The position of retired members within the RCN

There is a glimmer of hope. In December I attended the meeting of RCN Council to present our third Report and attended the whole two-day meeting as an observer (as any RCN member is entitled to do).

Several of the other agenda items and background papers were relevant to us. For example, one of the financial papers stated that nearly half of RCN members were aged over 45 years and a third are due to retire in the next ten years. I stressed the implications of this figure for membership recruitment (which appears to be the RCN’s current priority), but I am also concerned that RCN does not do enough to promote the interests of this group of members, especially their pension position. A great deal of energy is put into the pay of younger nurses, for example the campaign to overturn the 1% cap (Scrap the Cap), but there are many members to whom this does not apply, and they too have financial challenges. Nursing staff are especially vulnerable in the current pension changes because so many have careers interrupted by family commitments.

As before, my report stressed the need for a decision on our ongoing ambiguous position and our inability to carry out our function properly until this is resolved. The Chair of Council (Mike Brown) gave a personal commitment to get this matter resolved by the time of the next Council meeting in April. **A meeting has now been arranged to follow this up on 3 April at RCN HQ.**

NPC round table meeting at the House of Commons

On 21 February the NPC Health and Social Care working party (of which I am a member) is holding a round table meeting at the House of Commons on the crisis in social care and in particular how it can be funded now and in the future. I will report back on this meeting in our next newsletter.

NPC Biennial Delegate Conference – 21/22 March

The next NPC event is the Biennial Delegate Conference. This is similar to the RCN Congress, except that it has the policy development and decision making powers that in the RCN are held by RCN Council, so it really is powerful. Kate Fitzsimmons, Joyce Forge and June Clark will be attending.

RCN Congress 2017, Liverpool 13-17 May

Our Congress fringe application has been accepted: ‘Harnessing the voice of retired and older nurses’. We will let you know the date and time as soon as we know the details.

I plan to attend for the full week. We are not entitled to submit items for the agenda, but Peggy Pryer and Zeba Arif (who are both Network members) have submitted a resolution about the need to value and use retired members.
Our next task is to make nominations for the NPC’s working parties. It is in the working parties that most of the NPC policy work is done. There are eight working parties:

- Health and Social Care
- Minority Elders
- Women’s Working Party
- Transport
- Pensions
- Finance
- Trade Union Working Party
- Constitution Working Party

We currently have members on four of the working parties (Health and Social Care, Minority Elders, Women’s Working Party, Trade Union Working Party). Apart from the Trade Union Working Party (whose members are representatives of and appointed by their parent organisations) the members of working parties are appointed as individuals on the basis of their personal expertise. If you feel you have specific expertise in any of these areas and can contribute fully to the work of the RCN within the NPC please let me know.

**RCN Network communications**

Plans are in place to give your RCN NPC Network representatives access to the Member Communication Centre. Once training has been completed, we will be able to use the MCC to communicate with network members in a timely and responsive way.

**Jackie Burns**

Finally we would like to say a ‘goodbye’ to Jackie Burns who is standing down from her work on the NPC Women’s Committee. Jackie has been a great support and influence on the work of the committee. Over the last few years and we are sorry to see her leave. On behalf of the Network I would like to wish Jackie all the best.

**PS: Reminder**

This Newsletter is sent only to those members who have ‘opted in’ to the Network. Membership of the Network is free, but depends, like the Forums, on opting in. If you have already opted in please go to the My RCN section of the RCN website (rcn.org.uk/MyRCN) or telephone RCN Direct on 0345 7726100, and check that your details (especially your email address) are correct. If you have not yet opted in, please do so now, using the same method. And if you know of any other retired RCN members – we know that there are lots of retired members who pay the full RCN subscription and who cannot be identified as retired in the RCN database – please get them to join too. We have so far identified about 1,100 members but we know that there are more who are eligible to join. Our strength depends on our numbers!