

Key messages from the RCN Northern Ireland Board meeting

20 May 2024

- 1 In her opening remarks, the RCN Northern Ireland Board Chair formally welcomed newly-elected Board member Kate Ward Courtney to her first Board meeting.
- 2 The Board received a further briefing on the RCN pay campaign in Northern Ireland. The Board noted that arrangements for payment of the backdated 2023-2024 award have now been confirmed by the Department of Health. The report of the NHS Pay Review Body for 2024-2025 has not yet been published and there is accordingly no update on the pay position for the current year. The Board noted the steps taken by the RCN over concerns relating to the commissioning of pre-registration nursing and midwifery places for 2024-2025 and employment prospects for nursing students who will graduate and register later this year. The Board also noted that a revised regional agreement on the reimbursement of mileage expenses has been negotiated.
- 3 The Board received, noted and approved a series of governance assurance reports. These comprised the performance highlight report for the first quarter of 2024, an updated risk register, a report on the delivery of the Board's operational plan during the first quarter of 2024, and an operational performance data report covering the same period. Matters for clarification were raised by Board members and addressed.
- 4 The Board discussed ways of enhancing communication with RCN Fellows in Northern Ireland and strengthening their integration with the work of the RCN.
- 5 The Board received a presentation on the RCN Group scheme of delegation from Natalie Zara (RCN UK Executive Director of Governance, Risk and Planning) and Maxine Nunn (RCN UK Performance, Risk and Assurance Manager). A key focus of the presentation was strengthening and clarifying the relationship between RCN Council on the one hand and the country and regional Boards on the other.
- 6 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.
- 7 The Board received, noted and approved progress reports for the first quarter of 2024 in relation to the RCN Northern Ireland branch operational plans.
- 8 The Board received a further verbal report on the developing arrangements for RCN Congress 2024, which will be held in Newport from 2 to 6 June.
- 9 The Board Chair provided an update on the Prince of Wales Cadet Scheme and the recent celebratory event to mark the completion of the first Northern Ireland cohort.
- 10 The Board Chair gave a verbal report on the oral evidence relating to workforce issues presented by the RCN to the Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Health

on 18 April 2024. The report highlighted the ensuing media coverage and the Assembly questions to the Health Minister tabled by Committee members as a consequence of the RCN's evidence and the various issues that it focused upon.

- 11 The Board received a brief verbal update on the provision of Agenda for Change job evaluation training for RCN accredited representatives and members.
- 12 A verbal report on the current priorities of the RCN Northern Ireland Professional Nursing Practice department was provided.