

**Report to members of the meeting of Council held 18 July 2018
at RCN HQ, Cavendish Sq, London, W1G 0RN**

Strategy and performance monitoring

1. We began our meeting in July by agreeing the first RCN group strategy, for 2019 - 2021. This has been developed by RCN Council working with the Boards of the RCN Foundation and RCNi and the Country and Regional Boards. It was further informed by a consultation with members at 2018 Congress. More information will be available on the website shortly.
2. We also agreed the three-year financial strategy which will underpin the Group strategy.
3. Key to its success will be the next stage of the work to prepare a new rolling three-year plan and budget. This will provide the organisation with much greater financial sustainability in the medium to long term.
4. We also received an update from the Chief Executive & General Secretary on the priorities of the Executive Team and reviewed mid-year progress on the organisation's annual plan.
5. We used the corporate dashboard to review specific areas of activity and we asked for further information and monitoring of some of the associated risks in those areas.
6. In addition we reviewed the management accounts for the period.

RCN AGM 2019

7. We had a detailed discussion about the timing of the RCN's Annual General Meeting in 2019.
8. After consideration of all the options we agree that it would be held in the morning of Monday 20 May 2019, and that Congress business will commence once the AGM has concluded.
9. The exhibition opening and awards ceremony will be on Sunday 19 May
10. Please note that Congress is Sunday to Thursday in 2019 (and not Saturday to Wednesday as in recent years).

Northern Ireland pay

11. Siobhan Donald, RCN Council member for Northern Ireland, briefed us on the position on NHS pay in Northern Ireland.
12. Siobhan referenced the resolution put forward by members at Congress on NHS pay in Northern Ireland and explained that the complexities of the current political context meant that it was not possible to act on the resolution in its current form.
13. She explained that the support displayed by members at Congress had been very welcome and much appreciated. However, negotiations were very difficult because there is no Assembly, Executive or public sector pay policy set for 2018-2019. Therefore, the resolution could not be enacted at this time.
14. There are also a number of other factors which would affect the implementation of a pay deal similar to the one in England.
15. However, discussions are taking place, including meetings being set up by the Permanent Secretary in Northern Ireland with trade unions and employers to scope the implications of implementing the English pay deal in Northern Ireland.
16. A meeting also took place on 14 May between the Department of Health and Trade Unions in Northern Ireland which the RCN had not been able to attend due to Congress in Belfast.
17. However, that meeting had explored how elements of the English pay deal could be implemented in Northern Ireland so that the Department would be in a position to make progress once the Department of Finance had confirmed its public sector pay policy for 2018/2019.
18. The latter is in jeopardy in light of there being no Minister and a recent legal challenge over the ability of the Department of Finance to make decisions in the absence of a Minister. This legal process is still in progress.
19. In the meantime discussions with the Department of Health will be continuing. The Trade Union side wishes to present a revised proposal following the meeting on the 14 May.
20. The RCN Northern Ireland Board pay sub-committee will also continue to gather data to build an evidence-base to support an RCN NI position.
21. If, and when, a deal is in place the RCN will then consult its members. Council will be updated on the situation on a regular basis throughout.

Congress

22. We reviewed Congress 2018 and examined data on registration, attendance for both Congress and the Fringe events and the overall logistics as well as the results of the Congress delegate survey.
23. On the whole feedback was extremely positive and members had clearly found their time in Belfast both enjoyable and rewarding.
24. We noted, however, that there is a continuing trend of members registering but then not attending Congress which creates difficulties and waste. We will be looking into solutions for this as we plan for future Congresses.
25. We also noted the timeline for Congress 2019 and draw the following to your attention:
 - Applications for voting members are now open and will close on 17th October. Information is on the RCN website at <https://www.rcn.org.uk/congress/about/funding-to-attend-congress>
 - The call for Congress agenda items and for fringe submissions opens on 1 October and close on 6 January (Agenda) and 9 January (fringe) so please do get thinking now.
 - Online registration for non-voting members opens on 1 December – please encourage as many members to come along and enjoy the Congress experience.
26. The Congress 2019 web pages will be updated as arrangements for the programme are confirmed so please do keep checking this via www.rcn.org.uk/congress ,sign up for updates and keep your MyRCN details up to date so that you receive these promptly.
27. We also looked at potential developments for Congress in the future to optimise its value to as many members as possible, strengthen the role of Congress in our education agenda and grow income as part of our commercial strategy

Reports

28. We received reports from the entities and committees which report to Council.
29. The **RCN Foundation** has had a busy first six months to the year with the appointment of five new trustees, the appointment of the charity's first patron, author Christie Watson, increasing demand in each of its grant-making areas (hardship, education and nursing-led projects), and successful income generation initiatives such as the campaign fronted by RCN ambassador Emilia Clarke.

30. We also heard that **RCNi** is on track to achieve its budgeted profit and had seen encouraging growth in personal subscriptions to its enhanced digital offer.
31. We received an update from our **Finance and Investment Committee**. We were pleased to note a reduction in the deficit in the RCN staff defined benefit scheme though we remain cautious about the continued volatility of pension scheme valuations. The committee had also reviewed the mid-year financial position.
32. The **Trade Union Committee** had met three times since our last meeting including two special teleconferences on pay. NHS pay had been the focus of discussion as the committee had played the leading role in the consultation which had taken place with members in England. The committee was also keeping abreast of developments in the Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland which all have differing political systems and would be convening to take decisions on the respective pay deals as required.
33. In addition, the Committee is working closely with the UK Reps Committees to agree new ways of working going forward. The Committee also spent time discussing the performance and risk data it wanted to receive.
34. The **Professional Nursing Committee** met on 19 June and focused on four key agenda items – nursing staffing for safe and effective care across the UK, the decriminalisation of abortion, NMC Education standards, and work arising from the work of the RCN's forums and the *Valuing Forums* project.
35. The Committee had also discussed its future priorities, and received reports from the Forums Governance Group and the Fellows Co-ordinating Committee.
36. Our new **Governance Support Committee** Chair, Trevor Peel, gave an update on a number of issues discussed by the Committee. We agreed some small amendments to the Congress policy and process document to document the roles of Council and the Professional and Trade Union Committees at Congress. We also agreed terms of reference for a new Group Audit Committee and were updated on progress with the RCN's election and appointments.
37. The Committee also reviewed the work emanating from the review of country and regional boards and will be ensuring the feedback from the consultation is taken forward. Council will also be setting up a task and finish group to review our current branch structure and how well it meets members' needs locally. The first stage of this work will be a data

collection stage and there will be more information about this work and how you can contribute shortly.

38. The **International Committee** had met at the end of May and spent much of the meeting discussing its role in light of the RCN's new governance arrangements. We will discuss a new proposed terms of reference for the committee at our September meeting. The Committee had also received updates on key work-streams including the RCN's position on international recruitment, and the impact of Brexit on relationships with organisation such as the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN) amongst others.
39. Our **Students and Health Practitioners Committees** both met in June and reviewed their involvement with Congress in Belfast, and started thinking about their plans for Congress 2019.
40. The Students Committee had also discussed their work priorities and undertaken a media training workshop.
41. The focus of the HP Committee meeting was regulation and what needed to be done to take the campaign forward. The committee had also discussed the role of nursing associates, and the potential impact of the development of new clinical support roles on the name and definition of the current health practitioner category of RCN membership. Further work has been agreed in all these areas.

Nursing Associates

42. We received an update on the new professional role of nursing associate in England and the implications for the RCN's membership categories.
43. It has now been confirmed that the new nursing associates will have NMC registration, be subject to the NMC code of conduct and have the same fitness to practice requirements as registered nurses.
44. It was noted that these developments had taken place very rapidly and Council agreed it was important to consider how the RCN will support these and other nursing roles in the future; and how to assess the impact on the skill mix of the nursing workforce.
45. We agreed to set up a task and finish group to review our current membership structure which will have relevant committee representatives and representation from the four countries. The expectation is that this work will be carried out in time for Council to approve a new membership strategy at its November 2018 meeting.

Task and Finish Groups

46. We reviewed a paper on the use of task and finish groups to help us conduct our business more effectively and ensure that we draw on the appropriate skill mix and expertise from across the organisation to deliver our activities.
47. This way of working had been previously agreed by Council and we were updated on the work of the groups that were already underway and piloting this new approach.
48. We confirmed that the Governance Support Committee should take on a co-ordinating role in respect of the work of the task and finish groups to ensure they progress to time, produce regular reports and deliver their briefs. An initial review will be undertaken at the September Council meeting.

Arrangements for 2019 Council elections

49. All Council members, excepting the roles of President, Deputy President, Chair of Congress, and Student Member of Council will step down from Council at the end of December 2019
50. We looked forward to the RCN Council elections in 2019 and will discuss further at our meeting in September how to ensure the final stage of the transition from the previous composition of Council will be smooth and provides for a level of continuity going forward.

Calendar of meetings 2019

51. Finally we agreed our calendar of meetings for 2019 and have appended it to this report for information. Please note the most up to date version of the calendar can always be found on the website on the link at the bottom of this page

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/about-us/how-the-rcn-is-governed>

The meeting closed with Council extending its thanks and appreciation to Stuart McKenzie as he stands down from his role as Chair of Congress. Acknowledgement and thanks were given for his leadership over the last 4-years, as well as his previous work on the Agenda Committee and as Vice Chair.

Maria Trewern, Chair of RCN Council, July 2018