

**ROYAL COLLEGE OF NURSING NORTHERN IRELAND**

**Minutes of the open session of the Northern Ireland Board meeting held on Monday  
24 February 2020 in the Board Room, 17 Windsor Avenue.**

**Present**

Fiona Devlin	(FD)	Chair & RCN Council member
Andrew Doherty	(AD)	Vice Chair
Roisin Devlin	(RoD)	
Siobhan Donald	(SD)	RCN Professional Nursing Committee Vice-Chair
Eileen Dunlop	(ED)	
David Ferran	(DF)	
Kathryn Gault	(KG)	
Denise Kelly	(DK)	RCN Trade Union Committee member
Anne Marie Marley	(AMM)	
Helen McNeilly	(HM)	
Briege Quinn	(BQ)	

**Apologies**

Maurice Devine	(MD)
Audrey Harris	(AH)
Molly Kane	(MK)
Cherith Rogers	(CR)

**Staff in attendance**

Pat Cullen	(PC)	Director
Colin Poolman	(CP)	Associate Director (arriving late, travel disruption)
Rita Devlin	(RD)	Head of Professional Development
Joy Ireland	(JI)	Business Manager
John Knappe	(JK)	Head of Policy, Communications & Marketing
Brian Morton	(BM)	Operations Manager

**Members observing**

Mary McCullagh, South Western Branch  
Amanda Smith, Belfast Branch

**Guest observing**

Jacqui McKinlay CEO, Centre for Public Scrutiny

**Notes**

Fiona Adair (FA) EA to Director / Board Administrator

Item		Paper No	Action
20/09	<p><b>Chair's opening remarks including declarations of interest</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed those present, in particular the CEO of the Centre for Public Scrutiny, Jacqui McKinlay, who was observing the meeting as part of the RCN's external review of governance.</p>		

	<p>The Chair also welcomed observers to the open session: Amanda Smith (Belfast Branch) Mary McCullagh (South Western Branch)</p> <p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were noted from: MD (on holiday) AH (Due to work commitments but had joined by teleconference for item 20/24 only) MK (on holiday) CR</p>		
<b>20/10</b>	<p><b>Minutes of open session of Board meeting held on Monday 2 September 2019</b></p> <p>It was agreed that the minutes were a true record of the meeting and the Chair signed them accordingly.</p>	nib/20/10	
<b>20/11</b>	<p><b>Matters / actions arising following the open session of previous meeting of 2 September 2019.</b></p>		
<b>20/11/a</b>	<p><b>Actions:</b> Full list at <i>appendix I</i>.</p> <p><b>nib/161:</b> The scheduled December 2019 Board meeting had become a confidential extraordinary meeting due to the campaign. Therefore the fundees would be invited to present at the Board meeting in May 2020.</p> <p><b>nib/164:</b> Closed. As SD had now been elected to the PNC, the situation was resolved.</p>		nib/161
<b>20/11/b</b>	<p><b>Matters Arising:</b></p> <p>None were raised.</p>		
<b>20/12</b>	<p><b>2019 Operational Plan review Q4</b></p> <p>Board members raised queries as follows:</p> <p><u>Job evaluation</u> The Chair requested clarification regarding job evaluation and training of reps. The Deputy Director advised that a proposal was under development locally for the NI Management Team to consider, and a paper would be submitted to the RCN Trade Union Committee as part of a National piece of work.</p> <p>There was considerable work to be undertaken as profiles required to be updated. At the NI level, steps would be taken to ensure more robust governance around job evaluation.</p>	nib/20/12	

	<p>PC remarked that 64% of the NI nursing workforce was at band 5, an issue which had been raised repeatedly by nurses during recent engagement events. Addressing this would be a priority for RCN NI, going forward.</p> <p>It would be necessary to have people appropriately trained to undertake job evaluations. Ideally, a training resource could be developed within RCN and this would require an additional local resource.</p> <p><b>*At this point, CP joined the meeting</b></p> <p><u>Provision of legal services</u> The reason for considering a new model of legal services was queried.</p> <p>The Deputy Director advised that discussions as to the best model for providing legal services to members had been taking place in light of rising costs, in particular for regulatory work.</p> <p>Scoping work had been ongoing and a re-tender process would take place in coming months for a three-year contract as it was not currently viable to employ an in-house legal advisor. The continuing priority was ensuring quality of service for members.</p> <p><u>RCN Annual Lecture</u> The Chair explained that no annual lecture had taken place in 2019 due to the campaign and building works in the reception area.</p> <p>In light of decreasing attendance figures in recent years, it had been decided that the format would be reviewed.</p> <p>A paper would be presented to the RCN NI Board at its next meeting, for consideration.</p> <p><u>Nurse of the Year Awards 2020</u> The Awards would this year be held on 24 September, in the Culloden Hotel. It was expected that the Minister for Health would attend.</p> <p>The nominations process would open within the next couple of weeks.</p> <p><u>Review of Reps' L&amp;D</u> A progress update was requested. Head of Professional Development provided an outline of work to date and advised that a 2020 timetable for CPD would be devised.</p> <p>The Director added that preliminary discussions were taking place regarding a quarterly 'learning newsletter' which could include learning derived from anonymised NMC cases.</p>		
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	<p><u>Withdrawal of Care Policy</u> JK had sat on the Zero Tolerance Group during GM's recent absence and he advised that the Group had been informed that Withdrawal of Care was detached from the work of the Zero Tolerance Group, and responsibility devolved to regional Chief Nursing Officers (CNOs)</p> <p>Withdrawal of Care had been consistently raised by RCN over the past three years, with no progress apparent. It was therefore agreed that the Director would write to CNO requesting a progress update.</p>		nib/177
<b>20/13</b>	<b>Member consultations:</b>		
<b>20/13/a</b>	<p><b>Membership categories</b></p> <p>The Chair explained the background to discussions which had been ongoing about membership categories and asked Board members to carefully consider the contents of paper nib/20/13/a before providing their comments to FA by 30 March 2020. These would then be fed back to RCN.</p>	nib/20/13/a	
<b>20/13/b</b>	<p><b>Arrangements for RCN AGM</b></p> <p>The Chair stressed the importance of the AGM being held at such a time as to ensure an effective and quorate meeting. Board members were again asked to provide their comments to FA by 30 March 2020.</p>	nib/20/13/b	
<b>20/13/c</b>	<p><b>Member consultation on RCN UK Pay Policy</b></p> <p>The Chair asked that Board members give paper nib/20/13/c detailed consideration, before providing comments to FA by 12 March 2020.</p>	nib/20/13/c	
<b>20/14</b>	<b>RCN Committees' reports to Council and members</b>		
<b>20/14/a</b>	<p><b>21/01/20, Professional Nursing Committee (PNC) report to Boards</b></p> <p>The Chair invited SD, as Vice Chair of the PNC, to speak to the report.</p> <p>SD highlighted some main matters being addressed by PNC, including achieving consistency in dashboard reporting, and the organisation of a joint Congress fringe event with the TUC, to promote the dual roles of the College.</p> <p>She reported that the PNC had received a presentation from RD on the NI Safe &amp; Effective Care Campaign and was fully supportive on NI.</p> <p>A Board member asked whether, in discussions regarding</p>	nib/20/14/a	

<p>20/14/b</p>	<p>the NI campaign, consideration had been taken of the impact on critical relationships eg with Trusts, Department of Health etc. SD would feed this back to PNC.</p> <p><b>03/02/20. Trade union Committee (TUC) report to Boards</b></p> <p>The Chair invited DK, as NI representative on the TUC, to speak to the report.</p> <p>DK reported that her time on the TUC so far had been very busy, with frequent teleconference meetings in relation to the NI campaign. TUC was also fully supportive on NI and acknowledged the RCN campaign's role in restoring the NI Assembly.</p> <p>A TUC governance workshop would take place on 18 / 19 March and DK was happy to raise any issues on behalf of NI Board members.</p> <p>With regard to reps' facilities time, a template was being developed to support activists in applying for facilities time. CP noted that there were differing arrangements among Countries / Regions and it would be helpful if the process were to be standardised.</p>	<p>nib/20/14/b</p>	
<p>20/15</p> <p>20/15/a</p> <p>20/15/b</p>	<p><b>NI Board</b></p> <p><b>Venues for Board meetings 2020</b></p> <p>It was agreed that to hold Board meetings in Trust areas outside Belfast was important and could give more members the opportunity to attend as observers.</p> <p>RD suggested that CPD certificates could be issued to observers which would count towards their revalidation. She would develop a suitable certificate.</p> <p>It was agreed that the September Board meeting would take place in the Western Trust area, and the December meeting in the central region of NI, possibly Co Tyrone.</p> <p>Suitable venues would be identified and the meetings publicised to members in those areas.</p> <p><b>NI Board workshop and development day – proposal</b></p> <p>Plans for the 2019 Board development day had been cancelled due to campaign activity. Following discussion it was agreed that a diary date would be secured for a development session, preferably to take place before RCN Congress in June.</p> <p>Some suggestions for facilitation would be followed up.</p>	<p>nib/178</p> <p>nib/179</p> <p>nib/180</p>	

<b>20/16</b>	<b>NI Board representation requests:</b>		
<b>20/16/a</b>	<p><b>RCN Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee for UK Safe &amp; Effective Staffing</b></p> <p>The Terms of Reference had been shared and the Chair explained that the Board member who had previously sat on the committee had stood down due to work commitments. BQ indicated her interest in fulfilling this role.</p> <p><b>*At this point, CP left the meeting</b></p>	nib/20/16/a	
<b>20/16/b</b>	<p><b>Proposal to introduce 'Sensemaker'</b></p> <p>The Head of Professional Development explained this exciting project, which would form part of ongoing Safe Staffing work, and asked that a Board member would take part in the Programme Board. HMcN undertook to fulfil the role.</p> <p>A regular progress report would be provided to the NI Board.</p>	nib/20/16/b	
	<b>Items for information / noting</b>		
<b>20/17</b>	<p><b>Chair's Report</b></p> <p>The report was noted.</p>	nib/20/17	
<b>20/18</b>	<p><b>Director's Report</b></p> <p>The report was noted. The Director advised of her intent to change the format slightly, going forward.</p>	nib/20/18	
<b>20/19</b>	<p><b>RCN Council summary report to members, open session</b></p> <p>The report was noted.</p>	nib/20/19	
<b>20/20</b>	<p><b>RCN Independent Sector strategy – presentation</b></p> <p>The Chair invited Dolores McCormick (DM) to make her presentation to the Board.</p> <p>DM thanked the Board for allowing her the opportunity to present this work, and explained that development of an RCN Independent Sector Strategy had been identified as a key priority by RCN Council. The project had been established to address this in the context of equity for RCN members.</p> <p>The presentation went on to outline the background data, work which was planned and the desired outcomes.</p>		

	This work was welcomed by Board members. A questionnaire would be provided to Board members, to seek their input.		nib/181
<b>20/21</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>		
<b>20/21/a</b>	<p><b>Pension age discrimination ruling, firefighters</b></p> <p>Potential consequences for RCN members was raised, following a recent ruling with regard to firefighters' pension age.</p> <p>The Deputy Director advised that preparation work was being undertaken across all public sector areas as there was, potentially, an impact on other employees.</p>		
<b>20/22</b>	<p><b>Agree RCN NI Board Key Messages from open session</b></p> <p>The following key messages would go forward to the confidential session:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Board Chair welcomed RCN members Amanda Smith (RCN Belfast Branch) and Mary McCullagh (RCN South Western Branch) as observers to the open session of the meeting. The Board Chair also welcomed as an observer Jacqui McKinlay (Chief Executive of the Centre for Public Scrutiny) who was attending as part of the current external review of RCN governance.</li> <li>2. The Board received, discussed and approved the operational plan update for the final quarter of 2019. The Board noted with concern the continuing lack of progress by the Department of Health in relation to the development of a withdrawal of care policy for nursing in Northern Ireland and agreed to request further information from the Department. The Board also noted that:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• further work was to be undertaken on Agenda for Change job evaluation in Northern Ireland</li> <li>• a review of the RCN Northern Ireland Annual Lecture and Christmas Reception was being undertaken</li> <li>• arrangements were being finalised for the launch of the RCN Northern Ireland Nurse of the Year Awards 2020.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. The Board received and reviewed current RCN member consultations on RCN membership categories, arrangements for the RCN annual general meeting, and on an RCN UK pay policy. Comments from Board members on each of these consultations are welcomed</li> </ol>		

	<p>and should be forwarded to Fiona Adair in accordance with the respective deadlines.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Board members received and noted reports from the RCN Trade Union Committee and the RCN Professional Nursing Committee. In both cases, the Board noted and welcomed favourable comments made in relation to the industrial action taken by RCN members in Northern Ireland during December 2019 and January 2020.</li> <li>5. The Board agreed that two of its four meetings during 2020 will be held outside Belfast and will be heavily promoted with local members in order to encourage attendance in an observer capacity. The Board also discussed and agreed a proposal to hold a workshop and development day.</li> <li>6. A nomination was sought for a representative from the Board to join the RCN Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the RCN UK Safe Staffing for Effective Care campaign.</li> <li>7. Board members received a briefing on the Sensemaker project and a nomination was sought to join the project steering group. Sensemaker is a system that enables the collection and analysis of members' stories and would be utilised to inform the Safe Staffing for Effective Care campaign.</li> <li>8. The Board received and discussed a presentation by Dolores McCormick on the RCN UK independent health and social care sector strategy. This aimed to ensure a planned pro-active approach to meeting the needs of members across the health and social care workforce. The strategy relates to the RCN Council priority of increasing influence in the independent sector, and member engagement is central to its development. Further information about this work is available from Dolores McCormick via <a href="mailto:dolores.mccormick@rcn.org.uk">dolores.mccormick@rcn.org.uk</a>.</li> </ol>		
	<p>Concluded open session. Observers left the meeting.</p>		

**Signed:**  (Chair)

**Date: 11 May 2020**

## Appendix I

### Actions arising from open session of the Board meeting held on 2 September 2019

No	Open / Conf	Action required	Meeting of origin	Owner	Status	Closed / Open
nib/161	o	Marcia Mackey / Rae Bequest fundees to present to NI Board	8 May 2019	RD	To be invited to December meeting *POSTPONED UNTIL NEW YEAR  To present at Board meeting in May 2020	Open
nib/164	o	AMO to raise with Council lack of NI representation on PNC, explore co-opting arrangement	2 Sept 2019	AMO	Council meeting 18/19 Sept	Closed