

Key messages from the RCN Northern Ireland Board meeting

6 December 2021

- 1 The Board Chair welcomed RCN President Dr Denise Chaffer, who was in attendance at the meeting. The President thanked Board members for the invitation to participate and gave an introductory address to the Board.
- 2 The Board noted with sadness the recent death of former RCN Northern Ireland Board member and accredited representative Joe McCambridge.
- 3 The Director provided a verbal update on the recruitment of a new Chief Nursing Officer for Northern Ireland. The RCN's concerns over the role description and remuneration for the role were discussed and the Director set out the ways in which the RCN has sought to address these issues. She noted that, either individually and in partnership with the Royal College of Midwives, the RCN has engaged extensively within the nursing and midwifery professions in Northern Ireland and more widely, as well as with key stakeholders and politicians in Northern Ireland. The issue has also been highlighted on several occasions in the Northern Ireland media. The Board agreed to write to the Head of the Civil Service reiterating members' concerns over the implications for nursing and midwifery leadership and to engage further with RCN Fellows in Northern Ireland in relation to the issue.
- 4 The Board Chair provided an update on the [Carr Review of the culture of the RCN](#).
- 5 The Board received and discussed an extensive written and verbal report from its Pay and Safe and Effective Care Campaign Sub-Committee. This highlighted the recent [Department of Health announcement](#) of a 3% pay award for Agenda for Change staff in Northern Ireland for 2021-2022. The Board subsequently agreed:
 - that all eligible RCN members will be consulted on whether they consider the pay award to be acceptable or not acceptable
 - that the full timetable for the consultation ballot will be confirmed as soon as possible, with a projected date in mid-January and that the consultation ballot should remain open for a period of 28 days
 - that in the period prior to and during the consultation ballot, campaign activity will continue, with an increased focus on member engagement and clear messaging over the importance of proactive member involvement.
- 6 The Director provided a verbal update on progress in addressing the RCN's 'Big Five' strategic priorities, comprising pay, safe staffing, organising and transformation, the independent sector, and learning and development.

- 7 The Board received, noted and approved an operational plan update, a revised RCN Northern Ireland risk register, and the latest quarterly performance management report covering the third quarter of 2021. The Board agreed that a revised and refined operational plan reporting system will be introduced in 2022.
- 8 The Board received a further update on recent developments related to the investigation of allegations of the abuse of patients at Muckamore Abbey Hospital, which are now the subject of a statutory public inquiry.
- 9 The Board received, noted and discussed updates on the work of the RCN Trade Union Committee and the RCN Professional Nursing Committee.
- 10 The Board received and discussed a report on issues relating to RCN membership within the independent sector in Northern Ireland.
- 11 The Board received a brief verbal update on the current RCN Northern Ireland office closure and the work of the RCN Property Review Task and Finish Group. It was reiterated that 17 Windsor Avenue will be fully re-opened for staff and member access as soon as this is permitted under Northern Ireland Executive guidance.
- 12 The Board received a presentation by Donna Dillon of the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust highlighting her project on enhancing end of life care in care home settings that was supported through an RCN Foundation Rae Bequest award.
- 13 The Board noted that written evidence is currently being prepared for submission to the Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Health in relation to the [Hospital Parking Charges Bill](#). All RCN members are encouraged to share their views.
- 14 Board members were briefed on the inauguration of two new RCN bursaries; the [Gabrielle Award](#) and the [Canavan Award](#). The closing date for the receipt of applications for both awards is 31 January 2022.
- 15 The Board received and noted a series of activity reports from the six RCN branches in Northern Ireland. The Board received a verbal report on plans to refine branch reporting and agreed that a workshop should be held with branch officials during January 2022 in order to progress this work.
- 16 The Board received an update on arrangements for [RCN Congress 2022](#). This takes place in Glasgow from 5-9 June 2022.
- 17 The next meeting of the RCN Northern Ireland Board will take place on Monday 21 February 2022.