

Minutes of the Open Session of the meeting held on 14 February 2020

RCN North West Office

Present:

Dave Dawes (Chair)	Council Member
Maggy Heaton (Vice Chair)	Board Member
Sam Turner	Board Member
Alison Taylor	Board Member
Sally Young	Professional Committee
Carmel O'Boyle	Board Member
Mark Anthony	Board Member
Mike Travis	Trade Union Committee
Rosemary Wheeler	Board Member
Sharon Mason	Board Member
Jill Lloyd	Board Administrator
Estephanie Dunn	Board Secretary

In attendance:

Kelly Dooley	Communications Manager
Ian Parry	Centre for Public Scrutiny

Apologies

Alan Finnegan	Board Member
Hayley Cooper	Board Member
Paul Wood	Operational Manager

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Hayley Cooper, Alan Finnegan and Paul Wood.

The two new Board members Sam Turner and Alison Taylor were welcomed to the meeting and introductions were made around the table.

Ian Parry from the Centre for Public Scrutiny was also introduced, and he was here to observe the meeting.

2. Minutes and Actions from previous meeting

2.1 To agree accuracy of minutes

Minutes agreed as a true reflection of the previous meeting.

2.2 To review actions from minutes

All actions completed.

3. Key Messages from Closed Session of the Board Meeting on 14 February 2020

Confidential Session held immediately prior to the Open Session

- Recruitment and retention continues to move in the right direction with growth across all membership categories. We ended 2019 above target in all membership categories and start 2020 with newly set targets to retain and grow our membership.
- Plans to relocate the North West Regional Office is making significant progress and we anticipate a moving date of 4th March if all things go to plan. The New Office User Group continues to meet and will communicate progress and final arrangements with staff and the wider membership going forward.
- The Board reviewed expenditure of board funds for 2019 and decided on how to allocate its funding for 2020. The bidding process that has been adopted in previous years is to be continued. Branches are therefore encouraged to continue in their bidding processes to obtain board funding to help support member activities within their branches. An allocation of funding has also been designated to help support non-voting members attend Congress as in previous years. A board subgroup has been set up to manage and publicise this process going forward.
- The Board discussed the Branch Expenses Pilot that had been running during 2019 and 2020. The views of the Branch Executives, that had offered their feedback, was that they would like this process to continue. The consensus of the Board was that they would also like for this process to continue and formally wished for Council to consider this request. Dave Dawes agreed to progress this item to Council and to communication the outcome at a future meeting.

4. AOB Items to Declare

Period Poverty – Sally Young

Feedback from Bullying Conference – Sharon Mason

Fund our Future – Sam Turner

Coronavirus – Mike Travis

5. Member Consultation on Timing of the AGM

Estephanie Dunn, Board Secretary, presented this paper to the Board. The Consultation question to the Board is “Do you think the AGM should still be held in Congress week, or whether it should be held as a separate event bearing in mind that, because of the financial year, it would need to be held before the end of June?”

Following debate and a show of hands, all Board members agreed that the AGM should continue to be held during Congress week.

Estephanie agreed to complete the necessary feedback form on behalf of the Board and return to Governance by the deadline of 31st March. **Action**

Estephanie Dunn

6. Member Consultation on Review of Membership Categories

Estephanie Dunn, Board Secretary, presented this paper to the Board and explained that the Board was asked to consider 5 questions in relation to the document.

The first question is “Do you agree with the key principles on page 4?” All board members agreed with the key principles.

The second question is “Does a single membership deliver those key principles?” All board members agreed that it did.

The third question is “Do you agree that a range of payment plans linking the amount you pay each year to salary expectations is fair?” The Board members could not reach a consensus on this question. Some members felt that by not linking membership to salary gives the RCN an advantage over its competitors, as many members on higher salary scales move over to the RCN for this very reason.

The fourth question is “Do you agree that all members should be able to stand and vote for the members from your Country and Region on the RCN governing Council, your local board and the professional nursing and trade union committees?” A debate ensued and it was felt that the question needed to be reworded or split down into two questions. It was felt by some board members that the trade union committee representative needed to be a steward. If the question was split into two and have a question for “vote” and a question for “stand” then this helped some board members reach a decision. All Board members felt that all should be able to “vote” but the board decision was split on all members being able to “stand”.

The fifth question is “Do you agree that the President and Deputy President and Chair of Council should continue to be required to be a registered nurse?” Most of the Board members agreed with this question.

Estephanie Dunn agreed to collate the responses and return to Governance by closing date of 1 April 2020. **Action Estephanie Dunn**

Board members were also reminded that they could engage in the consultations on an individual basis themselves and encourage the wider membership to participate. All consultations are on the RCN website.

7. **Feedback from Regional Conference**

Sally Young shared the evaluation overview with Board members from the conference which was held on 19 November 2019. 80 delegates attended and 75% completed an evaluation form on the day. Overall the conference scored 9.5 out of 10 when asked if the conference met expectations. Delegated were also asked what topics they would like future RCN conferences to be on, so this commentary is available when planning for the 2020 conference begins. November was still considered to be a good month to hold the conference. Sally is happy to take the board lead again in the organisation of the conference, closely supported by Paul Kennerley, Office Manager. Board members were asked to be part of a subgroup and the following Board members volunteered: Estephanie Dunn; Maggy Heaton; Sam Turner; Sharon Mason; Mike Travis and Mark Anthony. **Action Paul Kennerly to arrange a date for subgroup to teleconference in.**

8. **Communications Update**

Kelly Dooley, Communications Manager, was in attendance to answer any questions in relation to the communications update circulated in board papers. The paper was noted by the Board, but no questions raised.

9. **Council Update**

Dave Dawes acknowledged that the Council Update had been circulated prior to the meeting and was open to take questions. The only observations noted was that the pay situation in NI and Guernsey is very fluid at the moment.

10. Year of the Nurse and Midwife

Due to a lack of time this item was deferred to the May meeting.

11. “State of Nursing in the North West” proposal

Due to a lack of time this item was deferred to the May meeting.

12. Minutes from Governance Committees

Professional Nursing Committee

Sally Young feedback from the Professional Nursing Committee on the work that is being undertaken. Key Messages from the Professional Nursing Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 21 January 2020 were shared. Some of the key messages noted

Committee agreed how we would cascade information about PNC meetings and our work to members

We discussed and agreed a new dashboard to strengthen our monitoring function and enable us to report to Council in the same format as the Trade Union Committee

Work to date on the 2019 Congress Items for which the Committee is responsible was reviewed

We received a report from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on their January meeting and Rita Devlin, Associate Director joined us to share the history of the NI safe staffing and pay parity campaign. We applauded our members in NI and recognised that their strike action had been the ultimate act of professional judgement

We will be appointing a member to Chair the new priority work-stream to develop an Education, Learning and Development Strategy

Notes from other Committees were noted.

13. **Board Consultation on UK Pay Policy**

This was a late item to the agenda, but the UK Pay Policy and details of the consultation had been circulated via email prior to the meeting. The policy has been produced following scoping exercises with staff across the UK; discussions between the Trade Union Committee and members of the three UK reps Committee members and a detailed workshop undertaken by the TU Committee. The outcome of this workshop informed a draft pay policy which was subsequently further reviewed by the TU Committee. The consultation question being asked of the Board today is “Do you agree that the UK pay policy provides a clear set of high-level principles which will usefully inform specific RCN negotiating strategies and objectives across the UK and across all sectors?”

The board debated if the four-country approach works with the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands but asked what are the alternatives? The disparity in the pay between the Celtic countries was also discussed. The need to protect pensions in the NHS when move to private employers ie Virgin. Working with all trade unions can be a disadvantage as inequality in pay with our allied professional colleagues, do we not just need to focus on nurses pay?

The Board agreed collectively to offer feedback via the Board Secretary who summarised the viewpoint of the Board. Deadline is 17 March 2020. **Action Estephanie Dunn**

14. **Any Other Business**

Safe and Effective Staffing Update

Mark Anthony had recently shared the OSC SSEC key messages from their January meeting. Mark wanted to bring to the boards attention that he has concerns with the scrutineer role and he feels that he is not connecting enough with the NW team. He believes communication is not good enough and wants to engage more in his role as scrutineer. Maggy Heaton, who is the rep lead for the region on this campaign feels the campaign should be member led but believes it is being controlled centrally. She was going to resign as lead but believes that now she is Chair of the UK stewards committee this puts her in a strong position to influence the campaign going forward, and has therefore reconsidered offering her resignation. Clear messages on what we are trying to achieve are needed along with next steps. Maggy believes that better support, communication and co-ordination is needed. An urgent meeting was requested to discuss these concerns which

included the staff lead, Board Chair OSC member, member lead; student lead and rep lead. Estephanie Dunn acknowledged the frustrations in the room and agreed to facilitate a meeting. A provisional date of 17 April was suggested. **Action Estephanie Dunn to co-ordinate meeting.**

Period Poverty

Sally Young highlighted to the group that she is involved in taking forward the actions in relation to the period poverty congress resolution from last year. The work includes trying to ensure that all hospitals provide free sanitaryware to patients across all regions. Sally will be linking with the Communication Team to promote the work and asked for support from Board members going forward.

Fund our Future

Sam Turner recapped to Board members that current nursing students had been awarded grants between £5,000 and £8,000 following on from the Fund our Future campaign. Students who are finishing their degrees imminently will not benefit from the grants and will have had 3 years of self-funding. No backdated reimbursement will be given. The Student Committee wish to take this issue further and are seeking the Boards support to do this. The NW Board agreed to support.

Coronavirus

A debate on the current situation and advice from World Health Organisation was held. Questions around impact on internationally recruitment of nurses and loss of allowances if members off sick due to being quarantined. A watching brief on the situation now needed. Regular updates in the media and on the RCN website.

Update from Board Bullying Conference

Due to the lack of time it was agreed that Sharon could provide a written update to the board on the evaluation of the Bullying Conference in January 2020.

Board/Council Meeting in April

Board members were asked to hold the date for the Board/Council away days in London on 21 and 22 April. Further details will follow when more information is available. **Action Jill Lloyd**

12. Key Messages for Sharing with Members Post Board Meeting

- The Board received feedback from the Board Subgroup who organised the Regional Conference in November 2019. The title of the conference was The Deteriorating Patient. The conference evaluated very well. Overall the conference scored 9.5 out of 10.
- Consideration was given to the review of the Members' Consultation on Timing of the AGM and RCN Review of Membership Categories. The Board agreed collectively to offer feedback via the Board Secretary. Board members were also encouraged to offer individual feedback and publicise both consultations with wider membership.

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/get-involved/consultations>

- The Board reviewed the RCN Pay Policy which has been developed by the RCN Trade Union Committee with input from the UK Reps Committees and RCN staff from across all four nations. Consideration was given to the consultation question asked to the NW Board, do you agree that the UK pay policy provides a clear set of high-level principles which will usefully inform specific RCN negotiating strategies and objectives across the UK and across all sectors? The Board agreed collectively to offer feedback via the Board Secretary who summarised the viewpoint of the Board.