

Report to members of the meeting of RCN Council held on 10 April 2019

RCN Council was joined by members of the country and regional boards for this meeting. This is an annual event which seeks to engage board members in the business of Council and is also part of our succession planning strategy. The meeting was live streamed on the RCN website and will be available to view again until the next meeting on 17 July 2019

Pay in Northern Ireland

1. Ann Marie O'Neill, Council member for Northern Ireland, updated us on the very challenging situation for our members in Northern Ireland.
2. Not only has our Northern Ireland members' pay fallen well behind that of colleagues in the rest of the UK, there is an unprecedented number of vacancies, increasing demand for services, and cuts to both pre and post-registration education.
3. The absence of a Northern Ireland Assembly or direct rule has meant that pay negotiations cannot take place. There have been discussions with department officials, employers and other trade unions but these have not been able to resolve the situation.
4. A 2018/2019 pay uplift was imposed in February by the Department of Health, without any agreement by the trade unions, and was backdated to April 2018. However, the uplift fell short of the 3% proposed by the trade unions and there was no three-year deal as in the rest of the UK. There were also mistakes made in the implementation resulting in significant numbers of members being under or over paid.
5. The RCN Northern Ireland Board, following approval by the Trade Union Committee, has already undertaken a consultative ballot of members which resulted in 98% of those who voted being in favour of industrial action.
6. In light of the impact on our members' ability to provide safe and effective care, the RCN Northern Ireland Board will now lead a programme of public information and engagement as part of the UK-wide Safe Staff campaign. We believe that the challenges facing the nursing profession in Northern

Ireland are a matter of public interest and public safety, and simply cannot be ignored.

7. In light of this untenable situation, and on the recommendation of the Trade Union Committee, we therefore approved the Northern Ireland Board's request to ballot members on industrial action, including strike action, following the planned series of public engagement events which will be concluded in May 2019.

Safe and effective staffing

8. We received an update on our Safe and Effective Staffing campaign.
9. We are calling for each UK country to have legislation which:
 - enables clear accountability to ensure there are enough nurses to meet patient needs
 - the right number of nurses with the right skills
 - a clear vision for tackling nurse shortages
 - clear plans for getting the right numbers and skill mix
 - and enough education and development to meet patient needs.
10. There are six work streams taking forward these campaign aims across the UK.
11. In Northern Ireland "Delivering Care" is a project to develop policy which will support the development of a framework to determine staffing ranges for nursing and midwifery.
12. Various factors are then applied to ensure the complexity of the workload is reflected in the final agreed funded establishment.
13. Wales already have safe staffing legislation and is now embarked on phase two which aims to support members faced with unsafe staffing situations, and to ensure effective implementation of the legislation.
14. In Scotland work is ongoing to influence the development of the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Bill which is in its final stages before being passed into law.
15. The "Ask for more" campaign has ensured member voices have been heard in the media, at parliament and on our social channels.
16. A different approach is being implemented in England, where there is no legislation, with regional events being rolled out to co-produce the Staffing for Safe and Effective Care campaign with members.
17. The events have encouraged members to develop their thinking around campaign target audiences, messages and activity.

18. We heard that members in England have a clear appetite and energy for creative campaign activity.
19. This work is the RCN's main priority for 2019 and beyond.

Membership category review

20. Geoff Earl introduced this item explaining that he was now chairing the task and finish group which is leading a review of RCN membership categories.
21. We heard that changing roles in nursing along with feedback from members about whether our member categories are still fit for purpose are the drivers of this review.
22. We'll be launching a consultation at Congress so, if you can, please do come along to our fringe meeting on Wednesday 22 May at the ACC in Liverpool at 5.45pm. The consultation will be sent out more widely after that.

Pocket diary

23. We discussed the RCN pocket diary which, we know, many members appreciate and opt-in to receive.
24. However, we also reflected on the increasing costs and made a decision to undertake another "opt-in" exercise to ensure the list is still up to date and that we are not wasting copies.
25. If you wish to continue receiving the pocket diary please watch out for an email soon which will ask you to confirm that you wish to opt-in.

Branch changes

26. On the recommendation of the Wales and Scotland Boards we agreed several branch changes.
27. Firstly, we agreed a review of Orkney branch given the difficulty in sustaining a viable branch on the island.
28. Secondly, we approved a change of name from Cardiff branch to Cardiff and The Vale branch to more accurately reflect its geographical coverage.
29. Finally, we were sad to approve the disbanding of Powys branch. This decision follows extensive but unsuccessful work to engage members in branch activity. Members of Powys branch will now be migrated to their nearest neighbouring branch.

Report from the Executive Team

30. Donna Kinnair updated us on the recent priorities of the Executive Team.

31. During her time as Acting Chief Executive & General Secretary, Dame Donna has been focussing on implementing the recommendations of the independent report from ERS. This report was commissioned as a result of the difficulties in 2018 following the England pay deal and the subsequent EGM called by members.
32. The safe and effective staffing campaign, as we heard earlier, has been a key priority for the Executive Team and there has been work with the NMC and the CNO in England to support the workforce agenda.
33. Pay has also been top of the agenda and there has been a positive outcome to the pay dispute in Jersey and, of course, the ongoing discussion about pay in Northern Ireland.
34. We heard that solid progress is being made on establishing a UK policy for pay, terms and conditions which reflects the differences in the four UK countries.

RCN HR and health and safety reports

35. We received updates on the RCN's own workforce and it was explained that the benchmark was against third sector employees.
36. Donna Kinnair highlighted a couple of areas to note including the number of BME and staff who consider themselves disabled in management positions being lower than the median for third sector employees.
37. The very comprehensive information in these reports will underpin the RCN's HR strategy going forwards.

Report from the Governance Support Committee

38. Cynthia Davis, chair of the Governance Support Committee, introduced this report along with a number of related papers.
39. The main focus of our discussion was on the ways of working between Council, the Trade Union and Professional Nursing Committees, and between those committees and the representative committees.
40. A suggestion for a chairs committee in order to improve communication and information flow was debated at length and it was agreed to do further work on the proposal.
41. Concerns raised by the UK Reps committees on their relationship with the Trade Union Committee were discussed and we debated the importance of differentiating between the governance role of the Trade Union Committee and the representative functions of the three UK Reps committees.
42. We acknowledged the impasse that exists currently in terms of agreeing satisfactory ways of working between those committees and the Trade

Union Committee, and heard from the Vice Chair of the Trade Union Committee about the attempts that have been made to have meaningful dialogue. We noted that a workshop will be held later in April with the aim of developing a positive solution.

43. We also reflected on the fact that both the Trade Union and Professional Nursing Committees had been new in 2018 and events surrounding the England pay deal had not enabled the time and space to develop clear ways of working in relation to trade union activity particularly.
44. We agreed that there was a pressing need to develop a clear organogram of the Council and committee structure and ensure clear reporting lines.
45. We also agreed to uphold the principle that members on governance committees should not also serve on representative committees, and we also agreed that candidates for the Trade Union Committee should be accredited trade union representatives
46. We believe that these decisions will enable the Trade Union Committee and the three Reps committees to have a more strategic dialogue when they meet in April.

Elections 2019

47. On the recommendation of the Governance Support Committee, we agreed the timelines for all the RCN elections taking place in 2019 – this will be the Council elections, Trade Union Committee and Professional Nursing Committee, Agenda Committee, and National Pensioners Convention representatives.
48. We decided to make some changes to the election procedures including removing the objection process which we have been advised is not common practice amongst organisations like ours.

AGM 2019

49. We also discussed the AGM which is taking place on Monday 20 May in Liverpool at the start of Congress week.
50. We agreed to ask the members to vote on two resolutions.
51. Firstly, we will be asking members to agree to change the name of the Health Practitioners Committee to Nursing Support Workers Committee – a change which the health practitioner members themselves have called for as they believe this is a more accurate representation of who they are.
52. Secondly, we are also asking members to agree to a small technical change to our Standing Orders to enable transition arrangements to be put in place if there is a change to the composition of Council approved by the membership in general meeting. The Standing Orders currently do not

provide for transition arrangements in times of change and this would provide clarification on that matter in the future.

53. In view of our previous commitment to members we are asking for your views on these resolutions in advance of the AGM and would be grateful if you could send in any thoughts using the proforma attached with this report.

Meetings policy and process and governance framework

54. We were due to ratify these two documents but, in view of the time, we agreed to defer this to our July meeting.

2019 and 2020 Congress

55. BJ Waltho, Chair of Congress, updated us on plans for Congress 219 and we heard everything was progressing well. Registration figures to date are at an all-time high which is very positive news.
56. We were made aware, however, that there continue to be pressures on the Congress budget and will ensure that this is monitored carefully.
57. We confirmed the dates for Congress 2020 as Sunday 7 to Thursday 11 June so please do put that in your diaries now.

Group and Committee reports

58. Finally, we noted the reports from the RCN Foundation and the Committees which report into Council.

Sue Warner, Chair of RCN Council, April 2019

The meeting was attended as follows:

Sue Warner (Chair, West Midlands), Richard Jones MBE (Vice Chair, Wales), Professor Anne Marie Rafferty CBE FRCN (President), Yvonne Coghill CBE FRCN (Deputy President) Cynthia Davis (London), David Dawes (North West), Geoff Earl (Scotland), Amy Fancourt (Student), Evan Keir (Health Practitioner), Heather Mercer (South East from 3.30pm on 9 April), Ann Marie O'Neill (Northern Ireland), Trevor Peel (Northern), Carol Popplestone (Yorkshire and the Humber), Dee Sissons (East Midlands), Geoffrey Walker OBE (South West), BJ Waltho (Chair of Congress), and Janice Waters (Eastern).

Simon Browes, Chair of the Professional Nursing Committee
Tracey Budding, Vice Chair of the Trade Union Committee
Simon Lowe, Chair of the Audit Committee

Members of RCN country and regional boards

Dame Donna Kinnair, Acting Chief Executive & General Secretary, and members of the RCN Executive team were also present.

Apologies were received from Janice Waters Council member (Eastern)