

## RCN Scotland Board

Minutes of the Royal College of Nursing Scotland Board, Open Session, held by video and teleconference on Thursday 10 December 2020 from 09.30am-2pm

### Present:

#### North Sector

Alistair Grant	Grampian
Peter Cartwright	Highland
Andy Notman	Islands

#### East Sector

#Jasmin Clark	Lothian
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#### West Sector

Aurelia (Peggy) Kungu	Dumfries & Galloway
Ann MacCrimmon	Greater Glasgow
Tom Wilson	Lanarkshire
+Julie Lamberth	Ayrshire & Arran

**Chair**  
**Vice-Chair**

#### Other Seats

Geoff Earl	Council
Mandy Kay	Temporary Seat

#### In attendance:

Theresa Fyffe	Director
#Eileen McKenna	Associate Director
Norman Provan	Associate Director
Luci Pollard	Board Administrator
Carol Harris	Communications and Public Affairs Manager
Sian Kiely	Knowledge and Research Manager
Alison Manners	Professional Learning & Development Lead
Susan Kirkman	Business Manager
Amy Dalrymple	Policy Manager

#### Apologies:

Theresa Connor	Professional Nursing Committee
Yvonne Smith	Borders
Martin MacGregor	Tayside
Graham Revie	Trade Union Committee

\*arrived after the start of the meeting

+left prior to the end of the meeting

#left for a period during the meeting

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed the Board to the Open session of the meeting.  
Martin MacGregor  
Yvonne Smith  
Graham Revie

Theresa Connor was also absent from the meeting.

**2. Minutes from the open session of the meeting held on 10 September 2020**

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

Action points noted.

**3. Board Elections Update & Board Chair election**

Luci Pollard spoke to this item. The Board were updated regarding the outcome of the elections, details of which had been previously circulated.

The Board noted the process for the election of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board.

Discussion

The Chair encouraged Board members to consider the role of Chair or Vice-Chair.

**4. Independent Health & Social Care Sector Strategy**

The Director spoke to this item.

Discussion

It was noted that this work is part of a wider transformation of the organisation and how it works. The Board noted the cultural shift that was required and the positive opportunities that will emerge for both the professional and trade union side of the organisation.

**5. Branch Mergers & Workplace Units**

Norman Provan spoke to this item. The Board noted that the merger of Borders and Lothian branches had taken place. The Board noted that workplace units were not currently used in Scotland and this was reflected across the UK.

The Board noted that a recent virtual branch meeting held by Lothian had 30 attendees with a good proportion of members coming from the independent sector.

### Discussion

The Board agreed that a sub-group should be set up to consider the issues raised in the paper and report back to Board with recommendations. It was agreed that the sub-group should include both Board members and other members. It was agreed that virtual meetings are popular and enable a greater number of members to be engaged. The positive aspects of the current branch structures should be valued whilst the opportunities of being more inclusive should be taken. It is important to ensure that the agendas of meetings should reflect the whole of the membership rather than just focus on NHS matters.

It was agreed that this would be actioned and further progress to ensure wider engagement will take place in the new year. The sub-group will also have support from a Senior officer and a Communications team member. Julie Lamberth and Peter Cartwright agreed to sit on the sub-group.

## **6. Scottish Parliament election campaign**

Niki Stark spoke to this item. She outlined the work that had been undertaken following agreement with the Board at its last meeting in September. The Board noted that the paper contained the full manifesto for the political parties and a shortened version will be developed for sharing more widely with members.

It was noted that a survey has been developed but has not yet gone out as there was concern regarding 'survey fatigue' as nursing staff have been asked to complete surveys by RCN and a number of other organisations.

The Director and Niki had met with health spokespeople. After consultation with a number of groups the following campaign title and strapline was proposed: Protect the future of nursing: stand up for safe and effective care. The Board noted the campaign image which had been selected by the working group. The campaign will be launched on 11 February 2021. The Board noted the political engagement planned: virtual round table discussions; hustings event in April; and guidance for branches to run their own hustings.

### Discussion

It was noted that it was beneficial to have specific asks and it was felt that where possible further specific asks could be included. The content regarding the pay campaign may need to be updated and the focus changed as the negotiations progress.

The Board agreed the content of the manifesto.

## 7. **Safe Staffing Update**

Eileen McKenna spoke to this item. She highlighted the risks around the implementation of the Act in relation to the appointment of a new CNO and the forthcoming parliamentary elections. The Board noted the issue of placements for students and the RCN position on the requirement for an increase in student numbers.

It was noted that the Director will write to the Cabinet Secretary regarding the implementation and briefings will be produced to share with MSPs and health spokespeople. The Cabinet Secretary had suggested that Chief Executives could be reminded of some of the requirements of the Act, but this has not happened as yet.

### Discussion

The Board noted the challenges of staff shortage and skill-mix and how to support care homes. It was felt that the pressures during the second wave of the pandemic is greater than during the first wave.

Winter pressures are increasing the difficulties. Discussions regarding reducing some of the pressures were being had at the Winter Preparedness Group.

Vacancies and sickness were adding to difficulties experienced by staff. The Board were asked to encourage members to Datex and escalate concerns when appropriate. This will help support Chief Executives when making decisions regarding reducing pressures. Raising and Escalations guidance was previously circulated and members are encouraged to use this.

The Board noted the update on Staffing for Safe and Effective Care Act implementation.

## 8. **Sensemaker**

Eileen McKenna spoke to this item. She updated the Board on the most recent input that has been received from members. By the end of November 23 stories had been shared across Scotland. More stories have been received subsequently. From these stories three themes have been identified: appeals to public (mask wearing; feelings of rejection when members of the public and colleagues do not follow guidelines); Teamwork has been strong and a source of support; Burnout – poor work-life balance. 44% of the stories were negative; only 4% were positive. 30% were neutral.

### Discussion

The Board noted the responses received from members to date and that members who had shared their stories had found the process helpful.

It was agreed that Sensemaker was providing very powerful and helpful information on the lived experiences of nursing staff. It was also agreed that it was good value for money.

The Board noted that this supported the work currently undertaken regarding safe staffing and will provide powerful support for the issues that are emerging and will continue to increase as the pandemic continues and subsequently.

An overview of the stories received so far will be included in a submission to the Scottish Parliament Public Audit Committee on leadership and workforce pressures.

*Jasmin Clark left meeting*

Board members agreed to promote Sensemaker to nursing staff (members and non-members) and contact Eileen McKenna with ideas for promotion. It has regularly been promoted on social media. The logo/link can be included on branch materials. It was agreed that a Board member would share their views on their experience of using Sensemaker. It was agreed that a presentation will be developed to share with members.

## **9. Exhibition Programme**

The Board noted the virtual exhibition The Many-Faced Myths of Nursing from November – March. The Board were asked to share and promote the online exhibition. Further details of the event will be available shortly.

### Discussion

The Board noted the update.

## **10. Care Home / Care at Home sector**

Amy Dalrymple spoke to this item. She gave an update on the work since the last meeting. The RCN sits on a number of groups: Pandemic Response in Adult Care Group; Clinical Professional Advisory Group and a group on Data in Care Homes. Issues raised included: visiting; vaccinations; social care support fund; the role of the nurse director;

*Jasmin Clark rejoined the meeting*

Governance and assurance framework is being looked at, and legal advice has also been sought regarding the role of the Nurse Director. There are concerns regarding the framework for accountability/responsibilities and the statutory responsibilities. The RCN has made a number of submissions regarding health and social care. Sensemaker will bring additional understanding to this work and the impact that changes can have on nursing staff.

### Discussion

The Board noted the update.

## 11. West of Scotland Office

Norman Provan spoke to this item. He reminded the Board of the background: RCN must leave the current office by the end of March 2021. Staff have been working from home since the beginning of the pandemic. Staff have confirmed their preferred working options and this will be confirmed with them in writing before Christmas. A new office hub will be identified, and visits to options will be undertaken in January as visits are not possible with the current tier restrictions. The dilapidations have been agreed with the owner of the current office space. The RCN will arrange for the removal of its furniture/equipment etc. It was hoped that offices may be able to reopen in spring, depending on government guidance. The Board noted the update.

### Discussion

The Board noted the new ways of working and the positive attitude of the staff.

## 12. Council Update

Geoff Earl spoke to this item. The Board noted the paper. The membership review had been undertaken. There had been a recent GM where a number of issues had been raised which will be added to the governance review. The presidential elections will be restarted and the current president can remain in role for 6 additional months to allow for the process to be undertaken.

*Julie Lamberth left the meeting.*

### Discussion

It was noted that there is some disquiet on social media regarding some Council decisions. It was also noted that Nurses United is not banned, but those with official roles within NU cannot hold elected roles within the RCN. Concerns had been raised regarding Dame Donna's non-executive role, which may be discussed further at Council. The Council member assured Board members that robust debates were had a Council meeting in order to reach agreement on decisions.

Concern was raised regarding how defensive Council appears to be on social media. It was noted that it was important to ensure that messaging is clear and mindful of how messages might be heard.

Council had noted that some members dislike criticism and are inexperienced in responding to conflict, and feel personally attacked when their positions are questioned. It was felt that ensuring elected members have better understanding of dissent and how to respond appropriately should be addressed. Training regarding this issue is under consideration. The Council member agreed to pass comments to Council.

**13. Trade Union Committee**

The paper was noted.

**14. Professional Nursing Committee**

The Board noted the paper.

**15 Student Committee**

The Board noted the paper.

**16. Board members' Reports**

The Board noted the reports.

It was noted that Highland has a non-functioning branch. The two branch officials have not responded to email or phone enquiries. The AGM in October was cancelled when the branch officials did not join the meeting. The Associate Director for ERD will pursue this issue.

**17. Any Other Business**

SPF seat

This will be available from the end of the year due to Alistair Grant leaving the position. Jasmin Clark agreed to discuss with Norman Provan the time commitment required. A temporary appointment could be made, and a final decision will be made at the next Board meeting in February 2021.

Board Development Session

The new Board members will be attending the development session and the Board were asked for their views on how this meeting should be undertaken. It was felt that an overview of the Board's priorities would be helpful for the new Board members. A Q&A session should also be undertaken; staff groups and responsibilities should be outlined. Current Board members will also have an opportunity to share their experiences. The Board agreed the following key priorities:

- Safe staffing
- Pay
- Care home sector
- BAME support in Scotland
- Member wellbeing
- NSWs
- Reps career development
- Election manifesto
- Membership recruitment
- Workforce service pressures

Board members will be provided with a briefing for the priorities and share with the relevant members.

#### Welsh Reps proposal

It was noted that the Wales Board would send vouchers to reps and others as a 'thank you'. It was suggested that WoW points can be awarded to relevant members which can be done virtually. The Board agreed that a 'thank you' should be given to relevant members. It was felt that the issue of equality across the Countries was important and Council should be aware. Decisions regarding this should be made by the Boards. It was noted that the monies would need to be spent in 2020. It was agreed that WoW vouchers would be used.

It was agreed that the following members should receive a virtual thank you: Reps (only one per person regardless of number of roles held); SIOs; Branch executives. It was agreed that the Board should not receive vouchers unless they hold a relevant role.

A letter will go from the Chair to the relevant members.

#### Oversight and Scrutiny Committee

A paper went to the last Council meeting and it had been agreed that the OSC will be stood down and the work will be undertaken by PNC. Ann MacCrimmon was thanked for her work on OSC.

The Chair thanked the Board and staff for their work.

**End of Open Session of the Board meeting.**