

RCN Wales Board

Minutes of the open meeting held on 11 September 2020

'commencing at 09:00

The meeting was held via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Denise Llewellyn, MBE, FRCN	RCN Wales Board Chair / Member of the RCN Professional Nursing Committee
Alison Magor	Board member
Ann Taylor Griffiths	Board member
Billy Nichols	Board member
Jackie Davies	Member of the Trade Union Committee – <i>joined at 13:30 and left at 14:00</i>
Prof Dame June Clark, DBE, FRCN	Board member
Moira Davies	Board member
Nicola Milligan	Board member
Sandra Robinson-Clark	Board member – <i>left at 11:30</i>
Tristan Griffin	Board member
In attendance:	
Helen Whyley	Director, RCN Wales
Nicky Hughes	Associate Director of Nursing Employment Relations – <i>left at 13:15</i>
Diane Powles	Associate Director of Nursing Policy and Professional Practice
Helen Carlyon	Finance & Business Continuity Manager
Katie Branch	Complaints, Quality and Administration Services Manager
Lisa Turnbull	Policy and Public Affairs Adviser
Jayne Taylor	EA to Director, RCN Wales
Lee Anderson	Secretarial Support
Nichola Ashby	RCN UK Head of Professional Learning and Development – <i>for item 4.4</i>
Jane Carroll	Senior Officer – <i>for item 4.6</i>

Observers

Alison James-Herbert

Welsh Representative on Nursing Support
Worker Committee

Sarah Williamson

Policy, Parliamentary & Public Affairs
Officer

Apologies:

Prof Donna Mead, OBE, CSt.J, FRCN

Board member

Neil Evans

Board member

Richard Jones, MBE

Council member for Wales / Vice Chair of
RCN Wales Board

1.1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Board Chair welcomed everyone to the Open session.

The Board noted that Board members, Moira Davies and Billy Nichols would stand down from the RCN Wales Board on 31 December 2020 following many years of continued and dedicated service. The Board expressed its thanks to them for their outstanding commitment and hard work on behalf of the RCN and members in Wales.

Apologies had been received from Board members, Donna Mead, Neil Evans and Richard Jones.

1.2 Declaration of Interests

The Board Chair asked Board members to declare any possible interests with any items on the agenda.

No further declarations were made.

2.1 Minutes and actions from the previous meeting

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 7 February 2020 had been circulated and were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

2.2 Review of Action Sheet

All actions were either noted as completed or an update provided on the action sheet.

2.3 Matters Arising

COVID-19 Stakeholder Advisory Group

The Board was informed that the Director had met with the Minister for Health and Social Services on 29 June 2020 and suggested that he establish a COVID-19 Stakeholder Advisory Group and had received a favourable response. The Director followed this up in a letter on 4 August 2020 and will raise it again at their next meeting. The Board will be updated.

ACTION 41: The Board to be updated as to the establishment of a Ministerial COVID-19 Stakeholder Advisory Group.

There were no further matters arising.

3. OPERATIONAL UPDATES

3.1 RCN Wales Board Chair's Report

A report had been received and was noted.

The Board Chair drew the Board's attention to the Board meeting dates for 2020 and 2021 which were outlined in the paper.

3.2 Director, RCN Wales Report

A report had been received and was noted.

The Director drew the Board's attention to the following meetings:

- ***The Shadow Social Partnership Council meetings on 14 May and 11 and 25 June 2020***

The Board was reminded that the Shadow Social Partnership Council had been set up following the First Minister's pledge in July 2019 to adopt a social partnership approach to engagement with trades unions, employers and organisations. The Director stressed that the RCN has welcomed the opportunity to have a seat on this Council, which had previously only been attended by members from the Trade Union Congress (TUC) Wales and TUC affiliated unions.

- ***The quarterly meetings with the Minister for Health and Social Services and the Director General, NHS Wales***

The Board was reminded that in 2019 the Welsh Government had asked Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) and Social Care Wales (SCW) to produce an integrated health and social care workforce strategy. RCN Wales had been engaged in this process in 2019 but had been disappointed with the first draft of the strategy.

The Board noted that the final strategy has still not been signed off by the Minister for Health and Social Services and that the Director had raised concerns regarding this with the Minister for Health and Social Services and the Director General, NHS Wales.

The Director had also raised concerns relating to the creation of the NHS Executive and has been advised that the Welsh Government has not yet determined its composition.

– ***The Social Care Forum – 10 September 2020***

The Director informed the Board that Julie Morgan MS, Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services had invited RCN Wales to be a member of the Social Care Forum which has been established as a tripartite social partnership group with trade unions, employers and the Welsh Government to work together to influence national priorities and policy regarding fair work in the social care sector in Wales.

The Board noted that the RCN Wales manifesto “Vote for Nursing” and the Nursing Workforce in Wales 2020 report, would provide an overview of the workforce in health and social care and would be published in support of the 2020 Senedd Elections campaign.

The Board requested advanced copies be sent to Board members of the RCN Wales manifesto and Nursing Workforce in Wales report.

ACTION 42: Copies of the RCN Wales manifesto “Vote for Nursing” and the Nursing Workforce in Wales 2020 report to be sent to Board members.

– ***Meetings with Chief Executives of Health Boards and Deans of Schools***

The Board noted that the focus of these discussions was on the availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and testing for COVID-19; student placements during COVID-19 and understanding the care home model.

The Board was informed that the Director had called for a stakeholder group to be set up for COVID-19 in the same format as the Ministerial Brexit group.

- ***Special Board briefings on COVID-19 and the RCN NHS UK Pay campaign***

The Board requested an update on the availability and supply of PPE.

The Associate Director of Nursing (Employment Relations) informed the Board that the Technical briefings had been stood down and agreed to raise this at the NHS Wales Partnership Forum Business Committee and call for the reinstatement of the technical briefings when necessary.

ACTION 43: The Associate Director of Nursing (Employment Relations) to query the availability and supply of PPE in preparation of a possible second wave of COVID-19 at the NHS Wales Partnership Forum Business Committee and call for the reinstatement of the technical briefings when necessary.

3.3 COVID-19 Update Report

A report had been circulated and was noted.

The Director highlighted the following:

- RCN Wales headquarters, Ty Maeth is now open Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 17:00 and staff are able to choose if they work from the office or from home.
- Services to members, including the library, continue to be provided virtually.
- The Employment Relations team is holding regular meetings with representatives and branches to provide support for members.

The Associate Director of Nursing (Employment Relations) advised the Board that NHS staff, who are shielding but cannot be found a non-patient facing role, are placed onto medical suspension.

The Board noted that the Associate Director (Employment Relations) had asked the Welsh Government and NHS employers to arrange for Public Health Wales to provide a technical briefing regarding the updated COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control guidance, to provide assurance on the guidance and explain the term 'COVID secure environment'. In addition, questions had been raised in NHS Wales Partnership Forum Business Committee regarding the long-term impact of COVID-19 and its impact on sick pay.

The Director informed the Board that RCN Wales is working with Welsh Government officials regarding the statutory sick pay top up fund to ensure that staff, who are suffering ill-health due to COVID-19, receive additional monies.

Concern was raised that some NHS staff, who have been waiting for scheduled surgery from before lockdown, are now on half pay and still awaiting surgery. The Associate Director of Nursing (Employment Relations) informed the Board that this is answered within the Frequently Asked Questions, stating that managers are permitted to use their discretion in individual cases.

The Board Chair commended the Employment Relations team on rising to the challenge of meeting a significant increase in member contacts and their agility to increase Duty Officer hours during the pandemic and thanked the staff for all their hard work.

The Board Chair requested that Board COVID-19 briefing meetings are held with the Board every 6 - 8 weeks.

ACTION 44: Board COVID-19 briefing meetings to be scheduled up to December 2020.

3.4 Policy, Parliamentary & Public Affairs Impact Report

A report had been received and was noted.

The Policy & Public Affairs Adviser gave a verbal update as follows:

- The Social Partnership Bill will come forward in the next parliamentary term.
- RCN Wales will draw attention to issues such as sex education, emotional resilience, cookery, CPR, physical activity and the contribution of nursing and school nursing within its response to the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill.
- The Draft Tertiary Education and Research Bill for Wales is out for consultation until December 2020. The Bill contains a proposal for a Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER) for Wales. The Bill will not go through this parliamentary term; however, RCN Wales will respond to the White Paper with issues of relevance to nursing research.
- The Prison Nursing Group met on 9 September 2020 and considered the impact of COVID-19 on prison nursing. Prison Nursing will be the theme for the Cross Party Group on Nursing on 5 October 2020.
- Social Care policy work at both UK and Wales levels commenced earlier this year. A member engagement event is yet to be scheduled.

- The Internal Market Bill 2019 – 2021 is causing great concern for Wales regarding its impact on the funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund that will have direct and indirect impact on health and social care.
- Recent polling has shown growing support for Welsh independence and the implications of this in respect of Brexit will be monitored.

Decision: The Board requested and agreed to hold further member engagement events ahead of the Senedd elections to include updates on the Internal Market Bill and the Shared Prosperity Fund.

ACTION 45: Member Engagement events to be scheduled ahead of the 2020 Senedd elections to include updates on the Internal Market Bill and the Shared Prosperity Fund.

3.5 Scholarship Funds Fundraising Task & Finish Group

The Board noted that this agenda item had been discussed in Closed session as it contained sensitive financial information. The Board requested an options paper on the future of the group be submitted to the February 2021 Board for consideration. This action is enclosed within the Closed session minutes.

3.6 RCN Wales Nurse of the Year and Alumni Network Update

A paper had been circulated and was noted.

The Board noted that the 2020 RCN Wales Nurse of the Year Awards had been cancelled and that all key stakeholders and sponsors had been informed. The Board was informed that those that had agreed to sponsor the event in 2020 had been given the option to sponsor the event in 2021 and a number of expressions of interest had already been received. The Board was urged to direct any potential sponsors to the RCN Wales website where further information is available.

The Board noted that the date for the 2021 RCN Wales Nurse of the Year Awards ceremony had been confirmed as 10 November 2021 and the event would be held in City Hall, Cardiff.

The Board noted that work with the RCN Wales Nurse of the Year Alumni network is continuing and will be developed further with the appointment of the Education and Lifelong Learning Adviser.

The Board Chair commended the way in which the Alumni network harnesses and builds on the expertise of the Nurse of the Year winners and is a real success story for RCN Wales.

A suggestion was made to include the RCN Fellows in Wales in the Alumni work and the Board was assured that, going forward, this would be done where appropriate.

The Board Chair urged Board members to consider nominating members in Wales for an RCN Fellowship award.

4. STRATEGIC UPDATES

4.1 RCN Wales Campaign for 2020 Welsh Parliament Elections

A report had been received and was noted.

The Board had discussed this report previously at a special Board briefing meeting on 26 August 2020.

The Policy, Parliamentary and Public Affairs Manager gave a further verbal update as follows:

- The website for the RCN Wales campaign for 2020 Welsh Parliamentary elections is being developed and the manifesto is being finalised ahead of the launch on 23 September 2020.
- A membership survey is being run in order to gain an understanding of the key policy and priority areas of RCN members. A report will be drafted from the survey but for the report to be credible, a response rate in excess of 1,000 responses is required. The Board noted that the response rate to date had been poor and Board members were urged to encourage members to contribute to this survey.
- Member videos, cartoon posters and animations are being prepared and online discussion events with members and politicians are being planned.
- RCN Wales attended the Conservative party conference and will join the online events for Plaid and Labour.
- The Board noted that for the remainder to the year, the focus of the campaign will be on influencing politicians and that in 2021, the focus will shift to engaging with members.
- Traditional hustings with all parties represented will be held in the New Year.

The RCN Wales Board Election Campaign Steering Group will hold its first meeting in October and the Board was grateful to Tristan Griffin for volunteering to sit on this group.

Some difficulties were reported in members not being able to register to join online RCN Congress events and branch AGMs. The Director reminded the Board that RCN UK Events team managed this process but assured the Board that this concern would be raised with them.

ACTION 46: RCN UK Events Team to be made aware of the Board's concerns with regards to the online registration system for Congress 2021.

4.2 NHS Wales Partnership Forum Update

A report had been received and was noted.

The Associate Director of Nursing (Employment Relations) gave a verbal update as follows:

- The NHS Staff survey will be circulated in the autumn.
- The 2016 Core Principles formed the basis of all policies and now includes compassionate leadership. The pandemic has highlighted issues where individual managers have not shown compassion in the workplace. Further work is ongoing through NHS Wales Partnership Forum to address this.
- The Managing Attendance at Work policy is being monitored by the Data Monitoring group. When the policy was implemented, a schedule of training for all staff was put in place in partnership with trade unions. Unfortunately, training has ceased due to COVID-19 and currently only 52% of staff have been trained.
- The Special Leave policy and Recruitment and Retention Payment protocol have been reviewed with minimal changes.
- The Secondment policy will be discussed at the next NHS Wales Partnership Forum meeting for review in light of staff redeployment due to COVID-19.

GP Practices Announcement

The Board was informed that on 7 September 2020, the Minister for Health and Social Services had announced that all doctors, nurses and staff working within GP practices would receive a 2.8% pay uplift. It was noted that this should come

into force no later than October 2020 and will be back dated to 1 April 2020 and that GP practices will administer the pay award to staff.

The Board welcomed this announcement but was mindful that the RCN had called for a 12.5% pay award for nurses.

Age Discrimination in the NHS Pension Scheme

The Board was informed that recent legal cases had ruled that the way in which pension scheme members were moved to the new 2015 Pensions Scheme was discriminatory on grounds of age. This discriminatory effect now must be removed and will mean pension scheme members having to choose how they want their pension to be calculated for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022.

The Board was reminded that the UK Government had held a public consultation to ask when scheme members should be asked to make this choice with the following options:

- 1) "Immediate choice" – in the 12-24 months from April 2022
- 2) "Deferred choice" – when the scheme member retires.

The Board noted that the RCN had held several webinars in early September to gather members' views that will be used to inform the RCN response.

4.3 RCN Wales Nursing Education Policy Position Statement

A report had been received and was noted. The Board noted that there was an error in the paper in that the recommendations should have asked the Board to approve the position statement and not to comment on it.

The Policy, Parliamentary and Public Affairs Manager thanked the Board for contributing to the creation of the draft RCN Wales Nursing Education Policy Position statement and commended it to the Board for approval.

The Board noted that the statement would be used in RCN Wales political influencing work.

The Director emphasised that this is a policy position paper and not an education strategy and reminded the Board that the RCN Group Education strategy would be finalised shortly.

Decision: The Board agreed the Education Policy Position Statement as outlined in appendix A of the report.

4.4 RCN Group Education, Learning and Development (ELD) Strategy – to consider.

The Board received a presentation from Nichola Ashby, RCN UK Head of Professional Learning and Development on the consultation of the first Education, Learning and Development (ELD) Strategy.

The Board discussed the ELD Strategy and made the following comments:

- It was disappointing that Board members were not provided with the pre-reading for the consultation until 7 September as the consultation would close on 30 September 2020.
- The strategy supports all aspects of nursing and is applicable to every grade and will enable the RCN to speak with one voice and continue to support education and learning development.
- RCN Wales engages with this development for example, the RCN Wales Nurse of the Year Alumni network and the recent engagement event included stakeholders from Higher Education Institutions and the Health Education and Improvement Wales and service providers.
- Some concern was expressed that the use of rainbow colours within the logo could dilute the message of equality for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans community.

The Board noted that Directors of Nursing in Wales have been engaged in the consultation process.

The Board was thanked for its feedback to this consultation.

The Board thanked Nichola Ashby for giving this presentation.

4.5 RCN Wales Independent Sector Working Group Update

A report had been received and was noted.

The Board noted that the terms of reference and the key objectives of the group had been identified.

The Board expressed disappointment that the RCN Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database does not enable the RCN to further breakdown independent sector member category to identify those members that work in the social care sector.

The Director reminded the Board that it had agreed a constraint within the 2020 RCN Wales elections for two members to be elected to the Board from the independent sector.

The Board also noted that RCN Wales had recently advertised the post of Independent Sector and Community Adviser in the Professional Practice Team.

4.6 RCN UK Independent Health and Social Care Sectors Strategy

The Board received a presentation from Jane Carroll, Senior Officer on the RCN UK Independent Health and Social Care Sectors strategy.

The Board discussed the strategy and made the following comments:

- The RCN has some good estimates of how many nurses and nursing staff working in the social care and independent sectors in Wales.
- The Board commented that the strategic framework is a positive start but queried how will it make a difference to members working in the independent sector and how will it be evaluated.

The Board agreed to the suggestion that an independent sector member should be sought to sit on the Wales Safe and Effective Care campaign project group.

The Board thanked Jane Carroll for giving this presentation.

ACTION 47: To seek an independent sector member to sit on the Wales Safe and Effective Care Campaign Project Group.

4.7 RCN Congress 16 – 20 May 2021

The Director advised the Board that applications for voting places at Congress 2021 were open and that those members that had been offered voting places in 2020 would be given priority for 2021. The Board noted that further communications on this would be circulated to branches shortly and that any queries should be directed to the Complaints, Quality and Administration Services Manager.

The Board noted that the deadline to register to attend Congress in 2021 is 30 October 2020 and that those who had registered to attend on behalf of their branch in 2020 are still required to register to attend in 2021.

The Board was informed that the agenda for Congress in 2021 was being drafted by the Agenda Committee.

The Board did not discuss the submission of agenda items for 2021 and noted that the deadline for the submissions had not yet been announced.

4.8 RCN Wales Succession Planning Committee Report

A report had been received and was noted.

The Board Chair gave a verbal update as follows:

- The Succession Planning Committee had met on 4 June and 1 September 2020.
- The vacant seats created by the resignations of Kate Parry and Gareth Howells had been included in the RCN Wales Board elections for 2020.
- The Board Chair had responded to queries raised during the meeting in relation to the constraints set for the elections.
- The Governance Support Committee was to meet on 11 September 2020 to agree the process for the Board Chair elections. The Board noted that an action to update the Board on the election of the Board Chair had been included in the Closed minutes.
- The Board Chair had written to the Chair of Council expressing concern that the voice of Wales would be missing from Council due to the ill health of the Council member for Wales.

4.9 RCN Prince of Wales Nursing Cadet Scheme Update

A report had been received and was noted.

The Associate Director of Nursing, Policy and Professional Practice gave a verbal update as follows:

- The scheme has been very successful and fits in with the work on the Nursing Now campaign.
- One nursing cadet has been accepted as an HCSW to support one of the Welsh Nightingale Hospitals during COVID -19.
- One cadet has been accepted to undertake Mental Health nursing in Wales.

- The scheme is being rolled out in England and the next phase will be to roll it out in Northern Ireland.
- The cadets will have a guaranteed interview in Wales provided they meet the entry criteria.

5. ITEMS TO NOTE

5.1 RCN Foundation Wales Committee Update

The Board Chair informed the Board that in excess of £950,000 had been distributed from the RCN Foundation's COVID-19 Support Fund to individuals during the pandemic.

The Board was advised that the autumn round of RCN Foundation grants is now open and urged Board members to review the grants available on the RCN Foundation website.

5.2 Report from RCN Council meetings April to July 2020

A report had been received and was noted.

The Director highlighted the following:

- Council had held a special meeting on 8 June to discuss the recommendations for the Independent Governance Review, to which the Board had submitted comments.
- Council had held meetings on 22 June and 3 July 2020 to discuss the UK NHS pay round for 2021/22. The Trade Union Committee had submitted recommendations for Council to agree a way forward.
- Aaron Clift, the Director of Transformation, Innovation and Digital had presented the proposed RCN Transformation Strategy and the new student app.

5.3 Report from Trade Union Committee meetings

A tabled report had been circulated and was noted.

The Welsh Representative on the Trade Union Committee informed the Board that the Scottish Government may be seeking to negotiate pay directly with the unions.

The Director informed the Board that the RCN is waiting for the UK Government to decide on the 2021 NHS pay round process for England and whether that will be via the Pay Review Body (PRB) process.

The Director reminded the Board that the RCN's focus for the pay campaign is on "Fair Pay for Nursing" and urged Board members to promote the campaign through social media.

The Director stressed that the RCN had used a sound member decision making process to arrive at the 12.5% figure, based on 42,000 member responses to the survey as well as economic data analysis and the views of members on elected or appointed boards and committees.

5.4 Report from the Professional Nursing Committee (PNC) held on 5 May, 2 July and 6 July

A report had been received and was noted.

The Board Chair in her capacity as PNC member for Wales gave a verbal update as follows:

- An audit of RCN forums will take place in September 2020.
- Nicole Valentinuzzi, Director of Communications, attended the meeting in May to discuss how to communicate key messages to members more effectively.
- The Council Congress 2019 report to members will be presented at the webinar on 15 September 2020.

5.5 Report from the Students Committee held on 17 March, 20 March, 7 May, 9 and 15 July 2020

A report had been received and was noted.

5.6 Report from the Nursing Support Workers Committee held on 6 May and 19 July

A report had been received and was noted.

Alison James-Herbert, Welsh Representative on Nursing Support Worker Committee was invited to speak and gave a verbal update as follows:

- There is a need to promote the role of Nursing Support Workers (NSWs) and for them to be seen as a valuable part of nursing workforce. Some RCN marketing could be more inclusive towards NSWs.
- It is not clear to NSWs that they can join the RCN.
- There are plans to promote the role of NSWs in November 2020 and the UK Marketing Team will provide posters for that initiative.

5.7 Report from RCN UK Reps Committees

A report had been received and was noted.

The Board noted that the Chair of the UK Safety Representatives Committee had stood down.

5.8 Correspondence

A report had been received and was noted.

5.9 Redevelopment Project Adjacent to Ty Maeth

A report had been received and was noted.

The Director explained that RCN Estates had been unable to reach agreement with the developers to allow the wall between Ty Maeth and the adjacent site to be removed and replaced.

The Board noted that the development work was still ongoing, and the developer would only need access to Ty Maeth to make alterations to the drains, for which they have permission, and which has been agreed will only be undertaken at weekends.

The Board noted that there had been some damage to Ty Maeth's boundary wall and that legal advisers had been made aware and negotiations are ongoing with the developers to undertake the repair.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 6.1** There were no further items of business and the Chair closed the meeting at 14:00.

The Board noted the dates for the next Board meeting as follows:

Board Development Session 11 December 2020 10:00 – 15:00

Board Closed Session 18 February 2021 09:30 – 17:00

Board Development Session 18 February 2021 17:30 – 19:00

Board Open Session: 19 February 2021 09:00 – 12:30

ET: Helen Whyley, Director, RCN Wales

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