Dame Sheila Quinn Memorial Service

The memorial service for Dame Sheila Quinn, RCN President 1982-1986, will take place in the OBE Crypt at St Paul’s Cathedral on Monday 5 June. If you would like to attend please email damesheilaquinnmemorial@rcn.org.uk or phone 0207 647 3640. Following the service there will be a reception at RCN headquarters. Attendees will need to organise and fund their own travel to and from London and make their own way to St Paul’s and back home from the RCN.

Social Care Roundtable at House of Commons 21 February

This meeting was organised by the NPC in conjunction with the NHS Support Federation, and attended by about a dozen people: a mixture of MPs, research staff from the various policy think tanks, and representatives of organisations concerned with older people. The RCN Professional lead for older people, Dawne Garrett also attended.

The aims of the meeting were:

- To consider what is the best model for funding our health and social care system in the future
- To discuss how this solution can be promoted politically

In trying to obtain a RCN briefing in preparation for the meeting, I was surprised to discover that the RCN has no policy on core issues such as how should the NHS be organised and funded, and what is the best model for funding our health and social care system in the future. The Network is currently trying to stimulate an emergency motion for Congress to remedy this deficit.

Adam Roberts from the Health Foundation, presented updated statistical and financial information. Norman Lamb MP, the former Care Minister, presented information about a cross-party coalition of MPs who are trying to find cross-party solutions, including his own panel set up to discuss shaping health and social care via national insurance remodelling. In Wales an independent parliamentary review is in progress.

Discussion ranged around methods of risk pooling, confirming the commitment to a unified health and care system funded from taxation and free at the point of use, and how to break through the barrier of political will.

The latest report on the state of social care – and perhaps the most damning - is Parliament’s cross-party Communities and Local Government Committee (CLG) Report on its Inquiry into Adult Social Care. You can read it here: www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmcomloc/1103/110302.htm

The NPC Biennial Delegate Conference (BDC) 21-22 March

The BDC is the NPC’s vehicle for determining NPC policy, electing officers and committees, and reporting on the past year’s activities. Based on membership numbers, the RCN is entitled to four voting delegates. Three of the RCN representatives were able to attend (June Clark, Joyce Ford and Kate Fitzsimmons). Our nominee, Jan Shortt, was elected General Secretary.
Motions covered constitutional matters, effects of Brexit on pensioners, pensions (including the state pension triple lock), sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs), social care, elder abuse, dementia, housing issues, and confirmation of the commitment to a unified health and social care service funded from general taxation and free at the point of use.

Our motion to enable casual vacancies on working parties to be filled by appointment (to avoid the muddle which last year nearly cost us our membership of the health and social care committee) was accepted. We are just in the process of nominating our representatives on the working parties for 2017-2019, and this time we have also nominated a member (Kate) to serve on the Pensions Working Party. The BDC Minutes are now available here.

Meeting with Michael Brown, Chair of RCN Council 3 April

Following his commitment at the December 2016 Council meeting to consider and propose some solutions to the problems we have been facing, a meeting was held at which Michael Brown, Chair of Council presented to us the proposals he intended to present to Council at its meeting on the following day. It was a very helpful meeting and his recommendations are a big step forward. He recommended:

- The continuation of the regional RCN local networks which Council passed a paper on 18 months ago. Each region and country must set up when asked to, a retired member’s network in their area; we have 5 set up already. This in turn ensures closer links with the regional and country boards
- A yearly national conference organised by the RCN for RCN retired members.
- Engagement with the strands of work from the recently agreed RCN equality and inclusion strategy
- Full involvement in Member Communication Centre (ie the ability to email members in the Network) and work to be undertaken to identify retired members within our membership will be undertaken to allow this to happen.

For the NPC Network:
- Continued support from RCN staff to fulfil the role of the elected members on the NPC.
- The removal of the constraints model used for NPC elections.
- Access to the Member Communications Centre (MCC) ie the facility to email Network members directly through the MCC system
- An increase in Budget to cover the increase in the affiliation fees to NPC.
- Access to RCN support and information for work that is carried out with the NPC
- Twice yearly meeting with RCN Chair of Council, RCN Chair of Trade Union Committee and RCN Chair of Nursing Professional Committee.
- A meeting at Congress to share the progress of the work within the NPC and better publicise the role.

In the future the NPC will also have access (through the MCC) to all RCN retired members for communication purposes around their agenda and to local retired members networks to help inform work of importance to pensioners issues at the NPC.

The following day, Council accepted all his recommendations. Some issues, however, remain outstanding:
- Only members who remain in full payment plan can stand for election to governance roles, this has long been the view held by council. Council have discussed this recently and continue to hold this view. (We will continue to fight on this)
• A separate membership entity for retired members. MRC has discussed Membership categories recently and suggested no changes to the current structure.

• Protected seats on council. (We did not ask for this). At this time we have 7 members on council who are retired and have remained in full membership (retired members are well represented on council). Council will continue with the geographical model for elections that is currently used and a separate seat for our membership categories of student and HCP.

• Voting and funding rights at Congress, although I will commit to a piece of work to look at some funding options for retired members attending congress in the future as non-voting members

• Workplaces do not recognise retired reps and there are issues with laws around employment and taxation of the RCN offering zero hours employment. Mentoring and support roles could be developed at branch level to support accredited reps

RCN Congress, 13-18 May, Liverpool

Although the Network has no funding or voting rights, June plans to attend for the full week as a representative of her local RCN branch. We will be running a Fringe Meeting on Sunday 14 May, 12.45 to 1.30pm (Room 1C) on ‘Harnessing the voice of retired and older nurses’. Speakers include Jan Shortt (General Secretary of NPC) and Peggy Pryer. June will also Chair the event and say a few words. We hope to see some of you there. More details next time.

The General Election

As this newsletter was being prepared the general election was announced for 8 June. Within 24 hours the NPC published its six-point Pensioners Manifesto:

1. A state pension set above the official poverty level and linked to the triple lock
2. Greater funding for the NHS, an end to privatisation in the health service and a national social care system funded from general taxation, free at the point of delivery and without means testing
3. Maintenance of universal pensioner benefits
4. More affordable homes
5. New legal protection for older people from all forms of elder abuse to ensure dignity and raise standards of care.
6. A Brexit deal that safeguards the payment of pensions, the EU health insurance card and the rights of UK pensioners living abroad.

NPC asks us to publicise and promote this Manifesto. So we are as busy as ever!

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!