

Key messages from the RCN Northern Ireland Board meeting

22 May 2023

- 1 In her opening remarks, the Board Chair noted the resignation of Kelly McConkey from Board membership following her decision to resign her position as a member of RCN Council. A process for electing a member from Northern Ireland to RCN Council will begin shortly. The Board Chair also welcomed Ruth Thompson (Assistant Director, Nursing Policy and Practice) to her first Board meeting in her new role.
- 2 The Board Chair complimented members for a highly successful Northern Ireland presence at RCN Congress in Brighton the previous week. This included members from Northern Ireland taking to the stage in support of the Board Vice Chair as he read a collective statement condemning the impact of the political and financial crisis on nursing and patient care in Northern Ireland. It also involved a spontaneous round of applause for RCN members who were taking part in a demonstration at Stormont in relation to the same issues, as well as highly effective and articulate contributions to the various Congress debates and other activities during the week.
- 3 The Board received a briefing on the current position regarding pay in Northern Ireland, taking account of the Department of Health announcement whilst the meeting was in progress that no Agenda for Change pay award could be formulated for 2023-2024 because of the budgetary crisis in Northern Ireland. It was noted that a further meeting between the health trade unions (including the RCN) and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland was scheduled for Thursday 25 May 2023.
- 4 The Board received, noted and approved a series of governance assurance reports. These comprised the performance highlight report for the first quarter of 2023, an updated risk register, a report on the delivery of the Board's operational plan during the first quarter of 2023, and a performance management report for the same period. Matters for clarification were raised by Board members and addressed.
- 5 The Board received a briefing on the various public inquiries in relation to health care issues currently taking place in Northern Ireland. These comprise allegations of the abuse of patients at Muckamore Abbey Hospital, Southern Health and Social Care Trust urology services, neurology services in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, proceedings related to hyponatraemia, and the UK Covid-19 public inquiry.
- 6 The Director provided a further brief verbal update to Board members on the implementation of the recommendations of the independent [Carr Review of the culture of the RCN](#) and the [independent governance review](#) of the RCN.
- 7 The Board received, noted and approved the RCN Northern Ireland branch operational plans for 2023. Matters for clarification were raised and addressed.
- 8 Board members received and discussed a detailed presentation on a campaign for the recruitment of RCN accredited representatives in Northern Ireland.

- 9 It was reported to the Board that the Assistant Director, Employment Relations and Member Services would be presenting oral evidence to the House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee on Wednesday 24 May 2023, further to a recent written submission made by the RCN to the committee's inquiry into the funding and delivery of public services in Northern Ireland.
- 10 A verbal update was provided on the recent RCN UK Joint Reps conference.
- 11 The Board received a further update on nursing in the independent sector and the position of nurses working in primary care. The Board received and noted a paper on the introduction of the Prince of Wales Cadet Scheme in Northern Ireland.
- 12 The Board received and noted various written reports on the work of RCN Council, the RCN Trade Union Committee, the RCN UK Professional Nursing Committee, the RCN UK Nursing Support Workers Committee and the RCN UK Student Committee. The Board welcomed RCN accredited representatives Amanda Smith and Francis Lavery for the presentation of verbal reports on the work of the RCN UK Stewards Committee and the RCN UK Learning Representatives Committee respectively.
- 13 The Board noted business reports from the Director and the Board Chair.
- 14 The next meeting of the Board will take place on Monday 18 September 2023.