

## OPEN SESSION

Minutes of the RCN Scotland Board meeting held virtually,

09:00-15:00 on Thursday 2 September 2021

### Present:

#### North Sector

Jackie Leith (JLe)

Dawn Marr (DM)

Peter Cartwright (PC)

\*+Martin Macgregor (MM) Vice-Chair

#### East Sector

Jasmin Clark (JC)

Hilary Nelson (HN)

#### West Sector

Derek Clark (DC)

\*Allina Das (AD)

Julie Lamberth (JL) Chair

#### Other Seats

Geoff Earl (GE) Council

\*Graham Revie (GR) Trade Union Committee

\*Theresa Connor (TC) Professional Nursing Committee

### In attendance:

Colin Poolman (CP) Director (Interim)

Eileen McKenna (EMcK) Associate Director, Nursing, Policy & Practice

Norman Provan (NP) Associate Director, Employment Relations

Luci Pollard (LJP) Board Administrator

Carol Harris (CH) Communications and Public Affairs Manager

Sian Kiely (SK) Knowledge and Research Manager

Alison Manners (AM) Professional Learning & Development Lead

Jacqui Neil (JN) Senior Nurse Professional Practice

\*Chris McDowall (CMcD) Legal Advisor, Anderson Strathern

\*+Joanne Galbraith-Marten (JG-M) Associate Director of Legal and Governance (Interim)

### Apologies:

Claire Lamza

Sandra Milne

Greg Usrey

+arrived after the start of the meeting

\*left before the end of the meeting

The Chair noted that the meeting was not quorate after a short break and proceeded to alter the agenda to accommodate, taking an update item in the first instance.

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were noted from:

Claire Lamza, Sandra Milne and Greg Usrey for the whole of the Board meeting. In addition for the Open session the following had also tendered their apologies: Allina Das, Martin MacGregor and Graham Revie.

2. Sensemaker® Update

Eileen McKenna, Associate Director, spoke to this item. She reminded the Board that it had agreed to set up a task and finish group to agree ways to encourage engagement with Sensemaker®. The Group had been set up and had met.

It was noted that it had been agreed that the image used will be replaced and a video will be developed to encourage members to engage and share their information.

It was noted that from June-August there has been an increase in members sharing information. It was noted that Borders, Western Isles and Shetland have had no respondents.

In relation to the emotional tone of the respondents there has been an increase in very negative responses.

*Theresa Connor joined the Open session – the meeting became quorate again.*

Approximately 65% of the stories have been around staffing levels and how these impact on patient care and staff wellbeing.

Workforce issues and lack of moral is impacting staff. Staff hesitate to raise concerns about staffing levels as they are either discouraged from doing so or recognise that the pressure they feel is reflected elsewhere and it feels as if there are 'complaining'.

Some of this information will be shared with the CNO's team and also the Scottish Executive Nurse Directors Group (SEND).

### Discussion

The Board thanked Eileen McKenna for her presentation. The Board noted the change since the last Sensemaker® report. The Board recognised that the reports from members are very likely to get worse as we move into the winter months.

This information needs to be linked into the safe staffing and pay campaign. The Scottish Government, and Management need to know how staff are feeling and the impact on patient care. It is important to link this information into all areas of campaigning.

It was noted that a Parliamentary Briefing is being developed which will include information from Sensemaker®.

Board members agreed to encourage members to use Sensemaker®.

### 3. Minutes

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting held on 27 May with the following edit: the word 'his' to be changed to 'her' in the apologies next to Theresa Connor's name.

Actions were noted.

In addition, the following were noted:

Organising work – Board was invited to join a Task and Finish group. A first meeting has taken place. Internal courses are being arranged and a new action plan will be presented to Council shortly. The UK Learning and Development Team have rolled out a series of bite-sized workshops. There was good take up in bookings, but a significant drop off in members attending the workshops, likely due to clinical pressures. The funding of this work is currently being drawn up. One of the issues is that the Scotland timescale is ahead of the rest of the UK. It might be helpful to seek additional support to deliver the organising model. It was noted that RCN Scotland is developing a business case for support.

Student Committee – work is ongoing in relation to support in this committee.

### 4. Safe Staffing Update

Eileen McKenna, Associate Director, spoke to this item. It was noted that the discussion planned at the development session has been delayed.

The paper gives an overview of the UK workstreams. It is hoped that these workstreams will help RCN Scotland develop its own workstreams.

The implementation of the Health and Care Act has been delayed, and despite assurances from the Scottish Government that it is a priority no timeline has been set out by the Government.

The Board will need to consider what work should be undertaken regarding Staffing for Safe and Effective Care despite the lack of implementation of the legislation.

### Discussion

This will be further explored at the rescheduled development session.

This was agreed that this is a crucial piece of work for RCN members. It was noted that there is a risk that there may be a 'permanent' delay on the implementation of the legislation. The enormous amount of work undertaken to ensure that this Act was passed, and the importance of implementation were recognised.

The number of student nurses needs to be increased to support safe staffing.

The CNO's team are supportive of implementation, but currently the team do not have capacity to progress this. There is an opportunity to use the previous Cabinet Secretary's letter to put pressure on Chief Executives. There are several actions that the RCN can take to progress this.

The Director highlighted the importance of the Board having time to consider further the actions required to progress this. Work is on-going and pressure on the Scottish Government will continue.

The Chair agreed that a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary should be pursued with safe staffing a key issue to be raised.

#### 5. Education and Learning Development Strategy Update

Nichola Ashby, Head of Professional Learning Development (UK), spoke to this item. The Board were asked to put forward names for the Expert Reference Group developing this work. Launch date of 17 June 2022, with updates before them.

A paper will be circulated to the Board.

#### 6. UK Learning and Development Pathway for RCN Representatives

Alison Manners, spoke to this item. The paper is a summary of the findings of the review to ensure that the pathway meets organisational needs. RCN has worked with Ocean to provide an external view whether our pathway meets our reps needs.

The following points from the report were highlighted: Ocean were positive regarding the approach taken during the covid pandemic. Despite a brief pause at the beginning of the pandemic, there has been good learning engagement and achievement of a high standard. There has been low attrition rates and positive learning feedback.

#### 7. LGBTQ+ Network update

Dawn Marr, Board member, spoke to this item.

Prior to the COVID 19 pandemic, members expressed an interest in setting up an LGBTQ+ member network. This was put on hold due to the pandemic and in May 2021, RCN Scotland Board agreed that plans could be re-started.

Two scoping discussions have been held in with members to gather their views on starting an LGBTQ+ network. These were originally being delivered by an external facilitator. Unfortunately, due to unplanned circumstances, the facilitator was unable to deliver the events and the workshops were facilitated by members and RCN Scotland staff.

Two workshops were held on the 21st and 25th August, with a total of 7 members attending. The workshops were advertised widely in advance of the events via

bulk email, through the website and via social media. Attendees were asked the following six questions:

- Should we set up a network?
- If so, what are the aims of this network?
- Should allies be part of the group?
- What should it be called?
- Would any one like to Chair the network?

The groups felt that an LGBTQ+ member network was important, and they would support this initiative. Reasons given were around providing peer support and providing some ownership and direction for the LGBTQ+ member voice.

An education and advocating role for LGBTQ+ members and patients were also seen as important for the network. Some members felt a forum for LGBTQ+ members would be helpful in the future.

Concerns were raised from one member of the group around the risks of splitting the RCN voice and avenues for member support but others felt this could be mitigated by being clear on the aims of the network. In addition, the network would not replace any employment relations support already in place but would provide members a safe space to explore issues they are experiencing. The groups agreed that allies should be welcomed to join the group and that if anybody violated the safety of the group, this could be dealt with on an individual level. Most of the group agreed that LGBT+ was the most useful term used. We have interest from several members to chair/facilitate the network. It was noted that Trans people are often not made feel welcome in LGBTQ groups generally. The group felt that as this network would be bound by the RCN Respect Charter, this would hopefully not be an issue but would be dealt with accordingly if so. It was noted that it was expected that the network might start very small, but should grown in time. It has been well received by members who engaged.

The Board noted the update. The Chair thanked the Board member for her work in this, and the Board will continue to support this work.

## 8. NMC Update

RCN has started to attend NMC Council meetings as observers to help inform our work going forward.

*Theresa Connor left the meeting*

The Chair noted that the Board meeting was no longer quorate. It was agreed that Update reports will be taken but no decisions could be taken given the status of the meeting.

9. Board meeting dates

These will be circulated for agreement.

10. Pensions Update

Ros Shaw, Senior Officer, spoke to this item.

A legal challenge had taken place in relation to the NHS pension scheme and as a result the Government is removing the discrimination and has been caused by the transitional arrangements has just published legislation to remedy this.

It was noted that a number of principles had been agreed, although a joint staff side position had not been possible to achieve.

It was noted that contribution rates will change for members currently contributing to a pension.

It was noted that those who have already retired will have their cases reviewed. In addition, this will impact the pensions of those who have died and those who have divorced. Also, the cases of those who would have made a different decision had the transitional arrangements been different, will be examined on an individual basis.

Planned communications will go out to clarify the impact of the legislation to members. All members who are affected will be written to, and a FAQs document will be developed to support member understanding of this complex issue.

Discussion

Board members were asked for their views on communication processes.

It was suggested that over the 12-week consultation, staff will give presentations to members, possibly at branch meetings. There will be different consultations across the countries, and the webinars planned will reflect this.

It was suggested that animation videos for the different groups could be developed to explain the relevant information. It was noted that SPPA were being asked about this.

It was noted that encouraging people to join the pension scheme is important, and if a differentiated scheme encourages this, then it should be pursued.

It was recognised that presentations will have to be given by people well versed in the pensions issue. Information will also go out to reps to help support the pensions conversations.

The Board noted the contents of the paper and the associated risks.

11. Congress Update

It was noted that Council had decided to make Congress virtual this year. Geoff Earl, Council member and Norman Provan, Associate Director spoke to this item.

Council was called to an emergency meeting to discuss serious allegations of incidences which had taken place at past Congresses. It was noted that other trade unions have had to manage similar issues. Following legal advice, where it was clear that it was not possible to put in safe-guarding policies, it was agreed that the safest option was to have Congress only virtual this year.

The Board were aware that members were very disappointed.

There are 50 voting places for Congress, of which 34 members were due to travel in person.

RCN will ensure that voting members who had intended to travel will be supported to attend virtually. RCN Scotland staff will be available to assist members virtually. The Board will receive a review at the next Board meeting.

The Board noted that Congress 2022 is due to be held in Glasgow, and this will be discussed at the next meeting.

### Discussion

It is important the Board supports Congress and members attending.

It was noted that Branches need to agree voting members, should there be a change in those being able to attend.

It is important to ensure that there is early planning for the Congress in Glasgow, and the Board need to be engaged fully in the process.

It was noted that some employers elsewhere in the UK were reconsidering member attendance. Board was asked to report anything similar to the Director.

### 12. Council Update

Geoff Earl, Council member, spoke to this item. The Board noted the latest reports.

The Governance Review is taking longer than had originally planned, it was hoped that in the next week an organisation will be identified to undertake the review. A number of elements have already been actioned, and members have been engaged giving their views.

The Chair of Council had been suspended and due process will be followed. The RCN takes very seriously any complaints or allegations and deals with these appropriately through RCN policies and procedures.

### 13. Trade Union Committee Report

The paper was noted.

### 14. Professional Nursing Committee

The paper was noted.

## 15. Board members' Reports

The Reports were noted;

Forth Valley – branch meeting planned for next week. It is challenging to get out and meet members face-to-face under the current circumstances. There will be NSW activity going forward. Stirling University archives have been interesting in the book launch. Work is being undertaken to implement the recommendations from the report.

Lanarkshire – the branch has not been very active recently; a meeting is planned in two weeks. The report was noted.

Highland – the branch is non-functioning currently. A branch meeting is planned in early October.

Grampian & Orkney – an event was organised, but not enough members came forward to attend. At a recent meeting staffing levels were raised. It was noted that RGU are restricting their fair to internal university staff. Board member and Sian Kiely agreed to catch up regarding this. It was agreed that the Senior Officer, Philip Coghill would get in touch with the Board member.

It was noted that some staff members were being pressured to go to work even if they have had contact with a covid positive person. It was noted that RCN had not been involved in the production of the guidance. Staff have a right to decline to attend work in these circumstances. Employers should do risk assessments to ensure that the staff involved should not work with immune compromised.

Ayrshire & Arran – issues with staffing issues. The Branch is growing with two new reps, and more members are engaging.

## 16. Student Committee

The report was noted.

## 17. Nursing Support Worker Committee Report

The report was noted.

## 18. Adult Social Care Reform

The report was noted and will be discussed at the next development session.

## Discussion

This is an important piece of work, and it is vital the Board and the wider membership are engaged in this work. There has been political pressure building for some time, but there is also the view that the Government would be content for this to be slow in progressing.

A consultation event is planned for Monday evening and there has been a positive response from members to engage.

19. Any other business

No other business was raised.

Close of meeting.