



Council

Date of meeting:	3 December 2015
Title of Paper:	Report from Membership and Representation Committee
Appendices:	<i>N/A</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 4 November 2015.

MRC Work Programme

2. We discussed progress with delivering the TU priorities and MRC's work programme for 2015. We agreed that the Committee had achieved a lot over the past 12 months and we took a moment to reflect on this work and its significance.
3. We noted that both the Trade Union Governance Group and the Stewards Committee had organised strategy days for the New Year to review their work plans and look forward to the year ahead and how their work will inform the Council priorities for 2016.

Pay, Terms and Conditions

Pay Review Process and 4 Country Update

4. The Committee was updated on the Pay Review process. We noted that staff side and RCN evidence had been submitted to the Pay Review Body on 29

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September 2015 and that the evidence had highlighted the gap between where pay should be, given inflation, and where it was in reality, and the catastrophic impact this was having on many nurses.

5. We were informed that the Treasury had set an expectation of a 1% pay increase with targeting and reform of incremental pay.
6. The Committee went on to discuss the situation around the four countries. We heard that the Northern Ireland Board had agreed to recommend to Council that a ballot for industrial action should be undertaken in Northern Ireland given that there was still no pay award on the table for 2014-15.
7. We also discussed the junior doctors' pay offer announced earlier in the day and agreed that the RCN could not get involved in their dispute with the Government.

Agenda for Change Review

8. The Committee was pleased to hear that there had been good discussions at the NHS staff council staff-side workshop at the end of July when the trade unions agreed that a simpler pay structure without overlaps would be beneficial.
9. We asked Josie to clarify and refresh the RCN's negotiating position in relation to UK pay structures.

Pay campaign and pay sub-committee update

10. We received an update on the work of the Pay sub-committee. We agreed that an integral part of the campaign would be to get the public on board with the realities of working in the NHS at the present time. It would also be important to underline the pride of nurses and the increased responsibilities that nurses and HCAs continue to be given.
11. We were reassured that the Pay sub-committee has been careful to develop a campaign that will be applicable to all four countries.

The Trade Union Bill

12. We then discussed the Trade Union Bill. We were sorry to agree that the government had public opinion on their side.
13. We had contributed to the RCN's response to three individual consultations at our special meeting in August. We were pleased to learn that some changes had been made most importantly to recognise the increased use of social media.
14. We were informed that when the Bill entered the House of Lords there would be more scope for lobbying as the Conservatives do not have a majority. At

this stage the RCN would be able to highlight its research, which demonstrated that Reps saved the NHS money.

15. We agreed that Boards and activists would be contacted after the report stage of the Bill to advise on what can be done at a local level.

Agency Nursing

16. Howard Catton updated the Committee on the situation with agency nursing. The bill for agency nursing has increased exponentially over the last few years as a result of the recruitment and retention issue in nursing. The agency spend makes up the majority of Trusts' overspend and the Government is keen to rectify this.
17. We confirmed that caps on agency nursing would affect staffing levels especially during the critical winter period.
18. Howard informed us that the amount paid to agency staff would be reduced in 3 stages to Agenda for Change rates by April 2016.
19. The staff-side have drafted comments in response to the proposals and have requested that rules are extended to all medical staff and not just nursing.
20. We agreed that the RCN should respond to the TDA/Monitor proposal regarding a cap on agency and bank staff and ensure that this is communicated to reps and the wider membership.
21. We supported the argument that the money spent on agency nursing should be converted to permanent staff otherwise issues of patient safety and waiting times will arise.
22. We supported the push for Trusts to pay overtime instead of relying on more expensive bank and agency nurses. Trusts should also work with staff-side on workforce planning to stop the use of agency nursing being used as a filler.

Immigration

23. Susan Williams gave an update on the situation with regards to overseas nurses. We noted that nursing has been placed on the skills shortage list until February 2016 pending a review of further evidence. This represents an opportunity to have nursing placed on the list for the short to medium term.
24. We requested clear messages be circulated to members that overseas nurses currently working on a visa can apply for indefinite leave to remain in the UK and will not be subject to the requirement to earn £35,000 if nursing were to come off the shortage list next year.

Revalidation resources project

25. Josie Irwin informed the Committee that revalidation will be going ahead from 16th April 2016. To prepare for this the Trade Union Governance Group have been helping to produce guidance materials for Reps. These resources are currently being tested and will be finalised after 8th December ready to be rolled out early next year.
26. The Committee requested caution in putting stewards in the middle of the revalidation process. Messages to members need to be clear that individuals undertake revalidation and stewards and activists simply act as sign posters and are not there to go through the process with them.

Steward Supervision and Support

27. Michael Reilly presented a paper on Supervision and Support for Stewards. The new process would facilitate discussion between reps and supervisors, ensuring that stewards do not take on too much and feel supported. We agreed the recommendations and next steps outlined in the paper.

Congress 2015

28. We received the first reports of Congress 2015 items. We noted that the UK Reps Committees had indicated which items they would like involvement with. We also approved the interim report and the RCN strategy on the EU referendum contained in the report on item 18.

MRS Programme Board and Case management quarterly update

29. Janice Smyth presented the Case Management Quarterly Report. It showed that a total number of 6086 referrals were made from April to June 2015. A total of 6840 cases were open, involving the representation of 8137 members.

Membership and Recruitment

30. We were informed that the membership figures for July – September were 2% ahead of target and that the impact of student recruitment was yet to be seen in the figures. At the end of October 2015 the RCN had a membership of almost 440,000. HP membership was also growing and stood at just over 17,000.

Trade Union Governance Group

31. Tracey Budding updated us on the issues currently being considered by the Trade Union Governance Group and the UK Reps Committees. We noted the issue raised by TUGG about safety and learning reps not currently receiving mentorship and supervision and it was agreed that members of TUGG should work with the Membership and Representation Programme Board on extending mentorship and supervision to these Reps.
32. We agreed the recommendations of the Stress Task and Finish Group and were pleased to hear that the Healthy Workplaces project had been a great success and received very positive feedback at its launch at the Joint Reps Conference in October.
33. Finally, we thanked Anne Wells for all of her hard work during her office as Chair of the Committee.