

RCN Wales Board

Minutes of the open meeting held on 17 February 2023
commencing at 09.30

The meeting was held in the RCN Wales Board headquarters, Ty Maeth, Cardiff
and via Teams

| Present | Position |
|---------------------------|---|
| Steve Watson | Vice Chair / Council member for Wales (Chair) |
| Dr Carolyn Middleton, MBE | Welsh member on Professional Nursing Committee – via Teams |
| Alison Magor | Board member |
| Anne Stevenson | Board member |
| Catherine Jones | Board member |
| Euan Hails | Board member – <i>via Teams</i> |
| Gaynor Jones | Board member |
| Kokila Swamynathan | Board member – <i>left at 12 noon</i> |
| Lynne Puckett | Board member – <i>via Teams joined after 10:30</i> |
| Mark Crothers | Board member |
| Nicola Milligan | Board member |
| Richard Hughes | Board member |
| Susan Williams | Board member |
| | |
| Apologies | |
| Jacquelin Davies | Chair, RCN Wales Board / Welsh member on the Trade Union Committee |
| Neil Thomas | Board member |
| | |
| In attendance: | |
| Helen Whyley | Director, RCN Wales |
| Nicky Hughes | Associate Director of Nursing (Employment Relations) |
| Sandy Harding | Associate Director of Nursing (Professional Practice) |
| Helen Carlyon | Finance & Business Continuity Manager |
| Alison Goodfield | Operational Manager |
| Katie Branch | Complaints, Quality & Administration Services Manager |
| Sarah Williamson | Policy, Parliamentary & Public Affairs Officer |
| Jayne Taylor | Executive Assistant to the Director, RCN Wales |

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from the Board Chair and the meeting was chaired in her absence by the Vice Chair.

The Vice Chair welcomed everyone to the Open session.

The Board expressed its gratitude to Board member, Carolyn Middleton, for giving a presentation on the Band 4 (Nursing) scoping project at the Board development session on 16 February 2023.

1.2. Declaration of Interests

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

Board member, Carolyn Middleton, declared her interest in the Band 4 (Nursing) scoping project being undertaken by the Office of the Chief Nurse.

No further declarations were made.

2. MINUTES AND ACTIONS

2.1 Minutes from the previous meeting

Minutes of the Board meeting held on 16 September 2022 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 updated on the action sheet.

2.3 Matters Arising

Learning Disability Nurse (LDN) Training

The Board was informed that the Director had written to Alex Howells, Chief Executive of Health Education & Improvement Wales (HEIW) to express concern that a Specialist Practitioner Qualification (SPQ) for Learning Disability Nurses (LDN) may not be commissioned. A response had been received which indicated that HEIW would be willing to work with RCN Wales to ensure that the recruitment and retention of LD nurses is addressed.

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 Vice Chair took the Board through the paper and highlighted that the date for the Board induction had been incorrectly recorded as 16 March but would take place on 18 April 2023 in RCN Wales headquarters, Ty Maeth, Cardiff.

The Board noted that dates were yet to be set for media training for Board members.

The Vice Chair sought volunteers to fill the vacancies on the various subcommittees and sub-groups of the Board as set out in Appendix 1 and the following Board members volunteered:

- RCN Wales Succession Planning Committee – Anne Stevenson, Richard Hughes
- Wales Board Pay Scrutiny & Decision-Making Sub Committee – Mark Crothers, Susan Williams
- Trustees of the Hettie C Hopkins Care of the Elderly Nursing Scholarship – Carolyn Middleton
- Trustees of the Alun Islwyn Giles Nursing Scholarship – Gaynor Jones
- The Wales Safe and Effective Care Programme Board – Richard Hughes, Mark Crothers, Cath Jones
- Wales Independent & Social Care Strategy Steering Group – Mark Crothers, Kolila Swamynathan
- RCN Wales Nurse of the Year Reference Group – Gaynor Jones, Euan Hails, Nicola Milligan
- The Wales Board Campaign Sub-group – no volunteer identified
- Review of the RCN Wales Board Risk Register – Steve Watson
- Review of the RCN Wales Operational Plan – Richard Hughes

The Board agreed to combine the RCN Wales Scholarship Fundraising Group and RCN Wales Scholarship Fundraising Working Group and open it up to external members including Owain Jones and Denise Llewellyn. The Board was grateful to Kokila Swamynathan for volunteering to sit on this group.

3.2 Director, RCN Wales Report

A report had been received and was noted.

The Director took the Board through the report and highlighted the following:

- It is hoped that the newly elected RCN President, Sheilabye Sobrany will visit and the Wales Board in June. The Board was reminded that a visit had been planned for the previous RCN President, Dr Denise Chaffer, to visit Wales but that the trip had been cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Welsh member, Linda Bailey, has been elected as Vice Chair of Congress and has a seat on the Agenda Committee. The Board was pleased to note that Linda will be Vice Chair when RCN Congress is held in Wales in 2024.
- On 29 November an Extraordinary General meeting was held to discuss the Carr report which had been commissioned to look at the RCN's culture and behaviour and work is ongoing with regard to the report's recommendations. The Director expressed her gratitude to the previous Board Chair and Council member for Wales, Richard Jones for his work on Council and the Wales Board.
- Several meetings with the Chief Nursing Officer for Wales were held and a constructive, open and robust relationship has been developed.
- The Director attends meetings of the Executive Directors of Nursing Peer group and the Welsh member on the Professional Nursing Committee also attends bimonthly. It is hoped that the RCN Director of Nursing, Nicola Ranger, will also attend a meeting later in the year.
- Hannah Blythan, MS, Deputy Minister for Social Partnership is a member of the Social Partnership Council (SPC) which is chaired by the First Minister. The Director has shared with her the RCN's position on the Social Partnership Bill. The Director has also made representations to her and the Welsh Government calling for the pool of potential nominees for the position of 'worker representatives' to the SPC to be widened to ensure non-TUC affiliated Trade Unions can be appointed.
- The RCN has attended a number of meetings with HEIW with regard to the development of their workforce plan but the slow pace of the work has been frustrating. Members are also frustrated with the lack of progress on pay, retention issues, retire and return etc. The Board noted that the non-pay elements in the improved offer from the

Minister for Health and Social Services was as a direct result of RCN members concerns in these areas.

- RCN staff attended the opening of the new suite in Glyndwr University.

An error was noted in the paper in that the Director had undertaken visits in support of picket lines around Wales on 15 and 20 December and not 15 and 19 December as noted in the paper. Also, the Director did not visit Prince Charles hospital on 15 December but on 20 December 2022 but the picket line had already stood down.

3.3 Correspondence

A report had been received and was noted.

The Director reminded the Board that correspondence is available to view by contacting the Director's office.

The Board was advised of an additional letter received from a previous Board member, Professor Dame June Clark thanking the Board for the letter of thanks and RCN shield sent to her.

The Board noted that the Director had been invited to visit Sancta Maria hospital in Swansea as RCN Wales had delivered a number of training courses for their staff.

3.4 Policy, Parliamentary & Public Affairs Impact Report

A report had been received and was noted.

The Policy, Parliamentary & Public Affairs Officer highlighted the following:

- The focus of the Policy, Parliamentary & Public Affairs team has been mainly on the pay campaign and getting the RCN's message across to Members of the Senedd (MSs). Members of the team have met with MSs to discuss pay and safe staffing and further meetings have been arranged for this year.
- The Board noted that at the debate in the Senedd on 23 September, nurses pay and the RCN had been mentioned 28 times.
- The RCN has had in excess of 100 mentions in Plenary during the last year including the Parliamentary Petition debate for the Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Act 2016 in September 2022. RCN Wales has built on this momentum in 2023 and has already been mentioned 14 times in Plenary.
- The Nursing Numbers report was launched in 2022.
- 4 RCN member pay discussions have been held with politicians, a few with branches.

- The team is planning a Cross Party Group on community nursing, specifically district nursing.
- Student nursing event in Senedd and looking at the bursary specifically.

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

- Welsh Government consultations - Board members were reminded that their comments are really valued and urged to share consultations within their networks.
- The UK parliamentary bills going through the Senedd that RCN Wales has provided evidence on including:
 - Professional Qualifications Bill
 - Health and Care Bill
 - The Nationality and Borders Bill

The Board noted that the Professional Qualifications Bill will allow the Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC) to move away from simulation and move away from regulation in the European space. The Professional Nursing Committee has submitted robust consultation responded to the NMC.

- The Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill., which will impact on Wales. Council has firm views of this legislation which may affect further strike dates and the RCN's ability to take certain action.
- The Care Home Project to highlight the role of nursing in care homes had been postponed due to industrial action. A provisional date has been set for 19 June 2023 to launch the film highlighting the role of nurses in care homes and the associated policy report.

3.5 RCN Wales Elections Update

A report had been received and was noted.

For the benefit of the new Board members, the Director explained the composition of the Board and the biannual election cycles and constraints applied.

The newly elected Board members were noted as follows:

Alison Magor and Richard Hughes were elected for terms of office until 31 December 2026.

Neil Thomas was elected for a term of office until 31 December 2024.

Kokila Swamynathan, the candidate that came in fourth place in the election, has been elected to fill the casual vacancy left by Steve Watson when he was elected to RCN Council for a term of office ending 31 December 2024.

The Director highlighted that the constraint to elect a member from the Glamorgan branch had not been fulfilled and would be applied to the next round of elections.

The Director informed the Board that the terms of office of the Board Chair and Vice Chair are due to end on 31 December 2024. However, as the terms of office of the Council member for Wales and the Welsh member of the Trade Union Committee are due to end on 31 December 2023, their positions as Chair and Vice Chair will be dependent on them having a seat on the Wales Board.

The Board expressed concern that the turnout for the Board elections was only 5.2%. It was reported that the email that is sent out by Civica does not clearly identify that it relates to an RCN election and maybe missed by RCN members as SPAM.

ACTION 01: The Director to discuss the Board's concerns with RCN Governance.

The Board had previously also expressed concern with the postal ballot undertaken in the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board during the pay ballot. The Director assured the Board that there would be a separate review of the pay ballot.

3.6 RCN Wales Nurse of the Year 2023 and Alumni Network Update

A report had been received and was noted.

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

- The 2022 RCN Wales Nurse of the Year Awards Ceremony had been postponed due to industrial action. The revised date to hold this event is 29 June 2023.
- The overall winners panel has yet to be held.
- The Board was advised that it had been agreed not to hold the awards in 2023 due to the rollover.
- Finalists were all informed of the decision to postpone and feedback from them was very supportive.
- Planning has commenced to hold the awards in 2024 and a large number of sponsors have already committed their support.

- The Alumni events/fireside chats have been on hold due to industrial action.
- The fireside chat that was to have been given by Professor Geraldine Waters, retired NMC Executive Director of Professional Practice in September 2022 will be rearranged once the industrial action has finished.

4. STRATEGIC UPDATES

4.1 Industrial Action NHS Pay Report

A report had been received and was noted.

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

- The picket line supervisors were responsible for the health and safety on the picket line and for ensuring a peaceful and professional strike.
- The locations for picket lines throughout Wales were listed in the paper.
- The Director travelled across Wales during strike days engaging with members and undertook a lot of media.
- The RCN General Secretary & Chief Executive visited the picket line outside Ty Maeth on 15 December 2022.
- Some members have reported issues with their pay being deducted at source which has impacted on them being able to claim the RCN strike benefit. RCN Wales has drafted letters to assist members in resolving the situation with their employers.

The Director informed the Board that strike benefit should be paid within 28 days of a strike to meet the standard and this is being met.

The Board commented that the public and other health care workers had been very supportive of the strikes.

It was noted that members from the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board had supported picket lines and provided support to colleagues across Wales.

The Director and staff were thanked for the tremendous amount of work that had been undertaken in organising the strikes across Wales and for supporting the strikes in England.

4.2 NHS Wales Partnership Forum Update

A report had been received and was noted.

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

- For the benefit of the new Board members, an update on the composition and reporting structure of the Welsh Partnership Forum (WPF) and Business Committee was given.
- An update on the Health and Social Care Workforce strategy had been given at the WPF meeting on 17 November 2022. This is a ten year strategy and the emerging themes will be taken forward in phase 2.
- A workshop was also held at WPF on the Workforce Implementation plan that has been written by Welsh Government but is in synergy with the work undertaken by Health Education & Improvement Wales (HEIW). The implementation plan has been published following limited consultation.
- The overview of the Social Partnership Bill that had been included in appendix 1 was highlighted.
- Concern was raised at the Business Committee that there have been no meetings of the Occupational Health Review Group for some months and progress is slow.
- RCN Wales had not been involved in the discussions around the Welfare project that was part of 2021/22 pay award as it had stepped out of discussions. The WPF has raised concerns that this work has not been taken forward.
- On 16 January 2023 a paper on Health and Safety, Care of the Workforce was presented to the Minister for Health and Social Services. The Minister was asked to scope and fund the implementation of the project but there has not yet been a response.
- An audit has been undertaken across health boards as to what is in place with regards to whistleblowing etc. The RCN has raised issues with the guardian process in England and is in the process of developing a framework but will not be advocating a guardian service.

The Board expressed concern as to how to keep long covid on the agenda and to ensure nurses impacted by covid have access to specialist services.

The Board commented that long covid is noted as risk on the safe staffing risk register and asked for consideration to be given to adding it to the RCN Wales risk register.

The Director suggested that the Board explore issues relating to occupational health structures in Wales with the British Medical Association (BMA) and the Society of Occupational Medicine and then to

raise any concerns identified with the Minister for Health and Social Services and the Chair of WPF.

The Board agreed to these suggestions.

ACTION 02: To revisit the RCN's position on Occupational Services and present it to the Board.

ACTION 03: With the Board's agreement to work with stakeholders to take the issue regarding the RCN's position on Occupational Services forward.

ACTION 04: Consideration to be given to adding Long Covid to the RCN Wales risk register.

4.3 Update on RCN Involvement in Health Education & Improvement Wales (HEIW) Nursing Workforce Plan

A report had been received and was noted.

The Director drew the Board's attention to appendix A that listed the interdependable workstreams that had been set up under the HEIW Nursing Workforce Plan. The Board noted that the Director has a seat on the overarching Nursing Workforce Plan Steering Group.

The Board noted that Professor Alison Leary had given a masterclass on 13 February 2023 for HEIW to inform their work on developing their nursing workforce plan.

The Board was informed that the Welsh Government had issued a workforce implementation plan alongside the HEIW workforce plan. It was noted that this complicates the landscape and makes it difficult to obtain an overview of this work and its progress.

The Director stressed that RCN Wales is keen to keep the pressure on HEIW to produce workforce data is readily available to scrutinise.

The Director informed the Board that there has been a big push on overseas recruitment from India by the Chief Nursing Officer for Wales' office.

The Associate Director of Nursing (Professional Practice) confirmed that RCN Wales is linking in with the RCN UK Policy team regarding ethical standards for international recruitment.

The Board was informed that there are concerns around different universities in Wales charging different fees for the same course. This has been raised with Diane Powles, Strategic Education Adviser, HEIW.

The Board noted concerns around the number of learning disabilities nurses coming through the education and training pipeline and RCN Wales will work closely with HEIW on that.

The Board was informed that Nicola Lewis, HEIW is undertaking a piece of work to ascertain what work is being done on retention in health boards in Wales. This work is due to complete in April and the Board will be updated at the June Board.

ACTION 05: To report to the Board on the work around retention in health boards undertaken by Nicola Lewis, HEIW.

4.4 Independent Sector update

The Associate Director of Nursing (Professional Practice) thanked the Independent Sector & Community Advisers and the Policy, Parliamentary and Public Affairs Manager for continuing the work of the Independent and Social Care Strategy Steering Group during the period of industrial action.

The Board noted that the ways of working for the steering group had been reviewed and, it was proposed to reduce the number of meetings per year and to hold roundtable events that would be open to co-production with members and enable the group to harness additional expert guidance.

Decision: The Board was content to support this proposal and agreed to reducing the number of steering group meetings per year and holding additional roundtable events.

The Board expressed concern that nurses working in care homes and the third sector are not supported during home closures and the distress of seeing the impact this has on residents.

It was reported that members had raised concerns with the directive from the CNO to senior NHS staff in health boards to discharge patients even if a care package was not in place.

The Board was assured that the Director had raised this issue with the Chief Nursing Officer for Wales and expressed concerns around safeguarding. The Board was informed that the BMA had also raised this concern. The Board was informed that RCN Wales has advised the staff nurse undertaking the discharge planning to escalate any concerns within their corporate framework.

4.5 Update from Cangen Gogledd Cymru Branch Plan

Branch Chair, Sandra Robinson-Clark was unable to attend to present the branch plan from Cangen Gogledd Cymru branch and this will be deferred to the June Board.

ACTION 06: Branch Chair, Sandra Robinson-Clark to be invited to present the branch plan from Cangen Gogledd Cymru branch to the June Board.

4.6 Update on Cwm Taf Morgannwg Branch Plan

Richard Jones, Chair Cwm Taf Morgannwg attended the Board and presented the Cwm Taf Morgannwg branch plan and gave a verbal update as follows:

- Induction events for Health Care Support Workers (HCSWs) have not taken place in Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board in 2022 but once they recommence, they will be used to recruit HCSWs.
- The continuous professional development (CPD) event held in the branch was very successful. It is hoped to hold 2 CPD events one on the role of mental health nurses across all settings (4 May) and one on the ward sister project (6 September 2023).
- The branch has been fully engaged in pay campaign and branch membership has increased by over 700 members in the last year.
- The branch has been involved in meeting and supporting 6 cohorts of overseas recruitment.
- The branch will encourage first time attendees for Congress in 2024 when it will be held in Wales.
- The branch is not using the Member Contact Centre (MCC) as a means to contact branch member as it is not flexible enough to identify specific groups of members and the training was difficult.

It was also reported that the Gwent branch had experienced problems with contacting members using MCC.

ACTION 07: Communications team to investigate the difficulties both Cwm Taf Morgannwg and the Gwent branch have expressed in using the Member Contact Centre (MCC).

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS TO NOTE

5.1 Report from RCN Council meetings held on 26, 27 July, 30 August, 27 September and 25, 26 October 2022

The reports had been received and were noted.

The Board Chair spoke to this paper.

The Vice Chair highlighted that on 26 October, RCN Council approved, in full, the recommendations from the independent review into the culture of the RCN by Bruce Carr KC.

5.2 Reports from the Professional Nursing Committee (PNC) held on September and December 2022 reports

Two reports had been received and were noted.

The Welsh member on the PNC highlighted the following:

- RCN UK policy statement on clinical supervision. The Board noted that the CNO had commissioned work around clinical supervision undertaken by Michelle Moseley.
- The definitions of nursing.
- RCN position statement on the role and scope of practice of Nursing Associates (NAs). The Board was informed that the RCN is calling for an England wide employer code for NAs and the CNO for Wales has commissioned a piece of work looking at how this sits in Wales.
- The Forums and Networks review - PNC are keen for the recommendations to be implemented into practice.
- Nursing Matters podcast on HCSWs in a week of HCSW celebrations. The RCN Wales conference highlighted the incredible contribution made by HCSWs to the nursing workforce in Wales.
- The recommendations of the Bruce Carr KC's independent review into the culture of the RCN will be implemented in full by Council, PNC, TUC and the Executive team. PNC noted the pressing need to review the RCN respect charter.
- The Education, Learning and Development (ELD) strategy. The RCN Learn platform was launched in November 2023 but the RCNi revalidation portfolio and testing phase for repository was delayed due to industrial action but should be available shortly.
- RCN Institute of Nursing Excellence. The Welsh member on PNC attended the initial meeting around the RCN research strategy which will sit within the Institute.
- The RCN position statement on the risks inherent in substitution of the role of the registered nurse. The Board noted that outputs from Health Education England (HEE) and the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) will be key in terms of data collection for evidence that role substitution is taking place.

The Board was reminded that the term 'nurse' is not a protected title in law. This issue was debated in the House of Lords recently but had not been supported. The PNC have been briefed on work that is being undertaken towards achieving legislative protection of the title.

The Director reminded the Board that in Congress 2022 one item was on leadership in nursing and that work will be taken forward to increase the profile of nursing in the national leadership.

5.3 Reports from the Nursing Support Workers (NSW) Committee September and November 2022 reports

The reports had been received and were noted.

The Director informed the Board that Alyson James-Herbert had stood down at the end of her term of office as the Wales member on the NSW committee. The Board expressed its gratitude to Alyson for all her hard work on behalf of members in Wales.

5.4 Report from the Student Committee held on 25, 26 October 2022

The report had been received and was noted.

The Director informed the Board that Carlie Andrews and Mike Palmer had been elected as Wales members on the Student Committee.

INVITE THEM TO OBSERVE THE NEXT BOARD

5.5 Report from the Trade Union Committee – December 2022

The report had been received and was noted.

5.6 Report of the UK Reps Committees – October 2022

The report had been received and was noted.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

6.1. There were no further items of business.

The Vice Chair closed the meeting at 12:30.

ET: Helen Whyley, Director, RCN Wales

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