

**Report to members of the meeting of RCN Council held on Wednesday 6  
and Thursday 7 December 2017 at RCN HQ, 20 Cavendish Square,  
London, W1G 0RN**

1. This was the final meeting of Council before the new governance arrangements take effect in January 2018. Further information about our new Council and its committees will shortly be published on the website.

**Pay – Next Steps**

2. We continued to build momentum behind the Close the Gap campaign on nursing pay in the lead up to the Autumn Budget. The pledge from the Chancellor Philip Hammond to fund a pay-rise for NHS nursing staff in line with the recommendations of the NHS Pay Review Body was a positive step forward, but we were clear that the words needed to be matched with a commitment to a meaningful pay award. We will now be submitting evidence to the Review Body using the finding of our employment survey of members. The PRB is due to make its recommendation in the Spring. Ahead of that, campaigning will continue to maintain pressure on the Government to fund a significant pay increase, and to continue to build public awareness about the impact of pay restraint and unsafe staffing levels. We are also making sure we are ready to ballot following any offer in the Spring.
3. Campaigning activity is focussed on political engagement, including supporting and encouraging pay champions and other members to contact and meet their local politicians, building awareness of the negative impact of staffing levels on patients and staff through our safe and effective staffing campaign, and ensuring that all our members know to check that their information is fully up to date so that we are able to reach everyone when we need to consult members on pay and in the event of a possible ballot.

## **Report from the Executive Team**

4. We received our regular report from Janet Davies, Chief Executive and General Secretary, on the work of the Executive Team since our previous meeting.
5. The Chief Executive & General Secretary updated us on work on the key organisational priorities. On the Royal College agenda we noted that Janet had given evidence to the Health Select Committee Inquiry into the Nursing Workforce and had taken part in a Ministerial roundtable meeting as a step towards developing a shared understanding of the new routes into nursing.
6. We noted plans to launch a new course for nurses working in infection prevention and control in the NHS, independent and social care sectors and hope this will be the first of many professional development courses we will be developing under the new HE regulatory framework.
7. Council also noted that the RCN had signed the new contract with the University of Sheffield to support our research activities from 1 December 2017 and welcomed news that we are providing support to Lord Crisp's Global Nursing Now Campaign. We have also spent some time discussing the opportunities for the RCN to contribute to the inquiry by European Union Select Committee into progress of the UK's negotiations on EU withdrawal and the impact of Brexit on recruitment and retention and education and training.
8. The Chief Executive also updated us on progress with the management of the work underway to ensure the RCN is fit for the future.
9. We reviewed the Corporate Dashboard report on our key performance Indicators and our Group Risk Register.

## **Finance**

10. The next part of our meeting focussed on the finance and business items.
11. We considered and approved the 2018 Annual Plan and the 2018 Budget in support of that plan. We also gave closer consideration to areas of significant activity and expenditure in the year ahead including the continued development of our Customer Relationship Management System and exterior works underway on 20 Cavendish Square.
12. Next we received a report on the RCN Staff Pension Consultation and considered this in the light of the triennial actuarial valuation of the

RCN defined benefit scheme. We reviewed the financial risks associated with the scheme and took decisions to ensure the scheme is adequately funded and remains affordable to the RCN.

13. We reviewed the management accounts for the period January to October 2017
14. The new Chair of the Audit Committee, Simon Lowe, gave his first report to Council on the work that had taken place since our last meeting. We noted that work had started on a GDPR compliance project.
15. The Audit Committee annual report gave us a clear overview of the key work that had taken place in 2017 and the priorities for 2018 when the Audit Committee will be focussing on our ways of working across the RCN and the Group to make sure they are as effective and inclusive as possible.
16. The Honorary Treasurer, Dave Dawes, presented the reports from the Finance and Investment Committee meetings. We were also updated about the work taking place to review the performance of our group investment managers.
17. The focus of the new Council in January will be the preparation of a Group Strategy. In preparation for this work we noted a presentation by Robert Sowney, Chair of the Board of the RCN Foundation on their strategy and received a paper from Rachel Armitage, RCNi Managing Director on the RCNi three year forward plan and business strategy. We also supported a proposal from the RCNi Board for an enhanced Nursing Standard digital offer and to launch a new monthly print edition.

### **AGM 2018**

18. In preparation for the AGM on 16 May 2018, we considered and approved the timeline, notice and draft agenda.
19. Between January and May Council will be consulting Members on the wording of an ordinary resolution to give a further five year dispensation to Council to set the subscription rate. During the past 5 years Council has only increased subscriptions once in 2012 and is committed to continuing to keep any subscription increases to a minimum. There will not be a subscription increase in 2018.
20. According to Standard Order 18.4 Council appointed Electoral Reform Services Ltd as the Returning Officer and Independent Scrutineer for the AGM.

### **Council Review Transitional Arrangements**

21. We received a report from the Governance Support Committee on the outstanding transitional arrangements that will support the smooth transition to the new governance arrangements on 1 January 2018.
22. There is still much work to do to update our governing documents to reflect our new structure. In this respect, we agreed amendments to our Regulation on Industrial Action; replacing references to the Membership & Representation Committee with the RCN Trade Union Committee.
23. We also agreed updates to several of our terms of reference to make sure they reflect the new governance arrangements and agreed transitional reporting arrangements for our UK representative committees and forums.
24. We considered and approved a vision statement (attached) for the new RCN Council.

### **RCN Elections 2017 and 2018**

25. Council considered a report on voting turnout in the elections that took place in 2017. Voter turn-out remains a concern and further work is taking place to understand how we can improve member participation in the elections in 2018 and beyond.
26. With that in mind Council agreed to introduce Country and Regional Nominations committees with terms of reference to improve member engagement in our election and appointment processes and to support local succession planning.
27. We reviewed and agreed the timeline and detailed procedures for the 2018 elections and appointments. We agreed that the Returning Officer for the elections would be the RCN Group Secretary, Jane Clarke, and we appointed Electoral Reform Services as our Independent Scrutineer.

### **Board Review Evaluation**

28. Council considered an overview of the key themes that have emerged from the feedback received to date from Boards and Branches responding to the November 2017 Board Review consultation.
29. We were pleased to see that confidence in the Board's ability to carry out its governance role has grown. We observed from members' feedback that further work needs to take place to improve branches understanding of the role of the Boards in the wider governance

structure. We will also be looking at ways to support better communication between Boards and other member groups.

30. A full report on the consultation feedback will be considered by Council in the New Year.
31. We agreed to continue to use the current voting model for the 2018 Board elections.

### **Nursing Practice and Policy**

32. Over the past 12 months the Committee has discussed a comprehensive report on the activity under the Future Nurse, Future Workforce programme and has informed the next stages of this work.
33. It has led the work on the RCN response to the NMC consultation on pre-registration standards for nurse education and Council noted that work was ongoing to prepare responses to the two further consultations on the regulation of Nursing Associates and the regulation of Health Care Support Workers. The UK Students Committee has also been feeding into this work.
34. The Committee has also been keeping abreast of the current position on the NMC English language testing requirements and the concerns that have been raised regarding Objective Structured Clinical Examinations.

### **Membership and Representation**

35. Council was pleased to hear that the framework for the Valuing Reps project will be presented to the new Trade Union Committee in the New Year. A priority for this project is to identify ways to build relationships and improve contact between existing and new reps in a workplace and the UK Representative Committees will be considering the important role the Boards and Branches can play in facilitating this.
36. The committee has informed the development of the “Close the Gap|” materials for the ‘next stage in the Pay Campaign and has led the preparation of the RCN submission to the NHS Pay Review Body 2018-2019.
37. Council heard about the plans to roll-out a streamlined reps accreditation process across England and noted that further changes to the process will be piloted in early 2018.

### **International**

38. We received a report on International matters relevant to the College and were updated on RCN activity to support EEA nurses and the

work taking place to ensure independent sector organisations are aware of the call for evidence from the Migration Advisory Committee on the economic and social impact of Brexit. Work has also been taking place by RCN Northern Ireland in relation to the borders issue for members in Northern Ireland following Brexit.

### **Students Committee**

39. Council was pleased to hear that the Oxford style debate hosted by the Students Committee on 25 October at Birmingham City University had been successful and well-attended.
40. The Committee continues to focus on improving the recruitment, retention and support for student members, and exploring ways to support and promote the role of our Student Information Officers in each of the four countries.

### **Health Practitioners Committee**

41. Council was briefed on the timeline for a review of the RCN's HP membership offer.
42. The focus for the HP committee in the year ahead is to continue to build links with all parts of the College to promote the role of HP members in the Nursing family.

### **Fellows**

43. Council received a report on the work of the Fellows Co-ordinating Committee which is exploring ways that the Fellows could better support the work of the College both locally and through the national agenda.
44. Work has been taking place to define the role of Fellows and the RCN Fellowship and this has been informed by discussion at a full Fellows meeting which took place in November. The outcome of this session will be shared with the Awards Panel when it meets in the New Year. The full Fellows meeting was followed by a public lecture titled 'Brexit and Beyond: an international perspective on nursing and Healthcare' which was very well supported.

### **National Pensioners Convention**

45. Next we considered the final report from the current members on the NPC Council. Council noted that the induction for new members was to take place the following day and that a role descriptor had been prepared for RCN members elected to the NPC Council

### **President and Deputy President**

46. In introducing her report the President took the congratulated staff, pay champions, members' and their communities and families for their contribution to the successful Scrap the Cap campaign.
47. The Deputy President highlighted his role on the judging panel for the Wales Nurse of the Year Awards which he had found inspirational.

### **Congress**

48. All the representative committees have been preparing for 2018 Congress.
49. The deadline for agenda and fringe submissions is 2 January 2018. Further information and guidance on all matters relating to Congress is found on the website [here](#).

## **Council Vision statement 2018**

### **The core role of the new Council**

RCN Council is collectively responsible and, accountable to members, for the long-term success of the RCN Group. RCN Council's role is to set the strategic direction and provide strong leadership to the membership. It is also responsible for ensuring compliance, and monitoring the performance and progress of the organisation.

### **The key behaviours that we will be looking for Council members to model**

RCN Council members will demonstrate leadership by displaying behaviours consistent with the culture and values of the RCN, always acting in the best interests of the whole organisation.

RCN Council will promote constructive challenge across all parts of the RCN Group. RCN Council members and the Executive Team will work closely together as a team and act as ambassadors and advocates for the organisation. RCN Council will build strong formal and informal links with its Committees and Boards and wider stakeholders.

### **The new ways of working that will inform and evidence Council's work**

RCN Council's agenda will focus on strategy, finance, risk, compliance and performance reporting and on evidencing the key principles of good governance in decision making; accountability, transparency, integrity and sustainability. These discussions will be distinguished from the responsibilities of the Trade Union and Professional Nursing committees and the day to day operational management of the organisation led by the Executive Team.

RCN Council members will optimise the use of modern technology to work efficiently and effectively.

RCN Council will embrace evaluation of its own effectiveness as a Board, identifying and implementing new ways to achieve diversity in its composition and skill set. The Chair will lead an appraisal process to demonstrate the collective commitment to self-reflection and evaluation. RCN Council members will access development in the key skills required to deliver their governance role.