

## Key messages from the RCN Northern Ireland Board meeting

15 February 2021

- 1] In her opening remarks, the Board Chair noted that this was the first Board meeting of the year and the first formal meeting of the current Board membership. The Board Chair congratulated a number of Board members in respect of recent media engagements and conference participation.
- 2] The Director provided a verbal report on the delivery of support to RCN members during the Covid-19 pandemic. She referenced the substantial engagement that takes place at all levels in order to address members' concerns, as well as the extensive communication and engagement with, and between, RCN members. The Director also referenced RCN engagement with government health departments across the UK in relation to members' current concerns over the level and quality of personal protective equipment [PPE], particularly in light of the emergence of new variants of the virus.
- 3] Board member Denise Kelly, who represents Northern Ireland on the RCN UK Trade Union Committee, provided a verbal briefing on the RCN's Fair Pay For Nursing campaign. This was followed by a briefing from the Director on a review of progress in relation to the safe staffing framework published by the Minister for Health and endorsed by the wider Northern Ireland Executive in response to the industrial action taken by RCN members in Northern Ireland during 2019 and 2020. The Board noted that, whilst progress has been made in respect of some of the issues identified in the framework, a number of elements have not been satisfactorily progressed. In light of these concerns, the Board agreed to re-establish its Safe and Effective Care Sub-Committee in order to agree a way forward in highlighting and addressing members' continuing concerns in relation to safe nurse staffing and pay in Northern Ireland.
- 4] The Board received a verbal report on a review of community mental health nursing services in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust. A number of concerns were noted by Board members in relation to this work.
- 5] Board members received and discussed a verbal report on issues relating to the nursing and residential care home sector in Northern Ireland.
- 6] Reports from the six RCN branches in Northern Ireland for the fourth quarter of 2020 were received, noted and approved, along with branch plans for 2021.
- 7] Board members received a verbal report on the recent work of the Northern Ireland Trade Union Partnership Forum, and the tripartite meetings between the Department of Health, employers and the trade unions. This report also included a briefing on the implications of the Department of Health draft budget for 2021-2022.

- 8] The Board received a verbal update on recent developments in respect of 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 approved an operational plan update, a revised RCN Northern Ireland risk register, and the latest quarterly performance management report covering the final quarter of 2020. Board members noted and welcomed the substantial growth in RCN membership in Northern Ireland recorded over the preceding twelve months.
- 10] The next meeting of the RCN Northern Ireland Board takes place on Monday 24 May 2021.