



Royal College of Nursing
Shaping nursing since 1916

Council

Date of meeting:	21 July 2016
Title of Paper:	National Pensioners Convention update
Presented by:	Professor Dame June Clark FRCN
Is a decision required? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

1. Introduction

This is the second report of the 2015-2017 cohort of the members elected to represent the RCN at the National Pensioners Convention. It covers the period April to July 2016. During this period representatives have continued to attend meetings of the NPC National Council, the NPC Executive Committee, and the four working parties (Health and Social Care WP, Womens WP, Minority Elders WP, and Trade Union WP). Two members also attended the Pensioners Parliament June 14/15 in Blackpool; a full report is available on request. June Clark was scheduled to attend Congress (funded as a branch voting member) but had to withdraw because of illness.

2. Priorities

The priorities on which the group has worked since the last report are:

- Communications within the group of representatives (Teleconferences)
- Communications with members of the Network (Newsletters)
- Wider communications (RCN website)
- Relationship with NPC
- Status within the RCN

2.1: Communications within the group of representatives (Teleconferences)

We continue to hold monthly teleconferences, the purpose of which is to share information including reports of meetings attended by individual members which is then summarised in the newsletters, to allocate participation in forthcoming activities, and to discuss other issues relevant to retired members. Participation has been extended to include a standing invitation to Dawne Garrett (RCN staff lead on Older People and Dementia. However the representatives agree that teleconferences alone are not enough and that a face to face meeting is now essential.

2.2 Communications with members of the Network (Newsletters)

We continue to send a bi-monthly Newsletter, using the bulk email facility, to the 1,100 members who have “opted in” to the Network.

2.3 Wider communications (RCN website)

Exploration of the new website had revealed that the Network had no presence in the website – it did not have a page, was not included in the list of “forums and networks”, and could not be found through any of the search facilities. Following a meeting with Rachel Purkett some of this deficit has now been rectified – the Network is now included in the list of forums and networks and has a page in the website; a further meeting is scheduled to discuss appropriate content. However, this “invisibility” of the Network has meant that the Network has not been included in any of the consultations or events held to consider or share information about the member communication project. It is still unclear where the Network will come in the phased introduction of the facilities for branches and forums.

2.4 Relationship with NPC

Our understanding of the NPC rules which govern our affiliation is improving but there are still some problems. The main problems are our inability to use deputies e.g. in the event of sickness and to fill vacancies in the working parties (outside of the biennial election cycle), where most of the work is done. The loss of membership of the Health and Social Care working party has now been remedied by the achievement of the appointment of June Clark as an “expert adviser”. According to NPC rules, members of working parties are appointed by the NPC Executive Cttee for their individual expertise and do not represent any organisation; however the RCN representatives feel that they should always speak on behalf of the RCN and according to RCN policy. It is clear, for example from the presentation at Congress (see below) by Jan Shortt (vice president of NPC) and informal conversations, that the NPC welcomes the affiliation of the RCN and wants it to continue.

2.5 Status within the RCN

This continues to be a major source of frustration. The issue was set out in detail in the Network's last report to Council (April 2016). Network members are quite clear that what they want is recognition of the Network as a RCN membership entity which will enable retired members to participate corporately in the work of the RCN. This was part of the manifestos on which the current representatives were elected, and it remains their strongly held view. They want the NPC work (representing the interests of RCN retired members at the NPC National Council, Executive Committee and Working Parties) to be part but not the whole of the purpose and function of the Network ; indeed we would argue that we cannot fulfil the function of representing RCN views in NPC without the wider function.

There is conflicting information (including the title) about the Network on the RCN website and on google searches. On the website our last report to council (April 2016) is not included in the list of papers presented to Council, and the presentation of the report is incorrectly minuted. Networks (other than Board networks) are not included in any of the published guidance on matters such as election processes, which refer only to Council, Boards, and committees. It is unclear why the Network is located within the Employment Relations part of the RCN – since employment relations is by definition irrelevant to members of this Network whose membership criteria require that they are not in employment. We believe that we should be more closely aligned with the Nursing Older People Forum.

We note that the Network already fits the new definition of "forum" as "*those bodies established [by Council] to provide an opportunity for members to network, share best practice and lead the development of knowledge within specialist areas of interest*", and the purposes of forums set out in the new regulation agreed by Council in December, (with the exception of the right to submit proposed agenda items for RCN Congress to support nominations for election.)

3 Congress

The Network had a very successful fringe event, hosted with the Nursing Older People's Forum, at this year's RCN Congress. The session – "What type of nurse do older people want?" - was attended by 60 people and was a good mix between registered nurses and care assistants and from the public and private sector. The meeting was introduced by Gerry O'Dwyer from Employment Relations who also gave apologies from June. Gerry confirmed that the discussions from the fringe would be fed into the work of the NPC.

The opening presentation was by Jan Shortt Vice President of NPC. Jan stated how delighted NPC were to have the RCN as a member of the NPC.

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She also spoke of the work the NPC would be doing on the RCNs motion to the last NPC biennial delegate conference (2015) on the need for every older person to have access to a registered nurse to help support them manage their own care.

Dawne Garrett (RCN Lead for Older People and Dementia) spoke of the joint work the RCN was doing with the NPC. She reminded the room that she had just returned from the NPC Pensioners Parliament in Blackpool where she had shared a forum with Jan on issues in the NHS. Dawne wanted to see continued mutual work with the NPC and encouraged members to attend Forum fringes later in the week.

The last ten minutes of the meeting was an open discussion. Some messages were consistent, in particular the need to treat patients with dignity and the importance of having the right numbers of staff.

Following the session some retired members met with Chris Cox to argue the need for the Network to be properly established as a membership entity.

4. Summary

It is now more than three years since this Network was established. Since that time every one of the reports to Council has stressed the need to establish the Network as a membership entity for retired members, whose work would include but not be limited to RCN representation within NPC. We do not identify with the employment relations section of the College – employment relations is not the “*specialist area of interest*”, of members who by definition are not in employment...

The summary given in the last report to Council said:

“It is now three years since this network was established. Whatever the reasons and the past history, the present position is not sustainable and needs to be resolved as soon as possible both in order to enable the RCN to maximise its influence in NPC and to meet the wishes of the RCN’s retired members”

June Clark, on behalf of:
Jackie Burns
Kate Fitzsimmons
Joyce Ford
Dougie Lockhart
Cordelia Okwusogu

June 30th 2016