

Key messages from the RCN Northern Ireland Board meeting

18 September 2023

- 1 In her opening remarks, the Board Chair noted the resignation of Board Vice Chair Andrew Doherty, who has stepped down from Board membership in order to take up employment with the RCN. It was also noted that Paul McAleer will stand down from Board membership with effect from 21 October 2023 in order to facilitate his recent appointment as Chair of the RCN Nursing in Justice and Forensic Health Care Forum. The Board Chair thanked Andrew and Paul for their service to the Board.
- 2 The Board received a further briefing on the current position regarding pay in Northern Ireland. It was reported that arrangements are being progressed for the launch of a campaign encouraging RCN members to engage with their local Assembly members to highlight the continuing absence of a pay award and the need for the restoration of the devolved institutions in order to address this pay disparity and the wider crisis in the health and social care system in Northern Ireland.
- 3 The Board received a detailed progress report on the RCN job evaluation project. It was noted that a group of specialist community respiratory nurses in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust have recently been uplifted from Agenda for Change band six to band seven due to the RCN's representations through the project.
- 4 The Board received, noted and approved a series of governance assurance reports. These comprised the performance highlight report for the second quarter of 2023, an updated risk register, a report on the delivery of the Board's operational plan during the second quarter of 2023, and a performance management report for the same period. Matters for clarification were raised by Board members and addressed.
- 5 The Board received a briefing on the various public inquiries in relation to health care issues currently taking place in Northern Ireland. These comprise allegations of the abuse of patients at Muckamore Abbey Hospital, Southern Health and Social Care Trust urology services, neurology services in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, proceedings related to hyponatraemia, and the UK Covid-19 public inquiry. The Board noted the successful briefing workshop with Gerry Boyle KC held recently for RCN members who may be asked to provide evidence to the Muckamore Abbey Hospital public inquiry, and the development of an information pack for members.
- 6 The Board received, noted and approved progress reports for the second quarter of 2023 on the RCN Northern Ireland branch operational plans. The Board also discussed and agreed ways to support the branches and enhance communication in respect of the branch operational plans and associated reporting arrangements.
- 7 The Board received a verbal briefing on the preliminary arrangements for RCN Congress 2024, which will be held in Newport from 2 to 6 June. Further to discussion at the previous Board meeting, the Board agreed a series of recommendations to encourage the submission of agenda items by RCN members in Northern Ireland.

- 8 The Board agreed a revised process for RCN Northern Ireland Networks and the establishment of new Networks. It was noted that a workshop for RCN Network leads is to be held on Thursday 21 September 2023.
- 9 Board members received a verbal update on issues relating to members employed in the independent sector and GP practice nurses.
- 10 A detailed report on the implementation of the Prince of Wales Cadet Scheme in Northern Ireland and across the UK was discussed and noted.
- 11 The Board received and noted various written reports on the work of RCN Council, the RCN Trade Union Committee, the RCN UK Professional Nursing Committee, the RCN UK Nursing Support Workers Committee.
- 12 The Board received and noted reports from the Director and the Board Chair.
- 13 The next meeting of the Board will take place on Monday 4 December 2023.