



RCN Wales Board

Minutes of the open meeting held on 22 September 2023
commencing at 09.00

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

Present	Position
Jacquelin Davies	Chair, RCN Wales Board / Welsh member on the Trade Union Committee
Steve Watson	Vice Chair / Council member for Wales
Dr Carolyn Middleton, MBE	Welsh member on Professional Nursing Committee
Anne Stevenson	Board member
Catherine Jones	Board member ûvia Teams
Euan Hails	Board member ûvia Teams
Gaynor Jones	Board member
Kokila Swamynathan	Board member
Mark Crothers	Board member
Neil Thomas	Board member
Nicola Milligan	Board member
Richard Hughes	Board member
Susan Williams	Board member
Apologies	
Alison Magor	Board member
Lynne Puckett	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
Katie Branch	Quality & Events Manager – via Teams
Heather Searle	Executive Assistant to the Director, RCN Wales

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Board Chair welcomed everyone to the Open session.

Apologies had been received from Board members, Alison Magor and Lynne Puckett.

1.2. Declaration of Interests

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

No further declarations were made.

2. MINUTES AND ACTIONS

2.1 Minutes from the previous meeting

Minutes of the Board meeting held on 2 June 2023 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.

The Board Chair took the Board through the paper.

There were no questions or comments from the Board.

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:

The Chief Nursing Officer has now

flowers but this was not forthcoming, so she was welcomed back yesterday.

Following the regular meeting with Judith Paget, Director General of Health and Social Services/Chief Executive NHS Wales, the Director RCN Wales agreed to join the Welsh Government Strategic Workforce Implementation Board due to the acceptance of the non-pay elements of the pay award. Welsh Government officials and Health Education Improvement Wales (HEIW) also attend this Board. Concerns were raised over the NHS Executive website which is very difficult to find information on and concerns regarding the senior nursing post on the new NHS Executive as it is only a band 8D nurse reporting to CEO of Improvement Cymru with a dotted line report to the Chief Nursing Officer. This post was not appointed to.

Meetings with the Minister for Health and Social Services have continued. The non-pay elements of the NHS pay award are on the agenda to ensure regular updates are received.

Meetings with Executive Directors of Nursing continue. The Director of Nursing for Hywel Dda Health Board, Mandy Rayani is retiring at the end of the year and the Executive Director for Public Health Wales, Rhiannon Beaumont-Wood has now retired. Both will be invited to a future Board supper.

ACTION: Mandy Rayani and Rhiannon Beaumont-Wood will be invited to the Board supper in February 2024.

Collaborative ways of

will be attended next month and reported on at the February Board meeting.

A concern was raised by the Board regarding newly qualified nurses being prescriber ready. This is only a small area of theory and simulation in the degree course, which is not enough, and the reality can be quite different. It is important to develop a spiral curriculum where skills are being embedded in year one, so this thread goes right through the course. Staff need to be trained to support the students.

The Associate Director of Nursing (Professional Practice) agreed that a spiral curriculum is beneficial, and this is with the Universities to be signed off. Feedback has been received from students who feel there are barriers to being supported which is not acceptable.

The Board made the point that students may not actually have done any prescribing in their first year as registered nurses and there needs to be ongoing development in this area. The Board was advised that following a consultation, the Nursing and Midwifery Council changed the curriculum, so all graduating nurses are prescriber ready. Although students would not be able to prescribe immediately on registration, their knowledge of pharmacology should allow a more critical appraisal of their care. It is so important there are registered nurses with the right skills ready to teach and mentor students and this is being raised with HEIW.

3.3 Correspondence report

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 Director highlighted the following correspondence:

The correspondence highlighted in red have not yet had a response. The letter regarding the Specialist Practitioner Qualification for Learning Disability Nurses within Wales has now received a response via email with an invite to meet with HEIW.

The Royal College of Psychiatrists in Wales was approached by the Welsh Government to provide an analysis of the recommendations of various mental health reports at Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board. They asked for the RCN to support this work and Catherine Gamble is undertaking this work as a paid expert. This is the first time an approach has been made to RCN Wales for professional work of this nature.

- Section 6 of the paper details engagement with Senedd members. The Board was reminded to contact the team if support with engaging with Senedd members is needed.
- Political leadership programme has been facilitated and there will be further programmes next year. This programme is very popular and there is a waiting list.

The Board commented on how beneficial this programme is and thanked the team for facilitating the programme.

The Board expressed concern over the Strikes Minimum Service Bill and how the derogation process adopted already addresses this. The Board were advised work is being developed to lobby Welsh Government, but this is new legislation that needs working through. This may form an item at Congress or a future RCN representatives conference. Guidance for members will need to be thought through as would not encourage members to break the law. It is inevitable there will be future strikes. The legal team may need to look at test cases.

3.5 RCN Congress 2024

A report had been received and was noted.

The

The Board commented that the roundtable with the Executive Directors of Nursing was very well received at this year's Congress.

3.6 RCN Wales Board meeting dates for 2024

A report had been received and was noted.

The Board agreed the proposed dates for 2024.

4. STRATEGIC UPDATES

4.1 Industrial Action NHS Pay Report

A report had been received and was noted.

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

- The outcome of the ballot was to accept this award but with a small margin. The main element of this paper is to show the extent of the engagement over the summer and the amount of work carried out.
- There was extensive coverage on social media. Targeted member emails were regularly sent. Cold calling, text messages and Thrutext were utilised extensively and were again targeted to members who had not voted. A live webinar was held which was sectioned up for social media posts. The frequently asked questions were updated on the website.
- Over 125 face-to-face engagement events were held across Wales which was phenomenal. Assistance was received from staff in Scotland and England. Promotional materials were used for engagement along with QR codes for members to access the ballot immediately.
- This was the fourth ballot in under a year, and it was positive to still receive a 40% turnout. It is important for RCN Wales staff, RCN representatives, Board and branch officials to all remain visible to members.
- There has been feedback and learning across the UK regarding all aspects of industrial action. This learning will go to Council and a paper will come to Board next year. The ability to scale up to support future industrial action is also being planned for any future industrial action.

The Board had no further questions or comments.

4.2 NHS Wales Partnership Forum Update

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

The last forum was on 13 July 2023 in Swansea and next year there will be a meeting held in North Wales.

The challenges with finance were discussed by the Chair.

The Minister's announcement for an independent group to look at whether the NHS is fit for purpose will be chased.

The Director will be invited to the Workforce and Implementation Board. The rigour and challenge needed for this Board is not there yet, however this is still in its infancy.

An update on the retention plan was provided and not all health boards have completed the self-assessment yet. There is a retention meeting this week and the group will then cease as it has achieved what HEIW have asked. Welsh Government and the NHS will be held to account to ensure implementation.

The staff survey has now been pushed back to October.

The Speaking up Safely framework and the toolkit and guidance was reviewed and will be rolled out.

The Board commented that the staff survey was raised at local partnership forum and there is a push to encourage staff to complete this online or via a hardcopy.

The Board enquired whether the work towards the non-pay elements of the pay award will be reported to partnership forum. The Board were advised that the work will be scrutinised, monitored and challenged at partnership forum. For example, there is a quarterly report to show the number of flexible working applications that are approved and rejected. The rejected applications will need to show whether another area could have accommodated, and all options have been explored.

The Board commented that the Speak up Safely framework is an important piece of work, but can be difficult to find the right balance of people. It has caused conflict where representatives also cover this role, and this has been stopped in some health boards.

4.3 Independent Sector and Social Care update

A report had been received and was noted.

The Associate Director of Nursing (Professional Practice) highlighted the following:

- RCN Wales continue to attend and participate in a variety of events which included the RCN North Wales Branch Independent Care Sector Conference.
- The c

4.6 Update on Cardiff and the Vale Branch Plan

The Board Chair welcomed Linda Bailey for Cardiff & the Vale branch and thanked her for attending.

The Vice-Chair would like to attend the branch AGM as Council member for Wales.

