

RCN Wales Board

Minutes of the open meeting held on 10 May 2024 commencing at 9am.
The meeting was held in person and via Teams.

Present	Position
Steve Watson	Vice Chair / Council member for Wales
Dr Carolyn Middleton	Wales member on Professional Nursing Committee
Alison Magor	Board member
Anne Stevenson	Board member
Catherine Jones	Board member
Lynne Puckett	Board member
Mark Crothers	Board member - <i>via Teams</i>
Richard Hughes	Board member - <i>via Teams</i>
Susan Williams	Board member
Apologies	
Jacquelin Davies	Chair, RCN Wales Board / Wales member on the Trade Union Committee
Euan Hails	Board member
Gaynor Jones	Board member
Kokila Swamynathan	Board member
Nicola Milligan	Board member
Helen Whyley	Executive Director, RCN Wales
In attendance	
Nicky Hughes	Associate Director of Nursing (Employment Relations)
Sandy Harding	Associate Director of Nursing (Professional Practice)
Helen Carlyon	Finance & Business Continuity Manager
Katie Branch	Quality & Events Manager
Heather Searle	Executive Assistant to the Executive Director
Observing	
Collette Sutton	RCN staff - <i>via Teams</i>
Dave Parry	Healthcare Support Worker Committee member for Wales

1. WELCOME

1.1. Apologies for Absence

The Vice Chair welcomed everyone to the Open session.

Apologies had been received from Board members, Jackie Davies, Euan Hails, Gaynor Jones, Kokila Swamynathan and Nicola Milligan. The Executive Director also gave apologies due to speaking at the Betsi Cadwaladr health board conference.

The Vice Chair welcomed Collette Sutton and Dave Parry as observers for the session.

1.2. Declaration of Interests

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

Carolyn Middleton, Wales member on Professional Nursing Committee declared a conflict of interest with the Band 4 project.

2. MINUTES AND ACTIONS

2.1 Minutes from the previous meeting

Minutes of the Board meeting held on 23 February 2024 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

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.

In the Board Chair's absence, the Vice Chair asked for any observations or points of clarification.

There were no questions or comments from the Board.

3.2 Executive Director, RCN Wales Report

A report had been received and was noted.

In the absence of the Executive Director, the Associate Director of Nursing (Employment Relations) took the Board through the report and highlighted the following:

- At the meeting with the Director General, NHS Wales, the Executive Director requested an update on the NHS Executive. The Board was asked whether this would be suitable for the Board development session in September.

ACTION – An update on the NHS Executive will be arranged for the September Board meeting or development session.

- Meetings with Executive Directors of Nursing and Heads of Schools of Nursing continue.
- Visits to hospitals have been undertaken to Bronllys Hospital, Prince Charles Hospital, University Hospital of Wales and Neath Port Talbot Hospital.
- At the National Emergency Department Measurement Review Task Group meeting, the Executive Director was given access to the dashboard for the emergency streams.

A concern was raised by the Board regarding whether patient information can be seen on the dashboard view. The Board were assured there was no patient data shown.

3.3 Correspondence report

A report had been received and was noted.

In the absence of the Executive Director, the Associate Director of Nursing (Employment Relations) reminded the Board that correspondence is available to view by contacting the Executive Director's office.

The following correspondence was highlighted:

- There has been no response with regards the nominal amount outstanding in the Betsi Cadwaladr scholarship fund. This continues to be chased as instruction is needed.
- There has been no official response to the letter sent to Russell George. However, there has been reference to this matter in the recent committee report.

Board agreed this can be closed.

- Suzanne Rankin has agreed to chair the Nurse of the Year Congress event. Suzanne was asked due to the current Wales Nurse of the year working in Cardiff and Vale health board.

3.4 Policy, Parliamentary & Public Affairs Impact Report

A report had been received and was noted.

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

- The Board are asked for any views on the planned activities, consultations and committee inquiries listed in the paper.
- The report outlines the main influencing activities and outcomes of RCN Wales in the period since the last Board and any relevant public, political and policy developments that have occurred. It also outlines the influencing priorities of the team for the immediate future.
- The next meeting of the Welsh Parliamentary Cross-Party Group on Nursing & Midwifery will take place on 21st May 2024 with a focus on ventilation in healthcare environments. This will look at what has been learnt through Covid and how to apply this to public health.
- Work is being undertaken for parliamentary action with regards corridor care. There will be a short window between now and the general election and then another prior to the Wales Senedd elections to carry out any action for maximum impact.

Following an enquiry from the Board, it was confirmed the Welsh Labour conference will be held in July in Llandudno and Plaid Cymru in Swansea in September.

The Board agreed the recommendations in the paper.

4. STRATEGIC UPDATES

4.1 Activism Academy

George Woods, Associate Director for the Activism Academy joined the meeting and gave a presentation. The following was highlighted:

- The Board were invited to comment and share views throughout the presentation. The Associate Director for the Activism Academy will be collating comments from all RCN Boards.

- The Activism Academy is also a brand and has brought together the organising team and the Activist learning and development team.
- There is work to be done to engage with the vast number of members who do not currently engage with the RCN. There are many ways to be active with differing levels of commitment. The Board were invited to share what currently works well in Wales and what the priorities for engaging members currently are.

The Board shared examples of the learning and development offered to members in Wales and the work of representatives and branches. Current priorities include speaking to members about the non-pay elements and encouraging a more organising model amongst the membership.

- The Activism Academy are already working on plans to treble the number of representatives, particularly for health and safety as numbers are low. Forums will also be reviewed. The Board were invited to discuss what other priorities the Academy should focus on.

The Board advised more information on the different ways to be active would be helpful to the membership. There is a lot of focus on becoming a representative but there are many other ways. Central support for branches would be welcomed. The organising model to be embedded across the membership. Ongoing training for existing representatives, not just when they first join. More engagement with the independent sector membership.

- Members and staff have been completing surveys to provide the Academy with information. Currently the team is collating these and will be used to help shape the Activism strategy by the end of 2024.
- Work is already being done with regards existing representatives. The objective is to provide a high-quality learning and development and this is under review. A What's App service has already been launched to keep representatives better informed.
- The Board were invited to contact the Associate Director for the Activism Academy if there are any further suggestions.

The Chair thanked the Associate Director for joining the Board meeting.

4.2 NHS Wales Partnership Forum

A report had been received and was noted.

The Associate Director (Employment Relations) took the Board through the paper and the following was highlighted:

- The last meeting was on 21 March in Swansea and all four seats were filled.
- The Director General highlighted the current service demand and funding. It was raised that boarding appears to be the norm across the service.
- The health and wellbeing guide is being launched. It was raised that basics such as accessing break areas, food and fluids needs to be a priority.
- The escalation framework is in place but amendments have been requested and the updated version is awaited.
- The Strategic Nursing Workforce plan is going to consultation.
- It has been raised that despite timelines now agreed, there is still not enough progress on the non-pay elements.
- The next staff survey is due to go live in September. It was raised that feedback from staff is the survey is too long and negative. However, to provide a direct comparison, the survey will not be amended this time.
- The job profiles for bands 4 and 5 are out for consultation.
- The Associate Director of Nursing (Employment Relations) has been elected unopposed as Staff Side Chair.

The Board enquired whether the respect and resolution policy will be available for members to review and comment on. The Board were advised it has been through partnership forum and concerns raised but changes not accepted. The FAQs have been strengthened and it has gone through staff side. The Board were invited to provide any feedback on the policy to the Associate Director of Nursing (Employment Relations).

4.3 RCN Scholarships

The Chair provided a verbal report.

- The application process to join the sponsored dog walk is due to close shortly. There have only been two applications for North Wales and eleven for South Wales, however there are no members.
- The Board were reminded this was a Board initiative but it is not being supported. It has taken considerable time to set this up.
- The Chair has taken the decision to postpone the walks for this weekend and a new date will be scheduled.

ACTION – Board to decide on a new date for the sponsored dog walks to raise money for the scholarship funds.

4.4 RCN Wales Nurse of the Year 2024

The Quality and Events Manager spoke to the paper and the following was highlighted:

- Nominations are now open across 14 award categories. Sponsorship is secured for all awards. The Board were reminded to promote this through their networks.
- Board members will be invited to sit on panels in September.
- Following feedback, there is now a minimum word count to help strengthen the quality of the nominations.
- The paper also highlights the activity with the alumni network and the work the current nurse of the year has been doing.

4.5 RCN Congress

A report had been received and was noted.

The Quality and Events Manager spoke to the paper and the following highlighted:

- All places are now filled and funding voting members will be staying in the Celtic Manor.
- The Wales stand will be supported by staff and is prominently displayed in the main atrium. Board elections will be promoted. The Board were reminded to visit the stand.
- The full programme of learning and wellbeing events are online. Monday evening is Welsh night at the Celtic Manor. This is currently oversubscribed and further options are being looked at to accommodate the numbers.
- The Board were reminded that emergency agenda items can be submitted right up to Congress and guidelines will be online.
- Tuesday is focused on students and coaches have been arranged to transport students to Congress from across Wales.

Following an enquiry from the Board it was confirmed that all attending students will be emailed an attendance certificate. These can be used for revalidation.

The Board asked about sustainability and it was confirmed that the venue has certificates for sustainability and will have reusable water bottles and a commitment to reduce printed materials.

4.6 Independent Health and Social Care report

The Associate Director of Nursing (Professional Practice) spoke to the paper and the following highlighted:

- The library in a box has launched and feedback is positive and there are plans to roll this out across Wales. The boxes also include information about joining the RCN and provides a way of engaging with members outside the NHS.
- A roundtable discussion was held on the theme of Leadership at Nuffield Health, Vale Hospital.
- Visits are planned across Wales for Care Home open week in June.
- In Northern Ireland a new network has been set up that links into the forum. In Wales, members do not always join forums and a similar network is being planned to ensure the Welsh perspective is included.
- An RCN Congress IHSC Learning and Wellbeing event was approved *“Unlocking opportunities: navigating your path in independent health and social care - breaking in, not breaking out!”* RCN Wales are involved in the planning and delivery of this event.

The Chair expressed thanks for all the work carried out by the team.

5. ITEMS TO NOTE

5.1 Reports from RCN Council meetings held on 28 November and 18 December 2023

The reports had been received and noted.

The Council member for Wales advised that work is being done to improve the turnaround of the Council updates.

The General Secretary and Chief Executive vacancy has now been advertised.

The Board had no questions or comments.

5.2 Report from the Professional Nursing Committee held on 1 February 2024

The report had been received and noted.

The Professional Nursing Committee member for Wales highlighted the following:

- There have been several joint meetings with the Trade Union Committee. The group had a session about the development of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategy.
- The committee have been briefed on the pay spine consultation and will be providing a response. It was felt that Agenda for Change does not serve nursing well any longer and compared to other professions, progression from band 5 to 6 is very difficult.
- A work programme has been set out for 2024 which aligns with the nursing department work.
- The RCN research strategy will be launched at Congress.
- The RCN position on nurse substitution and definitions of nursing are completed and are going live shortly. This has taken some time but important to get this right.
- A Forum and Network review is ongoing and leadership for forum chairs is in development.
- In England there is a band 4 role in midwifery but not in Wales. There will be work on this but currently the position in Wales is that the registered nursing associate role excludes midwifery.

Following an enquiry from the Board, it was confirmed that the nursing workforce standards sit with the Trade Union Committee. The Associate Director of Nursing (Professional Practice) confirmed the number of champions in Wales has increased and include eight in the independent sector. A review of the standards will be undertaken later this year.

5.3 Report from the Trade Union Committee held on 5 January 2024

A report had been received and was noted.

The Board had no further comments or questions.

5.4 Report from the UK Reps Committee meetings held in February 2024

The reports had been received and noted.

The Board had no further comments or questions.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 6.1 The Board were advised the Wales representative on the Learning Committee has resigned.
- 6.2 The Chair confirmed the sponsored dog walk will be moved to September.

The Chair closed the meeting at 12:00.