength with a series of #whiinurse posts celebrating Nurses' Day being seen by more than 10million people.

Centenary year

42. We approved the budget and plans for the RCN's centenary year in 2016. We also fed back our ideas on how we can celebrate the centenary locally. It will also form a key theme for Congress next year.
43. The centenary is a unique opportunity to celebrate the RCN's achievements, raise awareness of contemporary nursing issues and look forward to a strong future for the profession and the college. It is a platform from which we can engage with new and existing audiences, and encourage our members to become more active in the organisation.

Chief Executive & General Secretary's report

44. Peter Carter gave his final update as Chief Executive & General Secretary of the RCN.
45. He highlighted a meeting earlier that week with Sir Andrew Dillon, Chief Executive of NICE, when he raised the issue of safe staffing and asked how NHS England would be approaching this issue in future. We are still waiting for the detail.
46. He confirmed that his last day with the RCN will be 31 July and he thanked Council for their support during his time at the college.
47. We expressed our gratitude for Peter's significant contribution to the RCN and wished him well for the future.

Reports from the committees

Nursing Practice and Policy Committee

48. The Committee had met on 9 July 2015.
49. It was updated on the End of Life Care project. The committee gave feedback on the resources that were launched at Congress and discussed next steps.
50. The committee received a presentation on the policy landscape following the General Election and discussed its priorities for the coming 12 months. It also had a presentation on health and social care integration across the four countries.
51. The Shape of Caring Review was also discussed and the Committee noted the various RCN work-streams that were being aligned to the recommendations of the review including in particular the clinical leadership programme; the mentorship project and the work to develop a fellowship model.

52. The committee also discussed the NMC revalidation pilots and the RCN response to the NMC consultation which closes in October.

Membership and Representation Committee

53. The Committee met on 8 July. The budget announcement was being made at the same time as the committee was meeting and had been briefed as far as possible at the time on the challenges that lie ahead.
54. It discussed our negotiating position on pay and our response to key issues and agreed to continue to support a four country position on pay and made it clear that we would not be willing to trade unsocial hours' payments for a pay deal.
55. The committee discussed the proposed Council priorities for 2016. It will be continuing to work with the chairs of the Trade Union Governance Group and the UK representative committees to bring all its work programmes in line with the Council priorities for 2016.
56. There is a pressing need to recruit and retain more representatives and the committee agreed it is very important to ensure that our representatives are well supported with the right resources and training to respond locally to the priority areas.
57. The committee had also received reports on the work of the Member Representative Programme Board and Case Management.
58. On the recommendation of the Committee Council agreed two changes to the *Definitions of Membership* document. The first is to amend the definition of health practitioner membership to acknowledge the Scottish Social Services Council. The second is to enable those who are on a return to practice course, enabling them to re-register with the NMC, to pay the student membership payment plan.

International Committee

59. The committee met on 21 May 2015. It had received reports from the Commonwealth Nursing and Midwives Federation (CNMF) European Regional conference, as well as an update on plans for the CNMF conference next year which is due to take place in London. The committee agreed to submit abstracts on the RCN Zambia Union of Nurses Organisation (ZUNO) project, revalidation and ward leadership.
60. It also received a presentation on the European Forum of National Nursing and Midwifery Associations (EFNMA) meeting in Riga.

61. Additionally the committee was updated on the World Health Organization's health strategy for 2020 which includes the four strands of: education, skill mix, positive practice environments and evidence-based research.
62. The Committee received a report from European Federation of Nursing Associations (EFN)
63. Council noted that the next European Nursing Student Association (ENSA) meeting was taking place in London and will be hosted at 20 Cavendish Square.

Ethics Committee

64. The Ethics Committee met on 30 April 2015. The meeting had focussed on the committee's plans for two events – a workshop with the Defence Nurses Forum on 5 November and the first annual meeting on its network on the 11 September.
65. The committee is also working on a narrative and recommendations to be included in the RCN response to the NMC pre-registration and nursing education revalidation pilots and the Shape of Caring report on what should be taught in terms of ethical training as part of a pre-registration programme.

Health Practitioner Committee

66. The first item on the committee's April meeting agenda was a presentation on the findings of research which will inform the RCN's new HP marketing campaign.
67. The committee also received a presentation on the Care Certificate which had been launched in March, and been updated on the impact evaluation for the First Steps resource.
68. The committee also discussed how to increase HP membership and participation in the forums.

Students Committee and Students Governance Group

69. The Students Committee met on 8 May. They had received a presentation from Stephanie Aiken, the RCN Head of Education, on the Shape of Caring Review and discussed their input to the consultation.
70. The committee tested a new clinical skills survey; the aim of which is to discover the skills possessed by student nurses when they leave education, and what skills they require in the workplace.

71. The committee also received a presentation on the role of the RCN's Member Support Services and what services are available for student members.
72. Two members of the committee had attended the NUS National Conference and hosted a fringe on supporting nursing students. As part of building this relationship NUS members had attended Congress to host a session in the student programme.

Fellow Co-ordinating Committee

73. The committee met on the 5 May 2015. Jane Denton, Fellows Convenor, had provided an update on the Care of Older People project as well as arrangements for their event at Congress when the End of Life Care resources were to be launched.
74. Plans for the full Fellows meeting in November were also discussed and it was agreed that the theme should centre on revalidation.

National Pensioners Convention

75. We noted a report from the RCN's representatives on the National Pensioners Convention. The representatives have published a number of updates on their web page on issues discussed by the NPC.
76. Dr Joyce Forge and Trevor Peel had attended the 2015 Pensioners Parliament. Their report highlighted that key speakers had included Paul Nowak, TUC Assistant General Secretary; Dr Brenda Boardman, Environmental Change Institute; Carla Cantone, CGIL-SPI, Secretary General (Council for Italian workers), Dave Ward (CWU General Secretary) & Professor Christina Beatty (Sheffield Hallam University)
77. The representatives also hosted a fringe meeting at RCN Congress 2015 on Tuesday 23 June which was attended by Dot Gibson, NPC General Secretary.

President and Deputy President

78. We noted a report from President Cecilia Anim on her activities since our last meeting. Cecilia was unable to attend the meeting.
79. Rod Thomson, Deputy President, also updated us on his activities.