

RCN Scotland Board

Minutes of the RCN Scotland Board meeting held virtually,
09:00-16:00 on Thursday 9 December 2021
OPEN SESSION

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)

*Claire Lamza (CL)

Sandra Milne (SM)

West Sector

+Julie Lamberth (JL)

Chair

Other Seats

Geoff Earl (GE)

Graham Revie (GR)

Theresa Connor (TC)

Council

Trade Union Committee

Professional Nursing Committee

In attendance:

Colin Poolman (CP)

Eileen McKenna (EMcK)

Norman Provan (NP)

Donna McComb (DMC)

Luci Pollard (LJP)

Carol Harris (CH)

Sian Kiely (SK)

Susan Kirkman (SJK)

Alison Manners (AM)

Debby de Haus

+*Alex McMahan

+*Caroline Stevens

Director (Interim)

Associate Director, Nursing, Policy & Practice

Associate Director, Employment Relations

Board Administrator

Board Administrator

Communications and Public Affairs Manager

Knowledge and Research Manager

Business Manager

Professional Learning & Development Lead

KPMG

Chief Nursing Officer

Professional Lead Learning & Development

Apologies:

Greg Usrey

Derek Clark

Allina Das

Not present:

Theresa Connor (TC)

Professional Nursing Committee

*left before the end of the meeting

+joined after the start of the meeting

OPEN SESSION

The Board agreed due to the apologies from the Chair and unfortunate urgent absence of the Vice Chair that Geoff Earl would chair the Open Session of the Board meeting.

1. Welcome and Apologies

GE welcomed colleagues and noted apologies were from Martin MacGregor, Julie Lamberth, Derek Clark, Greg Usrey and Allina Das

2. Minutes and actions from open session of meeting held on Thursday 2 September 2021

The Minutes were agreed as an accurate record the meetings.

The Actions were noted.

It was noted any further updates on Congress will be presented at the next Board meeting. Congress 2022 will be held in Glasgow.

Julie Lamberth joined the meeting

3. Professional Leadership and Engagement

Eileen McKenna, Associate Director spoke to this item.

The Board noted there were several Scottish Government reviews and consultations prior to the pandemic. Consideration had been given to how members in Scotland can be better engaged. The paper outlines proposal to establish member led professional leadership and engagement model. This will facilitate members to discuss, debate and shape the RCN Scotland's position across a range of professional, clinical and policy matters.

Discussion

It was noted by the Board that difficulty in engagement had been a long-term challenge for RCN Scotland. Board members welcomed the proposal and suggested more professional groups may need to be added to those set out in the paper. It was noted that the model within the proposal was for illustration purposes and engagement would be flexible and responsive to ensure appropriate & improved engagement.

The link between this structure and the RCN's developing organising model was noted.

The Board asked what success would look like. It was noted it is important to have a proactive process and that members are engaged at early stages of consultations and development of national policy. The Board also noted that there are members of the RCN who are keen to be involved but they often do not know how.

The Board voted on the proposal. The Board was unanimous in agreeing the implementation of the proposed model to improve member engagement and leadership around professional and policy agency.

Julie Lamberth left the meeting.

4. Arrangements for postponed reps conference 2022
Alison Manners, Professional Learning and Development Lead spoke to this item.

The Board were reminded of the decision taken by the Short-Life Working Group (SLWG) to postpone the 2021 reps conference, this was due to the workforce pressures and reps' ability to attend.

A one-day event in Spring 2022 is being planned, no exact date as yet but possibly last week of April 2022. The Group is currently looking at parallel plans for either an in-person or virtual event depending on government guidance. Options are being considered to minimise financial loss in the event of cancellation in relation to either format.

Discussion

The Board noted the arrangements and confirmed that the following Board members wish to remain on the SLWG: Dawn Marr, Sandra Milne, Peter Cartwright and Claire Lamza. These Board members were thanked for their continued participation in the group.

5. CNO
GE welcomed Alex McMahon, interim Chief Nursing Officer for Scotland to the meeting.

The CNO indicated he had been in post for 9 weeks and appreciated the opportunities to meet with RCN Scottish Board. He is meeting groups of staff where he can maintain visibility of the role and welcomes the opportunity to continue to meet with staff across all services. The CNO indicated he has had regular contact with the RCN including calls with the Director and recently attended the meeting with the Cabinet Secretary and the RCN.

He stated that he wanted to work well with the RCN and he hoped even difficult conversations could be positive, maintaining openness and transparency where possible. He would welcome the opportunity to meet with the Board again in the future.

The Board had a constructive discussion with the CNO and discussed a number of issues including:

- the current significant pressures on the nursing workforce and the issues of patient and staff safety and how it can be maintained during this current climate.
- staff support during the pandemic and beyond.

- the importance of full implementation of the safe staffing legislation.
- concerns around emotional and cultural safe space in relation to safe staffing, specific concern reports suggest there has been active discouragement by some senior staff on Datex reporting.
- staff retention, one concern being around future pension changes.
- student nurse numbers and midwifery numbers and the importance of sustainability of the workforce.
- support for newly registered nurses and the implications of the pandemic on the 'Flying start' programme.
- developments within mental health.
- the importance and development of nurse leadership.
- career progression within the NHS especially within Band 5 and the lack of current recognition or reward.
- the development of clinical academic careers.

Julie Lamberth joined and left the meeting during the conversation.

Julie Lamberth re-joined the meeting

GE thanked the CNO for joining the meeting and for the constructive discussion and looked forward to inviting the CNO to a future board meeting.

6. Education & Learning Development Update
Caroline Stevens, Professional Lead Learning & Development spoke to this item.

The Board were updated on the progress of the implementation of the RCN Education, Learning and Development Strategy.

The Board noted the implementation of the strategy supports the Education, Learning and Development offer for members across all membership categories, and provides the strategic framework to support the RCN in its aims to become a centre of excellence for education, learning and development.

Claire Lamza left the meeting

An Expert Reference Group will provide expertise across all work streams. The Board was asked to identify a Board Member to act as point of contact. This will facilitate connections and engagement with the ELD work, supporting country involvement, providing expertise and to keep the Board regularly updated.

The Board welcomed the update and agreed a Board member would be identified following the meeting.

7. Nursing Support Workers
Eileen McKenna, Associate Director spoke to this item on Health and Care Support Worker Development Programme: Scottish Government HCSW Commission for Band 4 Nursing.

The Board noted there are concerns regarding substitution of registered nurses, the RCN is monitoring this across NHS Boards and flagged the risk with the CNO's team, particularly replacing band 5 with band 4 roles. The CNO's team noted the RCN concern but assured that is not the policy position. Other concerns are HCSW staff in social care sector may move to the NHS for better pay terms & conditions and the current perceived lack of equity across career development pathways. It was noted SSSC are currently carrying out work around career progression which will be available shortly.

Discussion

Board members highlighted the risk of a Band 5 choosing to become Band 4 as there is minimal difference in salary compared to the extra responsibilities. It was noted there is also the risk on aspiration to develop band 4's into band 5 roles by becoming registered nurses due to lack of financial reward.

There are concerns regarding the responsibilities shared particularly amongst Band 4 staff. Some registered nursing staff have concerns about delegation of some tasks to Band 4s. The framework around delegation and accountability of the registered nurse is not sufficiently robust and the RCN have raised these points.

It was raised that in some areas there is good clarity regarding the extent of tasks that can be delegated to a Band 4 and the RCN need to learn from those areas.

The Board noted the risks and benefits outlined in the paper and supports the current position RCN Scotland are taking:

- RCN supports the aim to reduce variation and improve consistency in roles within AFC band 2 – 4 across NHS Scotland
- RCN supports the development of a skills framework and career development pathway for roles within AFC band 2 – 4.
- RCN supports additionality in the workforce but does not support the substitution of Registered Nurse roles in anyway within the workforce.

Hilary Nelson left the meeting

8. National Care Service

Eileen McKenna, Associate Director spoke to this item, presented paper and consultation response.

The Board noted member engagements which had taken place to inform the RCN's response this included sessions at RCN Scotland Board, Highland Branch Meeting and session with members at the Care Inspectorate.

Board members have had access to the full response to the Scottish Government consultation.

Discussion

A Board member noted that this will have a significant impact on the work of the RCN members across Scotland as it affects many services.

It is anticipated that the Board will need to set aside time to prioritise as this progresses. It was agreed this could be done as part of a development day.

The Board thanked the Associate Director for the paper.

The Board noted the response and agreed RCNS will continue to encourage members to continue to contribute their views, expertise and experiences to influence the development of these proposals and subsequent legislative process.

9. SenseMaker Update

Eileen McKenna, Associate Director spoke to this item and presented recent data which highlighted the responses from members over the last year.

The number of responses vary over the year but appear to match the waves of the pandemic. When pressures start to build the responses increase. The Board noted there are some boards with zero responses.

73% of responses were negative or very negative in their emotional tone. The most prominent tones being “Stressed/Worried/Anxious” followed by “Frustrated” and “Unappreciated”.

The most positive emotional tone was “Proud” followed by “Hopeful”. Majority of these responses were in the Jan-Mar quarter.

The analysis shows there were times where “feeling safe” was most important, but over course of year “doing job well” and “working as a team” also factored.

What guided members decisions was “what I felt to be the right thing to do”

Members main focus was “outcome of the patient” particularly relating to staffing which is overwhelming theme in responses.

Concerns were “personal wellbeing” and “having what I needed to do the job”. This again predominantly relates to staffing levels and feeling of emotional distress.

The main theme on what members missed was “Feeling I was respected by others”. These responses mainly related to the public, government and senior managers.

What helped members to cope was “feeling like I was doing a good job” and less towards feeling able to solve problem or issues. The majority felt they were not empowered to solve the issue at hand.

Majority of members focus was on their work rather than on their family or own wellbeing.

Most of the stories received are about being undervalued and exhaustion. The Board noted that some of these stories were used in media briefings and in the meeting with the Cabinet Secretary.

The Board noted an annual report to publicise the findings over the past 14 months will be produced. The licence for 2022 will be continue. Printed materials and key information for branches and reps are being produced. This includes posters for clinical areas and business cards with the QR code. Social media videos have been launched to promote Sensemaker to encourage members and others to share their stories.

Discussion

Although it was noted that the CNO had indicated that safe staffing was being implemented in principle it is clear from Sensemaker® that this is not the case on the ground. This shows the value of Sensemaker of getting further intelligence from members .

It was noted the stories are anonymous and consent is agreed on completion that we will use the information locally and nationally to highlight the experiences of nurses.

The Board agreed to connect with branches to encourage member engagement with Sensemaker. Assistance from local reps and the ERD team as well as the posters/business cards is hoped to increase engagement in areas with low or zero responses over the coming months. Regularly reporting, highlighting at every opportunity and social media will help emphasise Sensemaker. It will also be used in responses to Parliament and in evidence to Scottish Government Committees.

The Board asked how this information can be fed into NHS Boards and SWAG. It was noted staff experience surveys are positively skewed. It was proposed the Associate Director (EMcK) could be invited to the Scottish Partnership Forum to give presentation on Sensemaker.

The Board noted the findings and agreed on the publication of report highlighting the themes and actions RCNS has taken in due course.

10. Council Update

Geoff Earl, Council member, spoke to this item.

The Board noted the latest reports.

GE noted to the Board:

- The Carr and Governance reviews are ongoing and will report in due course.
- Following a decision at the AGM to re-join the International Council of Nursing (ICN) there is a Council task and finish group undertaking due diligence moving the work forward, this includes the processes and financial aspects of re-joining.

- The carryover of branch funding has been confirmed by Council and branches will be notified in their accounts in early 2022.

11. Trade Union Committee Report
The paper was noted.
12. Professional Nursing Committee
The papers were noted
13. Board Members' Reports
The reports were noted
14. Joint Reps Report
The paper was noted
15. Nursing Support Worker Committee Report
The paper was noted
16. Any Other Business
The Board were asked to note that depending on pay negotiations in the New Year an extra Board meeting may be called when required.

It was noted that it would be helpful to invite the new Student Committee member to the next Board meeting.

It was noted that some members are not receiving emails via Member Communication Centre (MCC). Board members were asked to pass on this information to Carol Harris who will highlight to Governance.

A Board member advised a number of members have enquired if travel allowance will be reviewed given the increases in fuel costs, particularly in remote and rural areas. It was noted this is national issue and will be discussed at Staff Council and STAC secretariat.

The Board was reminded the next Board development day is scheduled for 26 January 2022.

It was highlighted that notice periods for some staff are being extended. Board members were asked to contact the Senior Officer in the relevant patch as this is a contractual issue.

Julie Lamberth thanked the Council member, Vice-Chair and Chair of the TU Committee for their support with the Board meeting today.

Debby de Haus from KPMG was thanked for attending the meeting.

GE closed the meeting.