



## RCN Council

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>05 April 2017</b>
<b>Title of Paper:</b>	<b>Communications Update</b>
<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Presented by:</b>	<b>Jane Hughes, Deputy Director of Communications and Campaigns</b>
<b>Is a decision required? No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b>	

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report summarises the activity of the Communications Department between November 2016 and April 2017.
- 1.2. We have concentrated on highlighting key issues including nursing pay, pressures in the health service, and violence against health care staff.
- 1.3. Having completed our member research, we are beginning to use the recommendations to help improve the way we communicate with members. This includes a greater focus on using member voices and stories wherever possible.

### 2. Communications strategy

- 2.1. The aim of the Communications Department is to enable the RCN to use all its communications channels to engage effectively with our different stakeholder audiences in order to help deliver our mission successfully.
- 2.2. We seek to engage our members and use their voices to strengthen our messages.

## Agenda Item 5

- 2.3. By ensuring that the right people hear and are influenced by what we say, our goal is to help make nursing practice the best it can be, and to empower nurses to deliver high quality patient care.

### 3. Pay campaigning

- 3.1. Building member engagement in our pay campaign and maximising awareness of our pay messages has been a big focus of our communications work across the UK.



- 3.2. Development of the campaign has been led by the pay sub-committee, with member activity at the forefront of our work.

- 3.3. Media and social media activity was successfully used to promote the pay petition, started by RCN member, Danielle Tiplady, which gained **105,600** signatures. Facebook posts asking members to sign the petition reached more than **1.5 million** users.

- 3.4. The petition succeeded in securing a Parliamentary debate on pay, and nearly 11,000 members from across the UK contacted their MPs to ask them to speak.



- 3.5. Social media activity during the day, including a Twitter Thunderclap, news story, photos of the lobby and member blog pushed website visits to a record high.



- 3.6. Following the debate, activity focused on promoting the Early Day Motion tabled by a Northern Ireland MP.

- 3.7. Next steps will be planned following the publication of the PRB's recommendations and the Government's pay announcement.

### 4. **NHS Pressures**

- 4.1. The RCN featured strongly in media coverage of the pressures on health services across the UK, with comments and interviews highlighting emergency waiting times figures in Northern Ireland, vacancy rates and waiting times in Scotland, winter preparedness in Wales, and pressures across England. We worked with members to highlight their individual stories of challenging situations in broadcast, print and social media.

### 5. **Violence against healthcare staff**

- 5.1. We highlighted the issue of members who are victims of violence at work, supporting an LBC radio campaign for legislation to give staff greater protection, including working with a member to share her experience of violence, and using social media to engage with MPs participating in the debate and members.



### 6. **Credentialing**

- 6.1. We have supported and promoted the launch of the RCN's credentialing programme, including developing a film and working with ANP members to highlight the benefits of credentialing.

### 7. **Sustainability and Transformation Plans**

- 7.1. We have worked to raise awareness among members in England of the introduction of STPs, including developing a dedicated section of the website, putting information in Bulletin and highlighting our concerns in the media.
- 7.2. As the detail of plans emerges, we'll do more to engage members at both a national and regional level.

### 8. **Congress 2016**

- 8.1. Promotion is underway and going well. We have a comprehensive communications and marketing plan to encourage as many members as possible to attend.
- 8.2. Activity so far has included articles, adverts and news stories in all of our regular member magazines, industry advertising, social media

## Agenda Item 5

(including some paid activity), bulk emails and website promotion.

- 8.3. In addition, we've sent direct mail postcards to all members in Liverpool, Manchester and the surrounding areas promoting the benefits of attending. Initial booking figures are very promising.
- 8.4. The Congress 2017 website has been entirely rebuilt, with improved layout, navigation and functionality, and offering real-time information about debates and other events.
- 8.5. We plan to encourage delegates to use the website as their first point of call for information about Congress, as part of our aim to eventually move to a digital-first and more paper-light event.

### 9. **Annual report**

- 9.1. Building on the Annual Report redesign from last year, we've also worked with Finance and Governance to make further improvements to the document to make it more engaging and accessible for members.

### 10. **Social media**

- 10.1. We've run regular Twitter chats to promote discussion around hot topics and to encourage members to get involved in the conversation. Topics have included sexuality in care homes and Revalidation. On average, these reach 135,000 people with over 300 directly participating.



- 10.2. This year we achieved 100,000 likes on Facebook, demonstrating the reach this social media channel has with our members. We have built interest by increasing our use of infographics and films, which are easy to digest and highly shareable, resulting in greater levels of engagement.

### 11. **Member research**

- 11.1. Our extensive research to better understand members' needs and their views about the RCN has given us important insight.
- 11.2. The research comprised 120 in-depth telephone interviews, seven focus groups and an all-member e-survey, giving us a detailed and

statistically robust picture of our members.

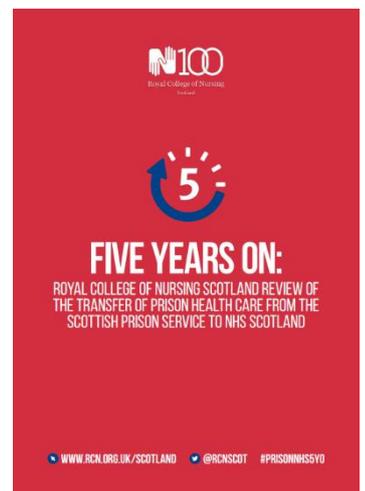
- 11.3. Overall, members said they are satisfied with the RCN, would like us to be more visible and approachable, and they need clearer guidance and support from us to get involved with the organisation. We have shared these findings with MRC, NPCC, the student committee and HP committee and sought their feedback and ideas.
- 11.4. To respond to the findings, we've established a project group that will focus on improving how we communicate with members, involving country, regional and HQ communications colleagues, so that members will be better informed about our work and more fully engaged. The Council development session in April will further inform how we take this work forward.

### 12. Northern Ireland Assembly elections

- 12.1. The RCN promoted nursing priorities for the Northern Ireland Assembly elections in March. These focused primarily on safe staffing and pay equality for nurses, including calls for a review of health and social care services to establish clear principles about safe staffing, and for adequate funding.
- 12.2. Communications channels were also used to encourage members to give their views in a consultation on proposals to ban smoking in private vehicles carrying children in Northern Ireland.

### 13. District nursing in Glasgow

- 13.1. Ongoing media coverage and social media activity is highlighting RCN concerns about Glasgow City Integrated Joint Board's proposals to cut or not replace district nursing posts. This supported a letter from Theresa Fyffe to the Chief Officer of the IJB, and planned meeting and other political activity.
- 13.2. Communications colleagues have also highlighted issues around prisoner healthcare and nursing in Scotland, raised in a recent RCN report.



### 14. Wales safe staffing legislation

- 14.1. Members have been encouraged to support the RCN's response to the Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Act through a postcard campaign.
- 14.2. Communications colleagues have also supported members to campaign to increase the number of nursing student university places.

### 15. **Bulletin and Activate**

15.1. We have been responding to feedback from our audience research by including more member stories, reflecting the positives of the nursing profession, and seeking to reflect patient views. Work is also underway to look at how we strengthen RCN Bulletin's presence online.

15.2. Features include an RCN member's pioneering work with gangs in London, the award-winning work a member is doing with victims of domestic abuse, and highlighting a member who has been improving access to services for people with learning disabilities.



### 16. **Forum blogs**

16.1. We are continuing to encourage submissions and getting a good response, such as a discussion of suicides in prison by the chair of the forensic forum. We aim to introduce commenting functionality for blogs in the next few months.

### 17. **RCN publications**

17.1. The team has been involved with 18 publication launches since November, including the Integrating Health Toolkit launched in January, which was published in the form of an interactive online PDF.

17.2. We've also been working with ERD and the Value of Reps project team on banners celebrating some of the fantastic work our Reps do for members.

17.3. And we're developing the membership packs sent out to members, to introduce packs personalised to the needs of individual members.

### 18. **Recommendations**

18.1. Council is asked to note this information.

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