

RCN Wales Board

Minutes of the open meeting held on 18 May 2022
commencing at 10:50
The meeting was held hybrid

Present	Position
Richard Jones, MBE	Chair, RCN Wales Board / Council member for Wales
Alison Magor	Board member
Nicola Milligan	Vice Chair, RCN Wales Board
Ann Taylor Griffiths	Board Member
Dr Carolyn Middleton, MBE	Welsh member on Professional Nursing Committee
Gaynor Jones MBE	Board member
Steve Watson	Board member
Present via Teams	
June Clark, DBE, FRCN	Board member – <i>left at 12.30</i>
Donna Mead, OBE, CSt.J, FRCN	Board member
Jackie Davies	Welsh member on Trade Union Committee
Cathrine Jones	Board member
Susan Williams	Board member – <i>joined at 09.40</i>
Apologies	
Ceri Dolan	Board member
Tristan Griffin	Board member
Observer	
Vicki Killington	Librarian and Information Services Manager
In attendance:	
Helen Whyley	Director, RCN Wales
Nicky Hughes	Associate Director of Nursing (Employment Relations)
Diane Powles	Associate Director of Nursing, Policy & Professional Practice
Helen Carlyon	Finance & Business Continuity Manager
Katie Branch	Complaints, Quality & Administration Services Manager
Luci Pollard	Executive Assistant
Lee Anderson	Secretarial Administrator

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Open session.

Apologies had been received from Board members Tristan Griffin and Susan Williams.

1.2. Declaration of Interests

The Board Chair asked Board members to declare any possible interests with any items on the agenda, but no further declarations were made.

2. MINUTES AND ACTIONS

2.1 Minutes from the previous meeting

Minutes of the Board meeting held on 18 February 2022 had been circulated and were approved as an accurate record of the meeting with the following amendment:

Page 4 'MBE' to be placed after Gaynor Jones's name

2.2 Review of Action Sheet

All actions were either noted as completed or updated on the action sheet.

Action 25 – Judith Benbow PhD student will be invited to the September Board meeting.

Action 3 – This is a regular discussion at PNC. There will also be a discussion at Congress.

Action 16 – Succession planning Committee to report back at next Board meeting

Action 20 – to be closed

2.3 Matters Arising

No matters arising.

3. OPERATIONAL UPDATES

3.1 RCN Wales Board Chair's Report

Chair spoke to this report.

He highlighted the Board attendance at Board meetings and other meetings which support the work of the RCN.

It was noted that some members have had technical difficulties when trying to join on-line meetings.

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:

National Primary Care Board continues to meet. There is a reference group that Pam Penman, Independent Sector and Community Advisor attends.

It was noted that an information paper will be presented to the next Board meeting regarding developments within Primary Care.

The Board noted that Sue Tranka, CNO, has set out her key priorities which includes workforce. <https://gov.wales/chief-nursing-officer-wales-priorities-2022-2024>

HEIW has appointed a new Clinical Director, who is a clinical nurse.

The Board noted that the Director will be attending the Conservative Party conference with the Chair of the Board on 21 and 22 May 2022.

The Director asked Board members to let her know if they wished her to visit their areas.

The Director highlighted how much work was being undertaken and importantly, what could be halted, given the increased pressures. It was suggested that members could be involved in what the key priorities are and to help identify what does not add value to members experience.

The Board noted that the amount of paperwork required, despite the use of digital, is time consuming and frustrating for members. The amount of evidence currently required to be recorded by nursing staff takes time away from patient care.

It was noted that a specialist group has been set up to look at documentation specifically for district nursing. There was concern that there are several different IT systems being rolled out that are not compatible with each other.

It was suggested that if there are local issues, where systems don't integrate well, this could be a subject for adopting the RCN Organising model approach to take things forward. There are also challenges regarding the availability of IT equipment.

It was noted that there is on-going work to ensure that systems can work together.

It was noted that detailed work was undertaken in approximately 2000 regarding district nursing and record keeping.

ACTION 24: Paper to be presented to the September Board meeting regarding developments within Primary Care

ACTION 25: Members to be asked to input into identifying key priorities for the RCN and matters which they do not perceive as adding value.

ACTION 26: Organising model activities to consider the issue of the incompatibility of recording systems currently in use by nursing staff.

3.3 Correspondence

A report had been received and was noted. The Director gave further information on the following:

New Year's honours letters were noted. It was also noted that Euan Hails, newly elected Board member, had been awarded an MBE.

Staff data was highlighted in a letter to Judith Paget, NHS Wales Chief Executive and Director General. The Director will be meeting with the relevant team to discuss issues regarding data.

Winners of the Betsi Cadwaladr award were noted.

It was noted that Ministerial responses are slightly delayed currently.

The delay in the NMC processing cases was raised. The Board noted that NMC cases are dealt with by the UK team. The Director will ask the General Secretary and Chief Executive regarding the possibility of writing to the NMC regarding these delays. It was noted that the General Secretary and Chief Executive meets regularly with Andrea Sutcliffe, Chief Executive, NMC.

ACTION 27: A representative from the NMC could be invited to a development session. It was agreed that this would be discussed by the Board Officers meeting.

ACTION 28: Director to discuss with the General Secretary and Chief Executive the possibility of writing to the NMC regarding the delays in processing cases.

3.4 COVID-19 Update Report

A report had been circulated and was noted.

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

Covid is still circulating within the population. It was noted that some groups dealing with issues relating to covid were meeting less frequently. The Board noted the UK decision that it was illegal for patients to be released from hospitals to care homes. At the time this occurred the guidance had been interpreted differently. It was noted that the RCN had questioned the guidance at the time.

The Board noted the arrangements that were put in place by RCN to support home working and delivering support to members.

It was noted that there are members with long covid who are still waiting for support from their employers. It was agreed that Board members would escalate these issues within their organisations and highlight them to RCN colleagues. It was noted that there is an item on long covid at Congress.

It was noted that there are members who are waiting for medical treatment which has been delayed due to the pandemic and these members are unable to work due to the delays in treatment.

It is likely that the pandemic will change to endemic before the autumn, and this will impact delivery and protection. It was noted that these issues, including treatment and sick pay, have been raised with employers. It is anticipated that 'normal' infection control practices and guidance will be implemented, but this may change again when circumstances change.

There is concern regarding access to anti-viral medications. Better access and information regarding these medications could reduce long covid. The Director informed the Board that this would be considered as part of the UK Employment Relations Department work.

The temporary register for nurses who have returned to work during the pandemic closes in September 2022. Some of these staff had indicated that the cost of registration was prohibitively expensive. There should be planning to try and retain those who have returned to nursing.

The IHA are currently considering which booster will be used. The lack of confirmation regarding which booster will be used has impacted planning for the booster roll-out.

It was noted that there is limited access to PCR tests which then impacts access to anti-viral medications. In addition, the 'at risk' register does not include all those who could be considered at risk.

ACTION 29: Long-covid to be on the agenda for the September Board following the Congress debate.

The Board agreed the notes of the briefing in December 2021.

3.5 Policy, Parliamentary & Public Affairs Impact Report

A report had been received and was noted. The Director highlighted the following:

The launch of the Ward Manger film had been successful.

The Parliamentary Impact report was noted.

RCN Wales has responded to the Mental Health Workforce Plan consultation and to the Education Commissioning Plans consultation.

Board members were invited to engage with the work of the Parliamentary team as Board support was very much valued.

The Parliamentary team are working on several policy positions in the coming months including specialist mental health services; nurse consultants; STOP! How to save money in healthcare; agency nursing; health inequalities and nursing excellence in integrating health and social care.

The Board noted the RCN Wales engagement with Party Conferences.

The Board were asked to note the significant contribution of members to the consultation responses.

The attrition of health visitors and independent sector ward managers was noted.

3.6 RCN Wales Nurse of the Year 2022 and Alumni Network Update

Director spoke to the Nurse of the Year 2022.

Scotland will be having their first Nurse of the Year this year.

There are 17 Award categories in this year's Wales Nurse of the Year, the event will be held in city hall.

Staff and Board were thanked for their work in preparing and supporting this event.

The Board noted that comments made previously has been noted and work has been done on providing guidance to nominators to help encourage and support nominations from diverse groups.

Health boards are now acknowledging the importance of Nurse of the Year. The Board noted that some health boards had set up groups to support nominations. Board members were asked to ensure there is no conflict of interest if they sit on the RCN Wales judging board and they have engaged in any selection process for their Board.

The ED choir from Swansea Bay was proposed as a suitable option for entertainment at the event. This suggestion will be passed to the working group that is planning the event.

Alumni Network – an expert reference group is being set up, which will include the Fellows. There has been interest from the CNO's office as to how RCN Wales developed the Alumni. The Board noted the HEIW has a Leadership learning portal Gwella. It was noted that there were plans to add a Florence Nightingale Alumni section to the RCN portal. It was suggested that this portal could also provide a place for other Alumni.

It was agreed that the RCN Wales Alumni Network expert reference group is a positive move. Although the size of the reference group might become an issue if there are too many members. It was noted that there are over 300 alumni. The expert reference group Terms of Reference is being developed.

Link to RCN Wales Nurse of the Year: <https://www.rcn.org.uk/wales/Get-Involved/Awards>

3.7 RCN Congress 2022

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

The Board noted that Congress is being held in Glasgow. Thirty-One places are available for members from Wales, 23 of which are filled.

The Board had been asked to encourage members from North Wales and Glamorgan branches.

Briefings are being developed for RCN Wales members attending Congress. Emergency items can be submitted. The Board noted a number of events were being held including: AGM on Sunday 5 June; President's reception is on Sunday 5 June which will include the Jubilee celebration; Network event with CNO; RCN Wales Welcome reception.

Discretionary funding that had been agreed but has since been declined by the members who originally requested it. It was noted that £1500 discretionary had not been utilised.

The Board noted that Jean Saunders, previous Nurse of the Year, has been invited to attend Congress, as Congress was not held the year she received her award.

It was noted that the distance between hotels and the venue in Glasgow was an issue for some members. Members with mobility issues were asked to get in touch with the Director if they would like some support. It was also noted that it is being held on a public holiday weekend. In 2023 Congress will be in Brighton. It is anticipated that Congress will be held in Wales in the future.

Congress on-line is observation only. In wellness events being held at Congress will be enable members who are remote to engage in these events. There is an AV team that will support members logging on.

A request was made to make logging on information to be made available. It was noted that the Governance team will provide relevant information. This information is usually available a week before the event.

Susan Williams and Steve Watson were thanked by the Chair for supporting the Congress resolution items.

3.8 RCN Wales Scholarship Funds Fundraising Task & Finish Group.

The Group met on 9 May, and it was noted that the Just Giving fund raising page for Hettie C Hopkins had been established. Mrs Giles has given her approval for a Just Giving Page of the Alyn Giles nursing scholarship and this will be established shortly.

Once both pages are established the Task & Finish Group will meet again to develop a plan for raising the profile of these scholarships.

It was noted that the 1.9% fees charged by Just Giving will be subtracted from donations

ACTION 30: It was agreed that the word 'geriatric' should be altered on the Just Giving page.

4. STRATEGIC UPDATES

4.1 Succession Planning Committee Update Report and Revised Terms of Reference

The Board ratified V3 of the Terms of Reference.

4.2 RCN Wales NHS Pay Campaign

A report had been circulated and was noted. The Associate Director of Nursing (Employment Relations) gave a verbal update as follows:

The vote turn out for the indicative ballot was just over 29% which was the highest turn out ever for a vote in Wales.

In January the Minister for Health and Social Services stated a remit letter would be submitted to the PRB. Council had made the decision that the ask would be 5% above the Retail Price Index. The Board noted that the trade dispute with the Government is still live.

A series of network events are being held with reps. It was noted that there had been a decision not to hold large engagement events with the wider membership as it was felt there was some burn-out experienced by members in relation to the issue of pay. It is felt that Representatives out in the clinical areas are the best people at this time to talk with members about pay until the Welsh Government announces the pay award.

There will be a huge increase in activity once the Pay Review Body (PRB) announcement is made in the next few weeks.

It was noted that currently members are indicating that they do not wish to take industrial action. A recession is expected and members will feel greater financial pressure and may leave the NHS to do bank nursing to earn more money.

It was noted that over-time rates are being reviewed. There were a number of issues relating to part-time workers also and their entitlement.

Members had commented that they appreciated working alongside very experienced retired members. This is an opportunity to enable newly qualified nurses to gain support from retired returned nurses.

It was noted that the grades offered retired returned nurses were not helpful in supporting retention.

It was suggested that prior to the announcement of the PRB the RCN could take the opportunity to highlight the cost-of-living crisis. It was noted that in the past starting campaigning early resulted in lower engagement over time. This suggestion will be taken to the Group to further discuss.

Currently there is no mechanism within the RCN to gather the views of retired nurses.

It was noted that the recommendation for retire and return policy supports retired members being offered the band they left the NHS on unless they wish to take a lower band. Service needs need to be properly identified. The abatement continues until October 2022.

It was felt that there is a lack of transparency within the health boards regarding the specialist nurses, and that levels of nursing staff do not reflect the complexity of care and specialist skills required.

There are on-going issues with the application of the across Wales policy, with significant differences between approaches between health boards and even within health boards regarding how they fill vacancies and how they develop staff. More tools/messages should be developed at local level. It was agreed that clear guidance for health boards should be available.

ACTION 31: The issue of the challenges of retire and return policy to be raised with Richard Tompkins, Director, NHS Wales Employers.

4.3 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:

Partnership met on 6 April 2022.

Occupational Health Review has been on-going since 2020. A survey has gone out to Health Boards to learn what services they have and what could be considered for the future. A scoping paper is being drafted currently which will set out how occupational health will be improved in the coming years. There is a strong drive for a single approach across the health boards. The Board will receive a further update at its meeting in September 2022.

Enhanced pay award was implemented in January and funding was provided for staff welfare. RCN has been informed that many of the issues are considered very challenging. The Trade Unions met recently and stressed the importance of rest, hydration, and availability of food for staff. Professional development and having time to professionally develop is also a priority.

It was noted that members did not feel that the fast-track system worked effectively as many staff are waiting 12-14 weeks to be referred. In addition, many calls from Occupational Health staff to members are missed.

The Board noted the update.

ACTION 32: Establish whether ill health retiral has to be signed off by a physician.

ACTION 33: Health and social care workshop feedback to be shared with the Board.

BRANCH REPORT

It was agreed that the Cardiff branch update will be taken at the September Board meeting.

ACTION: Cardiff Branch Update to be on the September Board agenda.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS TO NOTE

5.1 Report from RCN Council meetings held on 25 January and 20 February 2022

Membership categories 2.1 – It was noted that these papers are in the closed session papers. Retired, career break and lifelong membership have been confirmed. There is further work being undertaken on new membership categories.

A report had been received and was noted.

5.2 Report from the Professional Nursing Committee meetings held on 1 February and 23 March 2022.

A report had been received and was noted.

The workstream for next 12 months:

- Definitions of nursing
- Staffing for safe and effective care
- Education and learning development strategy – it was noted that a Board has been established with representatives from each country. The portal will have resources for members and the repository will only be available to education staff. There is a quality assurance programme to ensure the content is appropriate and up to date. Phase 1 is complete.
- Research Strategy – PNC are keen to progress this.
- Forum Review – this will be presented to Council on 27 May 2022.
- National and International Policy – looking ahead to what will impact nursing.
- Last Shift survey was undertaken with members with 20,000 responses. This will be published at Congress.

- Simulation position – this was increased during the covid pandemic, and a consultation will run over the summer. A position statement is being developed by the RCN.
- Nursing Associates – guidance has been developed to clarify that NA are unable to do assessments and therefore unable to request imagery.
- Assisted Dying – Jersey have agreed in principle, but it has not yet been enshrined in law.

Steve Mason agreed to share information on simulated learning with Carolyn Middleton.

OSCI centres - It was noted that two universities have been awarded a tender. No universities in Wales had put forward an application. It has been agreed that when tests are resat this can be done remotely. Consideration is being given to OSCI staff travelling to undertake assessments where the candidate is located.

June Clark left the meeting

Could RCN develop a business plan for OSCE centres in Wales. This maybe a problem as all centres are managed by higher education institutions.

The Chair thanked the Board member for the work she undertakes as a member of the Professional Nursing Committee.

ACTION 34: The Welsh member on PNC to join the Executive Director of Nursing meetings to update them on the work of PNC.

ACTION 35: Blog for members to be discussed at the Board Officers meeting.

5.3 Reports from the Nursing Support Workers Committee meetings held on 16 March 2022

A report had been received and was noted.

5.4 Report from the Students Committee meeting held on 25 March 2022

A report had been received and was noted.

5.5 Reports of the Trade Union Committee – April 2022

The Board noted the intensity of the TUC work.

The Chair thanked the member for the work she undertakes as a member of the Committee.

It was noted the challenges of lobbying independent sector companies when there are few members working there.

A report had been received and was noted.

5.6 Report of the UK Representatives Committees – May 2022

A report had been received and was noted.

A. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Diane Powles, Associate Director (Nursing, Policy and Professional Practice) thanked present and past Board Chairs and members. She thanked the Director and her team for the privilege of working with them.

The Chair thanked Diane Powles for all her work and the progress that has been made in the NPPP team.

The Chair thanked the Board for their input into the debates during the Board meetings on 17 and 18 May 2022.

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

Date of next Board Open session: 16 September 2022

ET: Helen Whyley, Director, RCN Wales

Email: helen.whyley@rcn.org.uk