



Royal College of Nursing
Shaping nursing since 1916

Council

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Appendices:	
Presented by:	Cecilia Anim
Is a decision required? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

1. The last three months have been particularly busy, particularly as events commemorating our centenary have been appearing in our calendars. I am therefore pleased to provide a brief overview of key events and activities that I have been engaged in over the period.
2. Following Nurses Day, there has been a flurry of activity focussed on engagement with members across the UK.
3. This started with a visit to Sussex County hospital in Brighton where I delivered a keynote presentation on the contemporary and historical challenges facing the nursing profession.
4. I was delighted to meet with our members and colleagues in Belfast for the RCNI Nurse of the Year which showcases the breadth and depth of our nursing innovation and our collective focus on improving the experience of patients and their outcomes.
5. There were of course, a number of activities that were designed to honour and highlight the contributions made by nursing icons such as

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Edith Cavell, Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole during this period which has made for great opportunities to engage with our members locally and to note the high regard for our profession within the communities that we serve. It is clear that the opportunity to tell our unique history both as a profession and an institution has been well-received.

6. It was also particularly good to meet with those RCN members who had managed to secure tickets to the Buckingham Palace garden parties as part of our centenary celebrations.
7. It was very heartening to participate in a number of Nurses' Day events in May. One event that I attended at Croydon University Hospital gave me the chance to present prizes to community nurses who have made a particular difference to improving both patient care and patient outcomes. I found the event absolutely inspirational given the sheer determination, intelligence and clinical skill used by all the participants.
8. I was humbled and deeply moved as I attended the granting of freedom of the city of Belfast to nurses for their outstanding and unstinting contributions to care during the period of the troubles. Their award marks their well-deserved recognition of professional combined seamlessly with clinical excellence and innovation.
9. I also found it illuminating to engage with our nursing students as I did on a recent visit to Plymouth for a joint RCN and university conference. This was a superb event as it highlighted how our partnership working mirrors the nursing student journey throughout the pre-registration learning and development.
10. It was also useful to visit the South West region and attend an event in Bath and hear from the legendary writer and teacher, Margaret Heffernan, who spoke powerfully about wilful blindness and the need for organisational as well as individual transparency, truthfulness, openness and desire to create a learning and nurturing environment for all staff.
11. Politically, this has been a busy and challenging period marked by unprecedented volatility and uncertainty, particularly following the referendum result. Our work in bursaries has continued and I took part in the demonstrations to protest against the proposed changes to student funding. I reflected on the overwhelming sense of solidarity and support that we received as we marched through central London. I spoke at the rally itself and was left with confirmation of my conviction to challenge and defeat the proposals to student funding.
12. It was also great to attend the NSPCC event in the House of Commons lobbying for support for children following an abuse – I have included a photo of the event.



13. I also attended an event at channel 4 on mental health awareness and the need for improve funding to bridge the gaps in current provision.
14. It was great to be in Glasgow for Congress this year and it was fantastic to listen to the debates and participate in the fringe events. More than ever, Congress left the communities that we serve in doubt about the commitment that the nursing profession has to enhancing their health and wellbeing.
15. Whilst the AGM was certainly eventful and challenging in some parts, it is a testament to the strength of our members' general support and their ability to respond to issues raised on the day that the Council Review proposals were agreed.
16. One of my many highlights for this period was the unveiling of the Mary Seacole statue. It was a great event which drew many figures from the world of nursing, politics and the arts together to celebrate what can be achieved given enough pressure and enough time.
17. What I have gathered from all these visits and engagements are the importance of our collective presence on the frontline with members whether they are on wards, in the community, in clinics or in universities or social enterprises. What stands out in my mind is a visit that I undertook to the Marie Curie hospice in Hampstead. It was a great opportunity for me to share and communicate the RCN's vision and act as a conduit to further engagement with the region and the independent sector team.

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18. In my experience, observations and reflections underline the view that there is a strong and immediate need to empower nurses, midwives and healthcare support workers to generate control and increase their levels of self-determination. Nursing is a profession like few others, currently it offers an accessible and critical route to social mobility. It is partly for this and other reasons why our students have to be supported to resist current funding proposals which is a significant threat to our profession.
19. Amid low morale and high levels of exhaustion of our members, they still manage to provide world-class care and continually find ways to frugally innovate. Yet the unsustainability of this position has yet to be properly understood by decision and policy makers and we must work even harder to ensure that they do understand the consequences of their decisions.
20. I hear the nursing stories on these visits and admire the courage of our members giving care in these challenging times sincere thanks to staff of the RCN for making these visits possible and their continued support to our members .