

RCN Northern Ireland Board Fair Pay and Safe Staffing Sub-Committee meeting 16 February 2022.

Key messages:

The RCN Northern Ireland Board Fair Pay and Safe Staffing Sub-Committee met on Wednesday 16 February 2022.

- The Sub-Committee noted the outcome of the recent consultative ballot of RCN members in Northern Ireland over the 3% consolidated pay award for HSC staff on Agenda for Change terms and conditions. Of those eligible to take part in the consultative ballot, 51.75% turned out to vote, with 92.2% of those who voted stating that the pay award is unacceptable and 7.8% stating that it is acceptable. The Sub-Committee also noted that the outcome has been communicated directly to RCN members and subsequently to the Minister for Health, members of the Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Health, the leaders of the largest Northern Ireland political parties, and the Chief Executives and Directors of Nursing of HSC trusts. The Sub-Committee commended the strong engagement of RCN members over the ballot and the high level of response that this generated.**
- The RCN Northern Ireland Board will meet on Monday 21 February 2022. The Board will carefully consider the outcome of the consultative ballot and determine options for the next steps in the pay campaign, taking into account the UK picture.**
- The Sub-Committee Board received an update on recent developments related to safe staffing in Northern Ireland. It was noted that the Department of Health has confirmed that safe staffing legislation will be prioritised at the beginning of the next Assembly mandate and that the RCN will hold the Department to account for delivering this commitment. An update was also provided on the Department of Health workforce stabilisation group, which is taking forward the issues of pay progression, the development of career pathways, pre-registration commissioning and post-registration education. The Sub-Committee was also briefed on the development of a nursing workforce retention strategy, in relation to which a series of recommendations will shortly be made to the Minister for Health.**
- The Sub-Committee received a report on the implementation of the RCN communications strategy associated with the consultative ballot. The Sub-Committee noted the strong media coverage generated by the announcement of the ballot outcome and commended the use of social media and text messaging in promoting the ballot and facilitating engagement with and between members.**

We encourage anyone who has any queries, comments, views or opinions to contact us via the monitored RCN Northern Ireland Board email address at ni.board@rcn.org.uk. Members should note that individual enquiries should not be raised via social media.