



RCN Council

Date of Meeting:	05 April 2017
Title of Paper:	Report back from the Deputy President
Appendices:	None
Presented by:	Professor Rod Thomson, FRCN
Is a decision required? <u>No</u>	

Overview of reporting period 12 December 2016 to 31 March 2017

Since my last report to Council regarding my duties as the RCN Deputy President it has been a very period particularly with the major pressures on the NHS and social care. There have been occasions when my RCN role and my 'day job' intersect.

With the announcement of the NHS England Sustainability and Transformation Plans in December my attendance at month's Council meeting was curtailed. In my full time role as Director of Public Health for two local authorities and two Clinical Commissioning Groups, this announcement has created extra work, particularly as the Chancellor of the Exchequer's budget statement has failed to recognise the severe pressures that local authorities are facing funding social care. The proposed funding of the 44 STP areas in England that was announced at the end of 2016 highlighted a significant 'post code' lottery in the future funding of health and social care which the RCN along with other stakeholders must continue to challenge if we are to see equitable provision for the population.

I had to leave the second day of the RCN Council's December session to attend a meeting at the House of Lords. The focus of the meeting was a new charity, the Darwin Centre Trust and its international role in promoting the study of Compassion. The aims of the charity include academic study of the factors that influence compassion and promote the practical development of this study to improve compassion in society. Given the issues that have been raised for nursing in recent years this is likely to be an area of study that the RCN will have a continuing interest.

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During January along with other members of Council I promoted the RCN's media statements regarding the current pressures on the NHS and social care as well as nursing pay via social media. With the deadline for submissions for RCN Congress resolutions and Matters for discussion approaching my former Agenda committee experience was called on by some members seeking advice regarding how to submit items for Congress.

Another area where my RCN knowledge and experience has been called on has been in 'day job' is to brief the local elected members that I work with when they are meeting Government Ministers. At their request I was able to brief them on a range of health and social care issues prior to their meetings, including on topics such as nursing pay, recruitment and retention.

It is always a pleasure to be invited to attend a branch organised event and in January I was the guest of the RCN North Staffordshire Branch at its learning event where I was presenting Public Health: what every nurse needs to know. I am very grateful to the Branch members for their hospitality and for so many of them turning out in the inclement weather to take part in the session.

Part of my Deputy President role is to work with RCN staff on a range of topics. With health and social care high in the mainstream news and social media, this also included behind the scenes work rather than meetings and visits to members. With the Pay Cap petition being successful in getting a debate in Parliament promoting the campaign to lobby MPs to lobby about the debate and other nursing issues.

This activity included working with Michael Brown, RCN Chair of Council, regarding the RCN's lobbying on the Pay Cap debate; the Save the NHS March which takes place in 6 weeks' time and the concerns raised by members by the CNO England's statements on the Sustainability and Transformation Plans. In the case of the STP proposals my analysis of the per capita allocations indicates that there are significant variations in the funds being allocated to the 44 STP areas that are likely to lead to 'post code variations' in health services. Coupled with the pressures on adult social care budgets, as seen by the proposal by Surrey Council to raise its council tax by 15%, the need for the RCN to campaign for fair funding for health and social care, including fair terms and conditions for nursing staff continues.

I'm fortunate that my range of roles brings me into contact with a number of MPs. With the debate on Scrap the Cap on the 30th January I've been in touch with a number of MPs to promote the RCN message. This included the Chair of the Health Select Committee and the MP for my home constituency, who by chance is a government Minister.

As part of the preparations for Congress I have also been working with Helen Donovan, RCN's adviser of public health, and members of the RCN working group on Children's Health Inequalities that was established following a Congress resolution. A progress report is being finalised for Council and for a briefing to Congress.

Also in January I met with Professor John Middleton, the President of the Faculty of Public Health regarding participation in the Faculty's annual conference in June. This builds on the RCN's successful involvement in their conference last year.

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In February as my work commitments prevented me from attending the lobby of Parliament so to support the Scrap the Cap Campaign I was active on social media to highlight the debate. This included contacting the Chair of the Health Select Committee to seek her support.

I was interviewed by RCNi regarding the NHS England's Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STP). I've been raising concerns via Local Government and Public Health networks about the significant variations in the per capita allocations to each of the 44 STP areas. Whilst the national average allocation is £1983 per person some areas will receive less than £1,800 per person whilst other areas will receive over £2,100. For an STP area with a population of 500,000 a £100 per person variation in its allocation will mean a difference of £50,000,000. There are also concerns emerging nationally that insufficient focus is being given in the STPs to prevention and primary/community care programmes that will reduce demand for acute care. Sometimes my Council commitments have been dominated by engagement our main committees. Also in February I participated in the Business Committee, the International Committee and the Governance Committee. There was a very full agenda to work through with topics including Congress, RCN Group Structure and the Council Review.

As well as Committee engagements I continued to liaise with college officers on a range of topics from the Congress action that I am the named council lead, to the arrangements for members who wished to participate in the Save the NHS march, as well as the follow on actions from the Scrap the Cap lobby. I am also a member of the RCN's Business Committee that with its usual topics such as the membership database, Pensions, the Annual Report and the investment strategy.

At the beginning of March I was in London as a speaker at the national Rural Services Network Conference held at the National Audit Office. I had been asked to speak about the challenges facing rural communities in tackling health inequalities and the funding pressures on rural nursing services. In preparation for the College's participation in a lobby of Parliament I responded to members' requests regarding the It's Our NHS March. On Saturday 4th March along with RCN President Cecilia Anim, Lora Alford, Gordon Lees and Anne Kennedy and over 100 RCN members I took part in the "It's Our NHS March" to Parliament. Our members made the effort to come from across the country to take part, with many making very early starts to get to London in time for the event. My thanks to all of them and the RCN officers who supported the Event.

Along with other Council members I took part in the National Policy and Practice Committee (NPPC) meeting. The committee was updated on a range of current work streams including the sub committees that report to NPPC. In March I met with Edward Timpson MP, the Children's Minister to raise concerns regarding a range of nursing issues including funding of health visiting and school nursing. My thanks to John Considine, the RCN staff officer who has been working with me on the briefing to the minister. Whilst the core of the discussion will be on the Children's Health Inequalities concerns from a Congress resolution, I also raised with him members'

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concerns regarding recruitment and retention as well as the cuts to health visiting and school nursing services

On behalf of the RCN I attended the British Journal of Nursing Awards in the Under Globe in London. It was great to hear about the wonderful contribution to nursing practice.

On the 14th March I travelled to Cardiff to take part in RCN Wales' Leadership Summit. As ever RCN Welsh Board utilised its influence to good effect and arranged for two Assembly Members to take part and to have the Chief Executive of the NHS in Wales as a keynote speaker. The summit brought together Nurse Leaders from across Wales. My congratulations to RCN Wales for organising such an excellent event.

Finally I have volunteered to participate in a fund raising event on behalf of my local hospice. So on the 25th of March I'll be stepping out of an aircraft 10,000 feet above the fields of Shropshire for a Tandem Skydive. Fingers crossed I'll see you all when we meet for council in April.