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## Council

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>28 April 2016</b>
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	<b>Report from Membership and Representation Committee</b>
<b>Appendices:</b>	<i>Appendix A - UK Learning Reps Committee Annual Report Appendix B - UK Safety Reps Committee Annual Report Appendix C - UK Stewards Committee Annual Report</i>
<b>Presented by:</b>	<b>Gordon Lees, Chair of MRC</b>
<b>Is a decision required? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b>	

1. I chaired my first meeting of the committee on 15 March 2016.

### **MRC Work Programme and Strategic Look at the year ahead**

2. We agreed that our overarching priorities for 2016 would be:
  - Pay Terms and Conditions
  - Equalities and Inclusion
  - Independent Sector
  - Membership – Categories Recruitment and Retention
  - Accredited Representatives - Recruitment, Retention and Support

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3. We agreed what our responsibilities were under each of these headings and we identified success markers to help us evaluate our effectiveness at the end of the year.
4. We reviewed the Committee's Terms of Reference and agreed that no changes were required at present.
5. We also discussed future ways of working and in particular how MRC would work with TUGG and the UK Committees to ensure information flows up and down across the governance and representative structures and is reported appropriately.

### Equality and Inclusion

6. Chris Cox reported on work on equality and inclusion in the College. We learnt about the successful 'Building Better Partnerships' conference, the aim of which was to strengthen the skill set of staff side representatives to raise and articulate equalities and inclusion issues. We were pleased to hear that an equivalent conference will be run in the autumn for the independent sector.
7. We were briefed on the public sector equality duty, which requires policy decisions to undergo equality impact assessments. We saw this as a useful provision although the RCN is not beholden to the duty as it is not a public body we will still seek to uphold its principles.
8. We noted that the RCN did not have an overarching equality and diversity strategy; that no formal measures or positive action had been agreed to improve representation on governance bodies.
9. Un-like other trade unions, the RCN does not have equality 'groups' 'annual conferences' for different groups or workplace equality representatives. In addition we have only carried out limited research into the disadvantage faced by different groups in health.
10. The RCN has only ever made limited public comment on equality issues and never commented on the gender issues that arise from nursing being a predominantly female occupation. We agreed to look at steps we could take to profile the gender pay gap in the independent sector and to ensure that the value of women at work was acknowledged.
11. We agreed that the RCN should take advantage of work already carried out by other organisations and should try to engage with these groups and add value where possible.
12. We also agreed that Equality and Inclusion should be a key priority for Council and MRC and that MRC should take responsibility for ensuring that

all the RCN's policy work went through an equality impact assessment. We supported the recommendation to form a group that would work on pulling together an equality and inclusion strategy and we will report regularly to Council on its progress.

### **Review of Membership Definitions**

13. Chris Cox confirmed that the RCN would continue to have access to the complete NMC register not just the public part and that there was no need therefore to review our definitions of membership at this time.
14. The Committee acknowledged that some retired members felt disenfranchised by the current arrangements even though they could participate in RCN activities through Boards, Branches and Forums in the same way as all other members.
15. It was clarified that retired members paid a reduced rate for membership but that some retired members had chosen to pay a full payment plan in order to be eligible for a governance roles.
16. The Committee agreed to look at how to improve the way it worked with retired members as part of the equalities and inclusion work-stream and that current arrangements continue until that work has been completed.
17. We also noted that it may be necessary to review the current membership categories when the outcome of the nursing associate consultation is known.

### **Pay, terms and conditions**

#### **Developing the RCN position on UK pay structures**

18. The Pay Award was announced on 8<sup>th</sup> March. We learnt that the Pay Review Body had seriously considered a Nil Award and that RCN evidence went a long way to pushing the Review Body to recommend 1% across the four countries.
19. We noted with concern that the Pay Review Body believed that there needed to be some trade off between staffing numbers and a pay increase.
20. We considered whether the RCN should consult on the Award. It was noted that both Scotland and England had received the pay circular and that Wales and Northern Ireland had not yet responded on whether they would be accepting the PRB's recommendations.
21. We were cognisant that it was a pay award and not a pay offer and that we are anticipating greater battles on terms and conditions. As a result we concluded not to consult the membership on the award but that the RCN would make it clear that members felt it was a derisory award.

22. We discussed training for RCN activists around campaigning and negotiating and we noted that the UK Stewards Committee was putting on a fringe at Congress 2016 on campaigning.

### **Agenda for Change**

23. We endorsed the approach being taken by the RCN's negotiators to enter into discussions, be willing to engage, come up with ideas and continue to approach discussions on a four country basis.
24. We noted the longstanding priorities for the staff side in relation to the pay structure, which are i) shorter pay bands – for equal pay reasons and to make it quicker for staff to reach the 'rate for the job' – and ii) to remove overlaps between bands so promotion means something.

### **Northern Ireland Ballot**

25. We received an update on pay negotiations in Northern Ireland after RCN Council approved a membership ballot in Northern Ireland in December on action short of a strike.
26. We were informed that on 9<sup>th</sup> February the Minister instructed the Pay Review Body to make a recommendation on pay, which he indicated he would support for 2016/17.
27. We asked that learning from the Northern Ireland negotiations, lessons from the junior doctor's fight and the student bursary demonstrations be pulled together into one document and shared with the Committee.

### **Trade Union Bill**

28. Gerry O'Dwyer gave us an update on the Trade Union Bill. Last August the Committee had responded to three Government consultations all of which were opposed by the RCN. We had then agreed to focus efforts on the importance of facilities time.
29. We heard how the RCN had lobbied at every stage in the Commons and had produced research that clearly showed the economic benefits of facilities time. The Bill has since entered the House of Lords and the parliamentary team have met with a number of Lords. Lord Curslake has tabled an amendment to the Bill which would mean there would not be a cap on facilities time. The amendment had support across the House and there was a push to get this amendment to a vote. However, as the Conservatives have

a majority in the House of Commons they could still overturn any amendment.

### **Election Manifestos**

30. We received presentations on the election manifestos, lobbying activities and events that have been taking place across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland ahead of their respective elections. In each of the countries it was reported that there has been a high level of member engagement with the campaigns. Each campaign has also drawn cross party support and a number of politicians have endorsed the individual priorities set out in each of the election manifestos.
31. We noted that the Staffing Levels Bill in Wales had now received Royal assent and is an excellent example of what can be achieved with the support of members and the public.

### **MRS Programme Board and Case Management Quarterly update**

32. We received the Case Management Reports for the third and fourth quarter of 2015 and we were informed of a number of projects that were in the pipeline for the next quarter. They include developing and agreeing the MRS training module 2 for staff, evaluating the paper-lite pilot, and progressing data protection training for staff and reps.
33. We discussed the paper-lite pilot and the fact that the I.T. infrastructure cannot currently support a completely online case management system. We expressed concern about the continued need to print case documents and hold paper files and it was agreed that the issue of keeping paper files would be taken to the MS Programme Board on 16<sup>th</sup> March and the outcome of the discussion would be reported to the UK Committees at their meetings in May.

### **Membership and Recruitment**

34. We received the report on membership recruitment and retention for 2015 and noted that total membership had grown by 3.97% for the period to an all-time high of 446,089 in November 2015. Nurse membership grew by 2.88% as a result of 3<sup>rd</sup> year students moving into full membership and the NMC's revalidation programme encouraging new members. Health Practitioner membership also grew by 11.73%, which was considered a good achievement even though below the target of 15%. A paid digital awareness and recruitment campaign was tested from June to November 2015, which produced encouraging results not just for the HP category.

### Trade Union Governance Group

35. Tracey Budding updated us on the issues currently being considered by the Trade Union Governance Group and the UK Reps Committees. We heard that TUGG continued to support the work towards extending mentorship and supervision to Safety and Learning Representatives and is looking at how the RCN can continue the Union Learn work now funding has come to an end. We also received the first Annual Reports from the UK Committees, which are appended to this report for your information.

### Appendix A

#### **RCN UK Learning Representatives Committee Annual Report to RCN Council 2015**

##### **Introduction**

This is a report of the activities, achievements and the challenges faced by of the UK Learning Representative Committee during 2015.

##### **Committee Membership**

Greta Alleyne - West Midlands Region

Melanie Barnard - Yorkshire & the Humber Region

Paul Brown - Eastern Region

Marva Duncan – East Midlands Region

Karen Dutton (vice chair) – Northern Region

Valery Radmore – South West Region (until October 2015)

Jean Rogers – North West Region

Karen Sanders (chair) – London Region

Chris Starnes - South East Region

Carol Cleary - Wales (until August 2015)

Sandra Robinson Clark – Wales (since September 2015)

Sindy King – Northern Ireland

Vacant Seat – *Scotland*

*South West Region (since October 2015)*

##### **General Information**

The Learning Representatives Committee met at RCN Headquarters, London on three occasions during January, May and September 2015. The committee met in the morning as the “RCN Union Learning Fund Steering Committee” and in the afternoon as the “UK Learning Representatives Committee”.

The Learning Representatives Committee met with Committee Members from the Stewards and Health and Safety Representatives Committees as the “Joint Representatives Committee” on two occasions, in March and October 2015 prior to the Joint Representatives Conferences.

The chair of the committee has attended the meetings of the Membership and Representation Committee (MRC), Trade Union Governance Group (TUGG), Pay Review Sub Committee, Joint Representative Conference Planning Committee, Congress Review groups, the Early

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Warning Signs Project (Ask. Listen. Act.), and the Revalidation Task & Finish Group supported by Karen Dutton (Vice Chair).

Committee members have consistently attended meetings of the Healthy Workplaces Project, Activist website Project, the Stress Task and Finish Group, and the Joint Representative Conference Planning Committee.

The attendance at the Union Learn Fund Steering Committee and UK Learning Representative Committee meetings has been:

### January 2015 – 54% attendance

6 committee members attended the meeting.

4 committee members were unable to attend due to poor weather conditions.

1 committee member was unable to attend due to illness.

The Scotland seat remained vacant.

### May 2015 – 82% attendance

9 committee members attended the meeting.

1 committee member was unable to attend due to illness.

1 committee member was unable to attend due to work commitments.

The Scotland seat remained vacant.

### August 2015 – 82% attendance

9 committee members attended the meeting.

1 committee members was unable to attend due to work commitments.

1 committee members was unable to attend due to personal reasons.

The Scotland seat remained vacant.

### **Priorities identified for the year**

1. To review the effectiveness of the Committee.
2. To contribute to the provision of Learning and Development Resources for newly accredited and experienced Learning Representatives
3. To contribute to the development, promotion and review of RCN resources/learning offer, publications and campaigns.
4. To support Union Learning Fund projects
5. To contribute to the RCN's work on mentorship issues faced by student nurses/learners and mentors in clinical practice.
6. To support members with ICT skills and confidence.

### How you engage with your members to inform your work

Some committee members are leading or are involved in local networks within their country/region. Other members are exploring their options for setting up local networks in their country/region in the near future.

A discussion zone exists for Learning Representatives on the RCN website.

Learning Representatives are engaged in the UKLRC Work plan, the UKLRC and Joint Representatives Committee Meeting agendas during Country/Regional Representative Development and learning events.

### Committee achievements

1. An annual committee effectiveness review took place during 2015. The following areas were identified for future action:
  - ◆ To share effective practice to strengthen relationships between committee members and the Boards.
  - ◆ To identify how to facilitate the development of committee members.
  - ◆ To contribute to the delivery of CLPD.
  - ◆ To contribute to Activate and Bulletin when appropriate to raise the profile of the committee and its work.

The Committee has been represented at TUGG meetings and at each meeting the committee has raised relevant issues/concerns for consideration by the group.

Committee members reported the achievements/issues/concerns from their country/region at each meeting and consideration is given as to whether they should be added to the committee's work plan.

The Committee has not been able to achieve full representation from each country and region. The Scotland seat remained vacant throughout 2015. The South West Region seat became vacant in October 2015. At the August 2015 TUGG meeting the committee requested an agreed way to temporarily fill persistent vacancies on the committees.

The Committee has submitted one resolution and one fringe event for consideration for Congress 2016.

All Committee Members are engaged with their County/Regional Boards.

2. Committee members have:

- ◆ Worked with the Learning & Development team to identify experienced reps to participate in the delivery of the Learning Representative Development Module to ensure that learning representatives can effectively support members in their CPD, to enable them to maintain their competence and skills so that they can provide safe and effective care.

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- ◆ Provided feedback to the Learning & Development Quality Assurance Lead on all aspects of the curriculum development (core topics) for Learning Representatives in 2016.
- ◆ Ensured that an experienced Learning Representatives contact new Learning Representatives in their Country/Region once they have completed the Foundation Module as their preceptor.

3. The Committee has worked with lead staff in the RCN Nursing Department, RCN Forums, other committees and RCN Events Team on the development and review of RCN resources and publications to ensure they reflect the perspective of the Learning Representative. This has included updating HCA resources “First Steps Resource” and the Healthy Workplaces Project.

It has also worked with lead staff in the RCN to develop, promote and evaluate campaigns e.g. Trade Union Act and the Pay Review Sub Committee.

The Committee is now working more closely with the Stewards and Health and Safety Committees. Joint working is becoming the norm.

4. The committee has supported Union Learning Fund projects, in the countries where projects exist by;

- ◆ Acting as a Steering Group (England only)
- ◆ Offering advice and guidance.
- ◆ Promoting the work.
- ◆ Engaging local Learning Representatives with the work.

We have been particularly involved in promoting and supporting the Learning Agreements and the Mid Life Development Review Projects.

5. Members of the committee have also contributed to the RCN Project addressing the mentorship issues faced by student nurses in clinical practice.

6. We have also gathered evidence of skill levels, support and access to IT in the workplace, in an attempt to be able to confidently identify the learning needs and resources required to support members including;

- ◆ A workshop on using Social Media was designed and delivered to all 3 UK Representatives committees in May 2015 following consultation at the Joint Representatives Committee Meeting
- ◆ RCN congress 2015 was used to raise awareness of this work and to collect valuable data.
- ◆ An IT survey has been developed by several committee members, which will be distributed to RCN Members via Survey monkey during 2016.

### **Being on the Committee**

As members of the UKLR Committee we feel that we are able to utilise our knowledge, understanding, skills and experiences in different ways than we are able to in our employed roles. As a result we are able to influence and make some difference regarding the provision of an environment of shared learning, collaboration, shared evidence based best practice in our workplaces, within the workplaces of RCN activists and throughout the RCN. We are able to promote networking along with other activists and joint working in the healthcare settings and within the RCN.

Some members of the committee feel that being a committee member is a benefit to their career, others not.

The Learning Representative Development Modules are useful in further developing our skills, knowledge and understanding.

### **Future priorities**

To headline the priorities for the coming year

1. To review the effectiveness of the Committee during 2016
2. To contribute to the provision of Learning and Development Resources for newly accredited and experienced Learning Representatives
3. To contribute to the development, promotion and review of RCN resources/learning offer, publications and campaigns - including addressing the way forward with the work/projects previously funded by Union Learn e.g. Learning Agreements and the Mid Life Development Reviews etc.
4. To contribute to the RCN's work addressing the mentorship issues faced in clinical practice. In 2015, the RCN commissioned research to develop an informed, evidence based contribution to the current debates around mentorship and provide recommendations for future ways of working. The Committee will work with lead staff in the RCN Nursing Department, other committee members and RCN Members to explore the recommendations from the research and explore the practicalities of proposed mentorship models and the resources that may be required to support mentors.
5. To continue to gathered evidence of skill levels, support and access to IT in the workplace, in an attempt to be able to confidently identify the learning needs and resources required to support members with ICT skills and increase their confidence.
6. To develop and promote the learning offer to the hard to reach independent sector.

### Appendix B

#### RCN UK Reps Committee Annual Report to RCN Council

##### Introduction

This report seeks to demonstrate the successes and challenges faced by the RCN UK Safety Reps Committee from January 2015 to end December 2015.

##### **Committee Membership (1<sup>st</sup> January 2015 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015)**

Denise McLaughlin (Chair) – Northern Region

Elsbeth Caithness (Vice Chair) – Scotland

David McKerr – Northern Ireland

Catriona Forsyth – North West (until June 2015)

Neil Thompson – East Midlands

Alison Upton – South East

Mitzi Wilson – West Midlands

Lesley Pallett – South West

Michael Oyeleye – Eastern

Billy Nicholls – Wales

Deborah Hammill – Yorkshire and the Humber

(Vacancy) - London

##### **General Information**

There are 12 seats on the committee which are held by elected safety reps from each country and region of the UK.

We meet as a committee 3 times a year and in addition to the UK Safety Rep Committee meetings, we meet twice a year jointly with the UK Stewards Committee and the UK Learning Reps Committee.

##### **Priorities identified for the year**

In January 2015, I took up the role as chair of the committee with a new vice chair, Elsbeth Caithness. Our priorities were to develop the visibility of the committee across the UK and at congress. We were successful in presenting items to congress.

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In order to develop the committee further, it was decided that we should undertake a committee effectiveness review. This was completed over the summer period of 2015 (see below).

We have been working to ensure our work plan and objectives are aligned with the council priorities through Trade Union Governance Group (TUGG) and Membership Representation Committee (MRC) and that any issues or challenges faced by safety reps are communicated to council via TUGG and MRC.

### **How you engage with your members to inform your work**

In each country or region, networks are being developed in order to communicate with and engage safety reps on our agenda. Each member of the committee takes the lead for the network in their country and region. Some are virtual and others meet. The approach is decided upon dependent on the most appropriate method for each country/region.

Safety reps who are interested in joining the committee or learning more about what we do are able to observe committee meetings. This can be arranged via their local country/regional office.

### **Committee achievements:**

#### *Committee Effectiveness Review:*

Over the summer of 2015, committee members completed an effectiveness review of how the committee functions and how we can measure success. This identified some strengths and some areas for development. We agreed to develop induction for new committee members and to introduce a buddying system to support new members as well. We also identified that links with country and regional boards need to be stronger and work has started to develop these links and succession plan within countries and regions.

#### *Stress in Reps:*

The UKSRC have been instrumental in developing thinking on stress in representatives. It is recognised that aspects of the reps role can bring its own stresses, including dealing with distressed members, access to sufficient facilities time and the impact on reps personal time. The UK Safety Reps Committee have been keen to continue to develop work on the support we provide to our reps in order to ensure their representative role does not come with a personal cost.

#### *Menopause:*

At congress in Liverpool in 2014, the UK Safety Reps Committee were successful in having an item accepted onto the congress agenda asking for awareness to be raised among health care employers of the impact of the menopause on the nursing workforce. Since then, work has been carried out between the RCN Women's

Health Forum and the UK Safety Reps Committee. This work has resulted in the publication of the 'Menopause and Work – Guidance for Reps' document.

### *Healthy Workplace, Healthy You:*

The committee takes an active interest in supporting employers with developing and ensuring employee health and wellbeing. The impact of these on staff health and well-being on employing organisations and patient outcomes. The committee has been actively involved in developing jointly with other rep committees the 'Healthy Workplace, Healthy You Toolkit' which is now available for all reps to use.

### *Building Links:*

The committee sees the benefit and importance of building appropriate links external to the college and as such, have had the national lone worker lead from NHS Protect to speak to us at our meeting in September.

### *New Ways of Working:*

The committee recognised and identified through the committee effectiveness review in 2015 that we needed to develop ways of working together between meetings. From this, there have been committee members involved in specific task and finish groups and we are now starting to use electronic shared files which we all have access to.

### *Congress:*

Members of the committee were successful in raising the profile of the work of the committee at congress in 2015. There were two items accepted for the agenda and presented at congress on behalf of the committee. These items formed part of our work plan for the latter part of the year. The committee were also involved in several fringe events during congress week including the John Goodlad lecture, which we are keen to continue to support.

## **Being on the Committee**

Being a member of the UK Safety Reps Committee has a not insubstantial time commitment for members and it is important that members continue to build the links with their regions and country boards.

Being on the UK Safety reps Committee brings opportunities for members to develop leadership skills and a much greater awareness of national challenges and issues in health and safety. Members are supported to develop personally and engage as much as possible with the work of the committee and raising awareness of health and safety topics within their own regions and countries.

### Future priorities

- Continue to build on the work to support reps in their roles.
- Develop links with HSE
- Review Shift Guidance
- Further work to develop the committee work plan
- Continue to develop stronger links with regional and country boards

The committee continues to support the work of TUGG and as chair of the UK Safety reps committee I attend MRC to represent the committee and work closely with the chairs of the UK Stewards Committee and the UK Learning Reps Committee on issues which affect all reps. As Chair of the committee, I also attend NHS Staff Council, supporting the Employment Relations Department at staff side and staff council meetings during the year.

Denise McLaughlin

Chair UK Safety Reps Committee

February 2016

### Appendix C

#### RCN UK Stewards Committee Annual Report to RCN Council

As Chair of the UK Stewards Committee, I have responsibility to provide an Annual Report to Council. This report seeks to give assurance that the UK Stewards Committee is fulfilling its role set out in the Committee Terms of Reference and it is functioning effectively as an active participant in the Trade Union activities of the Royal College of Nursing

In September 2014, the UK Stewards Committee carried out an Effectiveness Review. There was a desire to improve on the previous reporting mechanisms and governance arrangements. This resulted in an internal view that it was important to highlight key areas of effort by the committee and feedback to RCN Council in an Annual Report to be produced in December for onward submission to TUGG, MRC, and Council.

Following the outputs of the Committee Effectiveness Review the following priorities were identified:

- Buddying system for new members
- Succession planning and process for observing committees
- Ways of working between meetings to make the most of time and resources:
- Protocol for video and teleconferencing  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYu\\_bGbZiiQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYu_bGbZiiQ)
- A consistent way of feeding into the development and review of resources
- Identifying lead committee members for each workstream on our workplan

Committee Membership over the year has been consistent and is noted below-

- Graham Revie (Chair) Scotland
- Phil Noyes (Vice Chair) West Midlands
- Michael Smith (London)
- Marcia Turnham (Eastern)
- Ngaire Cox (South East)
- Kathy Lawrie (South West)
- Michael Hayworth (East Midlands)
- Michael Appleby (Northern)
- Carol Popplestone (resigned 31/12/15 – Yorkshire and Humber)

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- Catherine Leach (North West)
- Joanne McGillin (Northern Ireland)
- Jane Carroll (resigned February 2016 – Wales)

During the last year, the committee has continued to meet on a quarterly basis and the meetings have been quorate. In addition to the UK Stewards Committee, there have also been two Joint Representative Committee Meetings which have taken place alongside the Bi Annual Activist Conferences. The UK Stewards Committee have also continued to support RCN Congress. The later three events have been hugely supported by the Committee membership with almost full complement of members in attendance.

The Committee has continued to support the Governance structures within the Royal College of Nursing by ensuring attendance at the Trade Union Governance Group (TUGG) and Membership and Representation Committee (MRC).

As the Chair of the Committee, I have continued to support the Employment Relations Department attending all NHS Staff Council and Staff Side Meetings over the year.

Early in 2015, the Committee created a work plan that has been a developmental approach seeking to find new and more effective ways of working both at the Committee meetings and between the meetings. The Work plan is updated throughout the year and clearly demonstrates areas of involvement and engagement. This has provided the committee with an evidence based approach, mapping the internal RCN activity allowing the committee to assess the impact of an improved model of working. It is the intention to improve our work planning activity to ensure that there is alignment with RCN Council Priorities and TUGG & MRC Work plans. A Strategy and Activity Planning Workshop will take place in January 2016.

This year a number of key projects have been delivered by the RCN. These have had major contribution from the Stewards Committee.

### Steward Support

As the Case Management System continues to be integrated into the RCN Stewards method of record keeping the Committee has remained close and feedback from the committee has helped to shape developments and upgrades. The Committee regularly reviews outputs from what is becoming an increasingly rich source of data to enable improvements in supporting Stewards in their representative role.

The long awaited Rep Hub on the new RCN website is one of the most exciting areas of involvement. The Rep Hub replaces the Activist Zone and members of the Committee have been closely involved in both shaping the

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development and testing of the design and content. This will provide further support to Stewards within the workplace by giving one-stop access to a range of publications, useful links, the case management portal and other key resources.

The Stewards Handbook has been developed and is almost ready to be published.

This will also be available through the Rep Hub on the new RCN website, providing easy access to all Stewards active within their various workplaces

This year has seen the development of a Support and Mentorship process designed to ensure that consistent support mentorship is given to Stewards. This process is designed to ensure the RCN Senior Officers, Officers and Stewards work together in a structured framework that identifies issues and learning needs. The model is based on partnership between the Officers and the Steward with the desired outcome of Stewards feeling supported and equipped to deal with issues that arise on a day-to-day basis.

Following the Francis recommendations, RCN set up a short life working group to ensure that processes and procedures were in place to allow representatives and staff to be alert to patient safety concerns within care settings. The UK Stewards Committee have actively engaged in this programme of work. This has led to development of a toolkit that has been piloted successfully across three regional boards and is now being rolled out across many regional boards.

One of the highlights of the year are our two Joint Representative Conferences. The UK Stewards Committee continue to be engaged in the planning and evaluation of the conferences, which due to the dedication of all concerned have enjoyed resurgence in popularity with the Activist Groups.

The Committee has allocated a member to lead a piece of work in partnership with the Employee Relations Department on Whistle Blowing. This work is likely to be complete in the Spring of next year and aims to give Activists clarity in supporting members in this challenging area.

The UK Stewards Committee has worked in partnership with the UK Safety Representatives Committee in the development of the Healthy Workplace Toolkit that was successfully launched at the Joint Representative Conference in Autumn 2015.

### Terms and Conditions of Employment

A small working group has been set up to ensure that engagement remains strong in the Independent Sector. A member of the committee has led on this work that is becoming increasingly important following the implementation of Health and Social Care Integration, which has caused members to be transferred into Social Care environments often under TUPE.

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This year the RCN has commissioned a research project to examine the Economic Value of Facilities Time. The Committee has had close involvement in the development of this project and has been kept well informed of progress. All activists have been involved in gathering data and it is hoped this will provide a strong evidence base to counter the UK Government's commitment to reforming the Trade Union Legislation undermining Trade Unions in providing appropriate support to members in the workplace.

It was recognised by Council that there was a specific need to develop a strategy to combat the current UK Governments philosophy on Nursing Pay. Council have developed a working group to create the 2016 Pay Campaign for Nursing. The UK Stewards Committee have been involved in this significant piece of work since Autumn 2015. This is viewed as a Committee priority for the forthcoming year.

### Governance Arrangements

The Committee continues to review the governance arrangements in place to support the role and function of the UK Stewards Committee. The Committee has undertaken a review of the Committee Terms of Reference that have been approved by RCN Council.

The Committee continues to develop collective responses to various consultations being carried out by RCN Council. This has been particularly important in the recent Council Review and a focus of the committee has been to ensure that the Stewards collective voice is heard at Regional/ Country Boards and throughout the appropriate sub committees of Council. A significant contribution has been made by the Committee to the Legal and Governance Review.

The Committee members have undertaken a significant piece of work in 2015 in setting up and developing networks across Regional and Country Board Areas. This has involved working closely with the Boards, building on strengths in developing an approach allowing improved communication throughout the internal structures of the College. This work is at an early stage and although early indicators show positive engagement it is clear that this will be a key area of development over the next year. The Committee acknowledges the support and effort made by Regional and Country Board Directors and Senior Officer Support that has been given to this substantial area of work.

The contribution to the Legal and Governance Review, Development of Networks and Annual Effectiveness Review are three main elements to assure Council that the UK Stewards Committee continues to effectively function for and on behalf of Steward Activists within the UK and assists to drive forward activity

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based on the Council Priorities and communicates effectively with MRC and TUGG.

Succession Planning is recognised as a risk within the Committee and work has commenced to ensure that the Committee becomes more transparent and seeks to encourage representative volunteers to take on further responsibilities to become future elected members of the Committee. The Committee are grateful that Council approved the process for observers to attend the Committee in order that they may have first-hand experience of the content and function of the Committee.

Committee members have been frequently quoted in 'Activate' and many are engaged in Social Media activities helping to bring higher visibility to Committee activities. The Committee attended a successful workshop on the use of Twitter and other Social Media.

### Congress

The UK Stewards Committee has had success in increasing its visibility and influence at RCN Congress 2015. The Committee has contributed constructively to debate and discussion on Employment Relations issues. The Committee submitted and supported agenda items on the floor of Congress. Furthermore, Committee members have volunteered to assist MRC and Council in planning the delivery of actions generated by the debates held at Congress

I am happy to report that 2015 has been a year of steady progress within the Committee and would give assurance to Council that it is the intention of the Committee to follow this direction of travel. The meeting in January 2016 will evaluate the previous year's activity and plan the year ahead. It is intended that the Committee will strengthen links between Council Priorities and MRC and TUGG work plans, ensuring the Steward activists in the Royal College of Nursing continue to contribute positively to Trade Union activity, and supporting our members in very challenging political and economic times.

Graham Revie, Chair of UK Stewards Committee