Report of the meeting of Trade Union Committee held on 4 December 2019

1. The Committee met on 4 December.
2. An induction session was held before the start of the meeting for the new members elected to join the Committee in January 2020. The new members also observed the Committee meeting.
3. Thanks and best wishes were extended to those members who completed their terms of office on the Committee at the end of the year.

Northern Ireland and Guernsey

4. We received updates on the current positions of the ongoing disputes in both Northern Ireland (NI) and Guernsey.
5. We were especially pleased to hear positive feedback from the first day of industrial action short of strike in NI on 3 December and the extensive media coverage.
6. Planning was continuing for the further upcoming days of action including on 18 December a coordinated day of strike action with other trade unions.
7. We raised concerns about reports from a number of NI members of instances where employers were applying undue pressure on members taking part in industrial action.
8. It was advised that such instances were being dealt with swiftly by the relevant locally based industrial/strike action committee.
9. We noted that guidance was now on the RCN website on how members from the rest of the UK could support NI members taking industrial action. This focussed on reinforcing the key campaign messages on social media.
10. In Guernsey, the trade unions had rejected the latest offer from the employer as being unacceptable.
11. Legal advice was now being sought on next steps including the options of a further member ballot on the offer or moving to binding arbitration.

UK pay policy

12. We considered the first draft of a UK Pay Policy which had been informed by the workshop session we had at our October meeting and by initial scoping work undertaken by senior staff.

NHS Staff Council update

13. An update was received on the November NHS Staff Council meeting and the implementation of outstanding elements of the England and Wales pay framework agreements.
14. All elements of the Scotland agreement had now been implemented.
15. We noted that agreement had yet to be reached in England with regards to apprentice pay and the buying and selling of annual leave and were advised of next steps.
16. We discussed the approach to communications on the third year of the pay deals which would start in April 2020.
17. We noted that an NHS Staff Council sub group was developing joint communications for England including an 'at a glance' document and an updated pay journey tool for the third year of the pay deals.
18. We identified a number of additional areas for inclusion within the FAQ section to help support members to understand the impact on their pay.
19. Similar guidance would be developed for Wales and Scotland.
20. We reiterated the importance of prioritising our work on job evaluation. A task and finish group is being set up to lead this work.
21. An update was also received on the new NHS pension flexibilities.
22. NHS England had now confirmed that senior clinical staff adversely affected by a pension tax charge in 2019/20 would have their tax liabilities paid as a one off gesture in response to the arising workforce pressures.
23. A briefing was being produced for senior nurses affected.
24. We noted that a consultation was open on cost sharing for the public sector pension scheme on the Isle of Man.

**RCN position statement on work related violence**

25. A draft RCN position statement on work related violence had been drafted in consultation with the Safety Reps Committee.
26. This statement would form a starting point for the development of further resources on workplace violence including a charter and guidance for members and safety reps.
27. **Decision: the Committee agreed the draft RCN position statement on work related violence subject to a number of minor amendments.**
28. We also agreed to feed in any case studies or examples of good practice on prevention.

**Reps recruitment targets 2020**

29. Annual recruitment targets for Stewards, Safety and Learning Reps had been introduced in January 2019.
30. These had been set by each country and region based on a 10-20% increase on existing figures in order to take into account the considerable variation across the UK. The same approach had been adopted for the setting of targets for 2020.
31. **Decision: the Committee approved the proposed reps targets from January 2020 as set out in the report.**

**New activist/ambassador role**

32. We noted that a Council Member had drafted a proposal for a new RCN activist/ambassador role and had proposed a trial of this new role in a small number of branches.
33. We agreed to defer consideration of the proposal to our January meeting when the findings of two related pieces of work carried out in 2018 and 2019 on the engaging active members would be available.

Congress 2020

34. We discussed potential agenda and fringe applications that we could submit as a Committee for next year’s Congress and ideas for working collaboratively with other Committees on these.

35. A small group of Committee members was identified to draft the submissions.

Committee development programme 2020

36. We provided our views on how we would like to approach Committee development going forward, to address both our individual and collective learning needs.

37. A preference was outlined for continuing the approach this year of holding focussed development workshop sessions on particular topics as part of our Committee meetings.

38. We received a number of reports for noting including the latest quarterly MRSPB report, the RCNs response to the Migration Advisory Committee’s call for evidence, a report from the last International Committee and an update on the SSEC campaign.

39. We noted the 6 January deadline for written evidence submissions to the NHS pay review body 2020 pay round. As in previous years, there would be both RCN and joint staff-side submissions.

40. Owing to the tight timelines, we noted that the draft submissions would be circulated to us for comment via email with a deadline for response of 20 December.

Committee Membership and attendance

Lors Allford (South West) (Chair)
Tracey Budding (West Midlands) (Vice-Chair)
Michael Appleby (Northern) – apologies
Diane Coleman (Scotland)
Fiona Devlin (Northern Ireland) - apologies
Carol Evans (Eastern)
Liz Jeremiah (South East) – apologies
Gaynor Jones (Wales) – apologies
Clare Manley (Student) – apologies
Karen Pike (Nursing Support Worker)
Karen Sanders (London)
Neil Thompson (East Midlands)
Mike Travis (North West)