

**Report to members of the confidential meeting
of RCN Council held on 24 January 2019.**

Report from the Executive Team

1. Our first meeting, as your newly elected Council, began with an update from Dame Donna Kinnair, Acting Chief Executive & General Secretary.
2. First we discussed an analysis of the long term plan for the NHS in England and were briefed on work behind the scenes to ensure that both the government and NHS employers heard RCN members' concerns about the lack of commitment to nursing in the plan.
3. Dame Donna and RCN President Anne Marie Rafferty had attended a meeting the National Workforce Steering Group earlier in the week and had pressed home that the plan would not be deliverable without a commitment to nursing workforce planning.
4. We looked at the latest membership figures and were concerned by the decrease in the student membership figures. These reflect the reality of fewer people taking up pre-registration nursing courses following the abolition of the bursary in England. This together with increasing reports of student hardship across the UK, is the key driver for the Funding our Future campaign.
5. Amy Fancourt, the new Student Member of Council talked about the Student Committee's commitment to continuing the campaign to get funding put back into nursing higher education and to go some way to replace the funding lost when the bursary was removed in 2016.
6. Then Council discussed the RCN and Joint Union submissions to the NHS Pay Review Body and how best to ensure that the nursing voice continued to be heard at the negotiating table and at the same time reflect the strength of feelings and concerns of members.
7. We ratified plans to relocate RCNi from its offices in Harrow to the RCN HQ building which makes good business sense.
8. Finally we were updated on a number of interim staffing arrangements and heard about the very sad and untimely death of long-time staff member Samantha Manners. Sincere condolences have been passed on to her family.

Update from the Chair and Council priorities

9. We will be making sure that the important work which was started by the previous Council in response to the EGM and the ERS independent report is completed.
10. Council discussed how we wanted to work and how we would ensure openness and transparency about the decisions we take and the reasons for them.
11. We decided that as well as these summary updates we would publish the agendas in advance of our meetings. This new approach will begin from our March meeting which will be the first “business as usual” meeting.
12. The membership of our sub committees was agreed and we set the timescale for the election of the Chair of the Finance & Investment Committee/Honorary Treasurer and the Chair of the Governance Support Committee.
13. Our first exercise was to review the priorities the previous Council had agreed for the next three years. We broke into a workshop-style session to do this and will be looking at the output of our work at our second meeting at the beginning of March.

Remuneration Committee report

14. I updated Council on progress on the appointment of the new Chief Executive & General Secretary and Council agreed who would be on the Appointment Committee.
15. We are aware that some members are lobbying for an elected General Secretary and we are looking forward to hearing a discussion on the pros and cons at Congress in May.
16. If these discussions were to lead to change it would involve constitutional amendments and would take time to implement and would not therefore impact on the current recruitment process.

Agenda Committee report

17. BJ Waltho updated us on the Agenda Committee meeting which had taken place the week before.
18. 153 items had been submitted, a significant increase from the previous year.
19. We agreed the Congress agenda for 2019 and this will be published once all the submitting entities have received feedback on their submissions. This will happen during the week of 28 January.
20. We also heard that plans for Congress were well in hand and that registration numbers are already very healthy.

Safe and effective staffing campaign

21. At Congress in May 2018 the RCN launched *Safe and Effective Care: Nursing on the Brink* which sets out the UK principles setting out expectations for what should exist in a health and care system underpinned by legislation.
22. The launch was accompanied by a call to action to drive the campaign for safe and effective care.
23. This campaign is going to be our priority in 2019.
24. A UK-wide model has now been developed for planning and delivering the work. It takes account of the fact that the campaign is at different stages across the UK depending on the political context of each of the four countries.
25. We agreed the framework for decision-making, how members are going to inform and participate in the work, and next steps. You will be hearing much more about the campaign in the coming weeks and months.

Jersey - pay

26. Heather Mercer, our South East Council member, and Lindsay Meeks, Interim Director South East, updated us on the very distressing position of our members employed by the Health and Community Service Department in Jersey.
27. There has been a long running situation where our members have been battling for salary equal to their peers working alongside them. The pay offers for 2018 and 2019 have been below inflation and there is general unhappiness about the treatment of nursing staff compared to other health care workers.
28. Members have rejected three offers made in relation to pay in 2018 and are angry that their voices are not being heard. They believe, quite rightly, there should be equal pay for work of equal value.
29. We balloted our 615 eligible members in Jersey on the most recent offer and, on a 62% turn-out, 62.34% rejected the offer. On a further question, about the type of industrial action they would be willing to undertake, 79% said they would take full strike action.
30. In light of this Council had no hesitation in agreeing our members' request to move to a formal industrial action ballot on strike action targeted in specific areas (in accordance with criteria to be determined) save for "emergency" and, in the first instance, limited to a few hours or half a day.
31. This is a historic decision for RCN Council and we pledged to support our members in Jersey in every way we can.

Member engagement

32. We discussed progress with work to develop new member engagement strategy.
33. We agreed a proposal for a “deep dive” piece of research to identify, in particular, the barriers to effective engagement with members who are less active in the organisation.

AGM 2019, and Complaints and Resolution Policy and Process

34. We concluded our meeting with a discussion about the AGM in May and asked the Governance Support Committee to undertake to see if there were items that should be discussed by the membership at the AGM this year.
35. We also noted documents drafted last year by a task and finish group of Council to support a new complaints and resolution process and agreed to review them in advance of our next meeting in March.

Sue Warner, Chair of RCN Council, 25 January 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), Dr Heather Mercer (South East), 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), Janice Waters (Eastern, by teleconference).

Simon Browes, Acting Chair of the Professional Nursing Committee

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

In addition Tracey Budding, Vice Chair of the Trade Union Committee, Maureen De Gruchy, Jersey Branch Chair and Lindsey Meeks, Interim Regional Director South East attended either in person or by teleconference for the Jersey pay item.