

## RCN Wales Board

Minutes of the open meeting held on 18 February 2022  
commencing at 10:50

The meeting was held via Microsoft Teams

Present via Teams	Position
Richard Jones, MBE	Chair, RCN Wales Board / Council member for Wales
Denise Chaffer	RCN President – joined at 11:30 for item 4.5
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
Donna Mead, OBE, CSt.J, FRCN	Board member
Gaynor Jones	Board member
Jackie Davies	Welsh member on Trade Union Committee
June Clark, DBE, FRCN	Board member – <i>joined at 09:10</i>
Steve Watson	Board member
<b>Apologies</b>	
Catherine Jones	Board member
Ceri Dolan	Board member
Susan Williams	Board member
Tristan Griffin	Board member
<b>Observers</b>	
Ali Herbert	Welsh Representative on Nursing Support Worker Committee
<b>Presenters</b>	
Sandra Robinson-Clark	Cangen Gogledd Cymru Branch Chair – for item 4.7
Greg Dix	RCN Wales Foundation Trustee and Executive Director of Nursing, Midwifery & Patient Care, Cwm Taff Morgannwg University Health Board – <i>for itme 4.9</i>

Present via Teams	Position
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
Lisa Turnbull	Policy, Parliamentary & Public Affairs Manager
Katie Branch	Complaints, Quality & Administration Services Manager
Jayne Taylor	Executive Assistant to the Director, RCN Wales
Lee Anderson	Secretarial Administrator

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Open session.

The Chair also welcomed Alison Herbert who was observing.

Apologies had been received from Board members Catherine Jones, Ceri Dolan, Susan Williams, and Tristan Griffin.

### **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 10 September 2021 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**

#### **Consultant Nurses**

The Director noted that this was a key issue in all areas of nursing, especially for Learning Disability nursing which RCN Wales has joined the

Paul Ridd Foundation in calling for at least one consultant in each health board.

It was suggested that consultant nurse roles are considered alongside Clinical Nurse Specialists and Advance Nurse Practitioners. The Director felt this was encouraging and would form part of the Wales policy paper planned for later this year. Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) called for evidence in the last education commissioning round on post registration education.

**ACTION:** RCN Wales Consultant Nurses policy paper to be published in due course.

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 including the RCN Wales Board 2021 / 2022 meeting schedule and the Board Development opportunities that are being provided for the Board in 2022.

The Board Chair thanked Board members for all their hard work on behalf of the Board.

It was noted that there was an error in Appendix C. A corrected version will be available in the next update.

It was noted that the Trade Union Committee (TUC) Board member had attended all TUC meetings.

Alison Magor had been unable to update her activity form and agreed to do this as soon as possible. She noted that she was unable to attend some meetings due to technology issues.

Donna Mead noted that she had been unable to access emails.

#### **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 meeting with Andrew Goodall was his last meeting as Director General. It has since been announced that he was appointed to Permanent Secretary at the Welsh Government. Judith Paget has

taken over as Director general and the Director has met her in that capacity.

- There had been a number of meetings with the CNO, where the letters sent by the General Secretary/CEO and the difficulties faced by health care and social care staff were discussed.
- The Director had met with HEIW a number of times and had had regular meetings with the NHS Directors of Nursing (EDoN). The Director has been invited to DONs peer group on a bimonthly basis and this may be more frequent this year.
- The Director attended RCN Professional Nursing Committee as she is the Staffing for Safe and Effective Care lead.

The Board noted that nurses and other recipients of awards had been sent a letter of congratulations.

### 3.3 Correspondence

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

RCN Wales wrote to Wills wife enclosing a memory book on the anniversary of his passing.

The full correspondence log and details is available for Board members which can be accessed via the Director's office.

**ACTION:** Correspondence log to be updated to include letters of congratulations for health staff in Wales who received honours letters sent in January at the May Board.

### 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:

- RCN have been supporting rep work and ensuring members are well supported if sick due to covid.
- There has been a postponement to the pension abatement position.
- RCN Wales staff continue to attend the Vaccine Steering Group and the NHS Wales Partnership Forum informal Business Committee and Workforce Cell meetings. There is also representation on the Welsh Government Nosocomial Transmission Group.

- RCN wrote jointly with BMA to the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding Personal Protective Equipment and requirement to have FFP2 and FFP3 available for staff. In Wales, employers have been very supportive of the use of these masks but some areas of the private sector not so and these issues are being dealt with by the Employment Relations team.
- RCN Wales have been showcasing the nursing leadership in the vaccine program.
- On a UK basis the RCN devised toolkit that was shared with NHS Chief Executives.
- Reps hours have been maintained; some reps have gone back to clinical work but maintained their facilities time. The Director thanked the reps and the Employment Relations Team for this success.
- Nursing Policy & Professional Practice staff have been attending flu and covid meetings as well as several meetings on long covid. There had been a successful Board event on long covid which has instigated some RCN UK work on long covid.
- The RCN is following government guidance for staff in working from home. Restrictions were lifted from the end of January and staff will be returning to office using hybrid principles.

The Chair congratulated the Associate Director of Nursing (Employment Relations) on being elected as Chair of Wales Partnership Forum Trade Union Group.

It was noted that pension abatement rules only apply to people between 55 and 60. A questions was asked whether there are plans to see if it can be raised indefinitely to reduce possible shortfall in nursing numbers. The Associate Director (Employment Relations) noted that pensions in Wales are linked to pensions in England and UK government. The Welsh Government has no powers to make decisions as it is not a devolved issue. RCN HQ have lobbied to cease the abatement rule altogether, however, the government have conceded to postpone the reintroduction until October 2022. The RCN will continue to lobby on this issue. The Associate Director of Nursing (Employment Relations) agreed to raise the issue of extending abatement indefinitely with RCN HQ colleagues.

The Board were aware of the large amount of PPE purchases that had not been fit for purpose and wondered whether these costs were being absorbed by the UK Government.

Concerns were raised regarding surgical masks and fibres. The Director noted that masks used are not the same as the ones worn in theatre.

Concerns will be taken forward by Representatives Support & Development Network to pick this up and consideration will be given to a wider piece of work.

The issue of long covid in adults and children was raised, along with vaccinations for 5–11-year-olds. The Director noted that the take up of vaccinations for children had not been good and there is a need to ensure there is the workforce to deliver on this. RCN Wales will keep this under scrutiny and the issue of increasing the workforce will be raised at HEIW and Welsh Government and with the DONs. DoNs have indicated that Directors of Therapy are leading the resources in relation to long covid. The Director had reminded DONs of the huge role of nurses have in this and will continue to follow this up with Primary Care Programme Work and Chiquita.

It was noted that anti-virals can be difficult to obtain for long covid and there is a limited window of opportunity to use them. This has been raised this with Deputy Director of Primary Care – there is a mismatch of information regarding how to access antivirals. LFTs should identify those who require anti-virals. Anecdotally, GPs have only been able to access the drugs through dedicated trials. The Deputy Medical Director will address misinformation about how to access antivirals that do not automatically get picked up through LFTs.

It was noted that some NHS organisations wanted staff to work from home, but some staff wished to go to their workplace rather than work from home. Support for staff wellbeing was also noted as an issue of concern. The Director had not been assured that everything was being done in relation to wellbeing ie family friendly policies.

The Associate Director of Nursing (Employment Relations) and the Employment Relations Team were involved in work through the Welsh Partnership Forum to review policies such as the managing attendance at work and flexible working policies. It was noted that the same level of partnership work is not available in social care. The NHS needs to embrace commissioned services it has and its staff. There needs to be a stronger effort to look at flexible working.

A welfare project is being undertaken taken with trade unions and the Welsh Government. This is taking shape and should cover flexible working. Trade unions have asked that, in the short term, key things people need such as access, to hydration and a place to take breaks. Some issues are longer term, but the trade unions are pressing for key elements which will improve wellbeing of staff immediately. Flexible working policy is being reviewed to provide flexibility from the individuals

start date but open to local interpretation. It was noted that well-being is a broad issue that needs to be addressed.

The Board were very pleased to see the Director in the media particularly in her role as a vaccinator. She is an excellent ambassador for RCN.

RCN Wale Board confirmed the minutes of 10 December are an accurate record of their covid briefing.

**ACTION:** The Associate Director (Employment Relations) agreed to raise the issue of extending abatement indefinitely with RCN HQ colleagues.

ATG to raise any local issues re PPE masks with NH for escalation to RCN HQ infection protection and control expert.

### 3.5 Policy, Parliamentary & Public Affairs Impact Report

A report had been received and was noted.

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

- Successes of debate on the NHS pay campaign.
- Senedd event lights on buildings and evidence for Pay Review Body
- Priorities for first quarter, priority is to get 10k signatures on the petition
- Oral evidence on hospital discharge by NH and role of ward manager and community nursing services.
- Preparing for political conferences in Wales.
- Political Leadership Program will be held in May and two places have been reserved for Board members.

Board members were encouraged to share the Chair's blog with link to the petition with friends and family.

The Board noted how much work is progressing and acknowledged the number of consultations and the work required for the committee inquiries.

It was also noted that in relation to commissioning and workforce planning, the Health Committee had been persuaded to hold scrutiny sessions. RCN Wales gave evidence and scrutinised HEIW. RCN Wales asked for more evidence on HEIW's thoughts. Director raised our concerns re HEIW with the Minister. She also has regular meetings with HEIW chair and has written letters which take issue with TOR and SRG.

Other health organisations in Wales are beginning to consider these issues and have asked to form a group to put pressure on HEIW to improve workforce planning. There are some positive signs that they will do post reg nursing commissioning work. Statistics Wales has acknowledged the miscoding of nursing has led to inaccurate data. The new CNO is doing political influencing highlighting the strategic importance of nursing. The Chair of HEIW is receptive to some of the comments about transparency. The Board noted the significant amount of influencing that had taken place over the last 12 months and the potentially positive signs.

The Williams Review that led to establishment of HEIW set clear principles as why it was established. The Board would like to be assured that HEIW is carrying out its work to the terms of the Williams Review. Donna Mead worked on Williams Review and declared an interest. The Policy, Parliamentary and Public Affairs Manager noted this and agreed that this will be included in the preparation of work in this space.

**Decision:** The Board approved the Member Engagement on Consultations Protocol as set out in Appendix B.

### 3.6 2021 RCN Wales Nurse of the Year and Alumni Network Update

A report had been received and was noted.

The Board Chair thanked Board members for their continued support for the RCN Wales Nurse of the Year awards.

The Director thanked the Board members who helped deliver the virtual awards in 2021, which had been very well received. The staff were also thanked. The Director has spoken to sponsors about this year and the team are currently working through the launch of 2022. It was hoped that the event in 2022 will be face to face.

Some feedback on the diversity of the winners and runners up had been received. Consideration will be given to the nomination processes to make them attractive to members from ethnic minorities.

The alumni network programme is progressing for this year, and it is hoped that it will be possible to secure top people to be involved in the events for 2022.

The Chair thanked Donna Mead and Tristan Griffin as members of the subgroup. Donna Mead indicated that she would be happy to be a member of the subgroup going forward.

**ACTION:** To seek a second nomination for a Board member to sit on the Group.



### 3.7 RCN Wales Scholarship Funds Fundraising Task & Finish Group

The Finance & Business Continuity Manager a verbal update as follows:

The RCN Wales Scholarship Fundraising Working Group has been established and held its first meeting on 11 January 2022.

- The group membership is:
  - Owain Jones (Chair), RCN Wales member
  - Dr Lyn Middleton, Board member
  - Steve Watson, Board member
  - Denise Llewellyn, RCN Wales member
- The group is supported by the Finance & Business Continuity Manager.
- The terms of Reference will be agreed by Scholarship Group at its meeting on 9 May 2022.
- RCN Wales Communications Team posted on 31 January 2022 the Board Chair's blog honouring the amazing contribution that Alun I Giles made to the nursing profession.
- A profile of Hettie C Hopkins was published in 2021.
- Both Scholarships are currently calling for applications. Deadline for receipt of applications is 31 March 2022.

The Board Chair asked the Board for volunteers to join the group. June willing to join but conflict of interest needs to be checked.

**ACTION:** Board Chair to seek volunteer Board members to sit on the Scholarship Group

## 4. STRATEGIC UPDATES

### 4.1 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:

- Reminded the Board of the background to pay campaign.
- Following indicative ballot in November, this report outlines the numerous member engagement events and communications that were undertaken to promote the campaign.

- The enhanced pay offer from the Welsh Government regarding the 2021/2022 pay award has been implemented.
- The Pay Review Body (PRB) process for 2022 has commenced. Evidence has been submitted to the PRB from the UK joint trade unions. In addition, RCN HQ has submitted UK evidence with RCN Wales providing supplementary evidence regarding issues for nurses in Wales. The trade unions are working with employers and the Welsh Government to agree a high-level statement to be submitted alongside the Welsh Government evidence regarding joint asks. on the pay require for 2022. Negotiations continue.
- The Chair thanked the Board members, activists and staff for all their efforts and work undertaken in support of the campaign.

#### 4.2 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:

- The Wellbeing tool is being launched.
- There was a presentation from WAST around anti-violence campaign and RCN Wales are promoting that.
- The Welsh Partnership Forum are awaiting more information on the Race Equality plan.
- The Organisational Change and Managing attendance at work policies are being reviewed and the disciplinary and capability policies are being postponed.
- Holiday pay around Flowers judgement if you normally work enhanced hours on a regular basis that you should have that when you are on leave. Agreement was reached in Wales on the ‘Flowers Judgement’ regarding the provisions of enhancements payments during annual leave for those who normally work regular overtime, and this has been disseminated widely to members and reps.

#### 4.3 RCN Wales Board Election Update

A report had been received and was noted.

The Director took the Board through the paper and the process for filling the vacancy on the Wales Board.

The Board noted the Board members who are required to stand down on 31 December 2022.

The Board will bring a list of constraints for the Board to be agreed by the May Board.

It was agreed that it would be helpful to have full geographical spread on the Board. It was noted that June Clark will not be standing for a second term but still wants to participate. The Chair expressed his thanks to June Clark and commented on her knowledge base for the work of the RCN in Wales.

The Chair expressed the Board's thanks to Rhys for his contribution and he wished the Board well going forward.

Decision: The Board approved the timetable for the election to fill the current vacancy on the Wales Board as set out in 2.3.3.

#### 4.4 Succession Planning Committee Update

The Board Chair informed the Board that the last meeting of the Succession Planning Committee had not been quorate and a new date is being sought for a meeting in March. The Board noted that at the March meeting, the Committee will consider the constraints to be applied to the 2022 Board elections and will the draft constraints to the May Board for approval. As requested at the September 2021 Board, the Committee will review the terms of reference and bring a revised copy to the May Board.

**ACTION:** Draft constraints for the RCN Wales Board elections and election timetable to be submitted to the May Board for approval.

#### 4.5 Update from RCN President, Denise Chaffer

The Board Chair gave a special welcome to the RCN President, Denise Chaffer.

The President thanked the Chair and Board for the invitation.

The Board members introduced themselves to the President.

The President noted that it was a challenging time for the College.

She highlighted her passion about patient safety. She works at NHS Resolution and her role is to try and learn from the harm and share learning and cost of harm on retention of nursing. Trying to work in the space of retention. The IC global nursing report shows the scale of the nursing shortages worldwide. Evidence from the NMC indicates that a difference in culture can be a part of some of the difficulties people are

facing. Being Fair – co-authored, so when people are involved in incidents it is important to give a framework for people to follow that is more ethical. Staff assaults, stress, needle stick injuries, back injuries etc are all issues. Senior colleagues are concerned about patient care and about staff. PNC looking at helping and covid materials have been updated and made more accessible. There was a joint webinar with NMC regarding risk of registration and risk of harm. The President met with patient associations, because as organisations, we have a shared purpose.

The President is trying to focus blogs on how we look wider at the pressures including community services, and in equipping system to enable people to die at home. The President also highlighted some of the very positive work going on in forums. She also noted that the RCN is about to re-join ICN and work with Diasper nurse to give opportunities for overseas nurses. The President was keen to get feedback on her blogs.

The cost of re-joining the ICN was queried. The President highlighted that a lot of work had been undertaken since the vote at the AGM which gave the mandate to re-join. It is important to understand what the concerns were that led us to leave the ICN and how these can be mitigated, working with ICN to get best value for money of membership.

The importance of role and status of the president was noted. A Board member felt that over last 20 years the role of the president has diminished. In the 1990s the President worked with ICN, the RCN can learn from and contribute to global nursing.

The President noted that work is underway to ensure that the RCN is fit for future generations, and this is part of KPMG review. She indicated that she personally was a promoter of distributed leadership model and the need to succession plan.

The Chair thanked the President for joining the Board meeting.

#### 4.6 Introduction from the Trustee of RCN Foundation

The Board Chair introduced Greg Dix who is the Trustee of the RCN Foundation and is also the Executive Director of Nursing, Midwifery & Patient Care, Cwm Taff Morgannwg University Health Board.

Greg Dix highlighted the following:

- He had joined charity last September.
- All members of profession can be supported and do not have to be a member of the RCN.

- RCN is sole member of charity, but it has own board of Trustees chaired by Jane Cummings. Each country represented and Chair Welsh strand of the charity and first meeting couple of weeks ago and reviewing the main board and four country committees under governance.
- External advisers are very supportive of charity committees and supporting staff in applying for grants.
- Benevolence arm and hardship grants supported 377 nurses and midwives last year and just under 1000 contacted the charity in relation to finances.
- £150 K awarded to 97 individuals for some form of education but just 5% from Wales. There is not enough communication and stakeholder involvement of what charity can offer to registrants in Wales and need to build on that going forward. Both pre and post reg education as well as support for attendance at conferences and group projects is offered. there is a need to maximise its contribution across all countries.
- Focusing on 2 key project – Children & Younge People with Mental Health issues and Learning Disabilities.
- Exploration of newly qualified nurses and their needs is being considered that embeds equality and diversity in everything.

It was noted that the charity is being promoted to DONs, but there is more work to do in highlighting it more widely and support from the RCN Wales Board would be appreciated. It was suggested that raising awareness in universities would be beneficial.

The Board highlighted that newly qualified nurses had issues with transitioning into registered nurse post and this had been especially the case during the pandemic. HEIW doing work around preceptorship and newly qualified transition. Greg Dix noted that HEI providers in North England leading this and feeds into the business plan of the charity.

It was noted that those who newly qualified during the pandemic were now deemed not to be newly qualified as they have been on covid ward but the ward they intended to transition to they are novices. They therefore need enormous amount of support. Gregory Dix stated that in CTM Health Board the practice education team provide support to those that qualified at the beginning of covid.

The Board asked that when RCN Foundation partnered with Deliveroo, which is anti-trade union organisation, was reputational damage to RCN considered?

Greg Dix said that there was discussion at the Board but the fact that Deliveroo approached the charity with funding to support nurses and midwives the charity made the decision to accept. It is controversial and the charity has to abide by law around charitable donations.

Steve Watson or Susan Williams said they would contact Greg Dix regarding the work of Karen Spillsbury in relation to a report of nurses working in independent sector, Greg Dix will then follow up.

Greg Dix highlighted that the annual report would show proportion of accounts is spent on administrative costs. The last Board approved fundraising strategy and working more with corporate clients to ensure sustainability. The Board noted that any applications need to have evaluation criteria attached prior to funding being awarded.

The Chair thanked Greg Dix who found it useful to speak to the Board and very happy to come again.

#### 4.7 Update on Cangen Gogledd Cymru Branch Plan

The Board received a verbal update from Sandra Robinson-Clark, Chair, Cangen Gogledd Cymru Branch on the branch plans for 2022.

#### 4.8 Update on Cwm Taf Morgannwg Branch Plan

The Board received a verbal update by Richard Jones, Chair, Cwm Taf Morgannwg Branch on the branch plans for 2022.

It was noted that the Independent Sector Conference and advisers were keen to be involved in programme. Board game came to Nursing Now

<https://games.focusgames.co.uk/ZeST/games>

The Director highlighted that there is help and support for branches available including the education and learning and development strategy resources. This is still in phase one and Council are discussing it.

## 5. COMMITTEE REPORTS TO NOTE

### 5.1 Report from RCN Council meetings held on 23 August 2021, 28 October 2021 and 30 November 2021

A report had been received and was noted.

## 5.2 Report from the Professional Nursing Committee meetings held on 2 November and 2 December 2021

A report had been received and was noted.

- It was noted that Rachel Hollis will continue as Chair of PNC for a further term.
- PNC had agreed to input into part of the Independent Governance Review.
- It was noted that Susan Aitkenhead, Director of Nursing and Deputy General Secretary/CEO had resignation. PNC were delighted that the Director will be providing leadership in the interim.
- PNC is trying to forge good relationships with the NMC and was working with Prof Geraldine Walters.
- Long covid – PNC will collaborate with partners undertaking work on long covid and submitted a report for Congress.
- Dashboard and performance issues – strategy phase one and about to launch onto phase 2 (see above).
- PNC produced end of year report in papers outlining key workstreams and outcomes and KPIs.
- SSEC – PNC noted positive impact of securing ss legislation in Wales.
- Digitalisation came from Congress 2021 and every nurse is an e-nurse. Long way to go around e platforms but direction is more becomes electronic.
- HCSW day – PNC 23 Nov supported that.
- Nursing Substitutions – some issues had been raised about posts for nursing posts not advertised for just nurses and its becoming wider so that any health care professional can apply. DL will raise this again.
- 1 February meeting first meeting LM attended with the Director – workstreams priorities and PNC prof framework and protecting the title of the nurse, educational framework which is on track and less of a risk. SSEC front and centre and absolute need to work with TUC on that. Development of research strategy very important and overt. What is the USP of PNC needs to be revisited.

A Board member noted that ICN votes and all discussions about content about the vote but discrepancy in voting patterns in the yes and no votes and this could impact on other votes ie Board elections.

It was noted as important that there should not have problems with digital inclusion for older members.

There was some discomfort around the Foundation as it is now an independent charity setting its own priorities and objectives, and whether these will link with those of the college.

It was noted that the key role of PNC is to protect and promote the identity and role of registered nurses. Further information will be sought regarding voting.

The Chair thanked the Committee member for her contribution.

5.3 Reports of the Trade Union Committee held on 1 and 14 September, 5, 13 and 15 October, 3 and 10 November, 7 December 2021

A report had been received and was noted.

5.4 Reports from the Nursing Support Workers Committee meetings held on 12 October 2021

A report had been received and was noted.

5.5 Report of the UK Representatives Committees

A report had been received and was noted.

5.6 Report from the Students Committee meetings held on 1 November 2021

A report had been received and was noted.

## 6. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Board Chair thanked the staff for their support of the work of the Board.

The Board Chair thanked Board members for all their hard work and support and closed the meeting at 14:25.

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

Date of next Board Open session: 18 May 2022

ET: Helen Whyley, Director, RCN Wales

Email: [helen.whyley@rcn.org.uk](mailto:helen.whyley@rcn.org.uk)