

## Professional Nursing Committee Report to Members – September 2023

1. This report reflects work done by the Professional Nursing Committee since the last report to Council and an update from our most recent meeting on 6 September 2023.
2. Nominations have closed and [candidates have been announced](#) for the election of members to seven seats on the Committee from 1 January 2024. Aquiline Chivinge has been elected unopposed to the East Midlands seat and Tim Grace has been re-elected to the Northern region seat.
3. Voting for the contested seats (Eastern region, London region and the student seat) opens on 18 October and closes on 15 November following which successful candidates will be announced. Unfortunately, no eligible nominations were received for the Northern Ireland and North West region seats. [Nominations](#) for those seats reopened on Monday 9 October.
4. We continue our monthly deep dive sessions, holding our last one on 23 August with a focus on the professional framework project, specifically looking at the levels of practice workstream.
5. As previously reported, our monthly podcast ‘Nursing Matters’ was temporarily halted while an evaluation of its reach and engagement was carried out by the Communications Team. Our intention is to resume recording shortly with a series of six episodes focussing on staffing for release in the New Year.
6. The report of our September meeting follows.

### Chair’s Update

7. Under this item, we noted that Lynn Woolsey, Deputy Chief Nurse, would take up post on 11 September. We welcome Lynn to the RCN and very much look forward to meeting her at our next meeting.
8. We also formally noted our approval by email of the name change request from the Emergency Care Forum (formerly the Emergency Care Association).

9. We discussed the work that is underway to better articulate the role of the Committee and also to better promote the professional work of the RCN. We recognised that there will be a number of opportunities over the coming months to raise this professional profile, for example through development of the RCN Research Strategy, the Staffing for Safe and Effective Care (SSEC) programme and development of the RCN Institute of Excellence.
10. I formally thanked Tim Grace for representing PNC in my absence at the RCN AGM in July and Paul Trevatt for agreeing to represent the PNC on the programme board overseeing implementation of the recommendations arising from the Carr and KPMG reviews.

### **Chief Nurse's Update**

11. Professor Nicola Ranger, Chief Nurse, updated us on the work of the Nursing Department and on the key issues currently facing members across the four countries.
12. She also briefed us on her recent trip to Montreal, Canada, for the International Council of Nurses (ICN) meeting of the Council of National Nursing Association Representatives (CNR). We will be hearing more from Nicola in our next meeting as to some of the key learning from this event.
13. We were delighted to hear of the warm reception given to the RCN delegation, which included Deputy President Tracey Budding, and the positive impact of rejoining the global nursing community at the ICN.

### **Committee Work Programme 2023**

14. We received an update on progress against the Committee's 2023 work programme. Key areas of work for PNC include the professional framework, Staffing for Safe and Effective Care (SSEC), and development of the RCN Institute of Excellence. There are also a number of items arising from Congress that will be added to the next iteration of our work programme including corridor care and suicide prevention.
15. A key part of our role is to monitor and interrogate the Committee's risk register. As at all of our meetings, we spent time looking at this in detail and continue to refine this approach to ensure that we can be assured of the mitigating actions in place for our key risks.
16. We have agreed that a new risk will be drafted around Staffing for Safe and Effective Care for us to review and agree at our next meeting.

## **Professional Framework Project**

17. We received a presentation on work under the professional framework programme.
18. Since our meeting we are delighted that the new [definition of nursing](#) and principles of nursing have been published. They will underpin the continuing development of the RCN Professional Framework.
19. One of the key aims of the professional framework is to set out the RCN position on the levels of nursing practice. Following discussion at our August deep dive session, we formally ratified the RCN definitions of enhanced, advanced, and consultant level nursing practice. We expect these definitions to be published ahead of the RCN Advanced Nurse Practitioner conference on 17 October. They will inform the RCN contribution to the work being undertaken by the NMC on advanced practice.
20. The work of the professional framework will also include work on defining the nursing support workforce and provide clarity on supportive and assistive roles in that workforce; this will be done in collaboration with the Nursing Support Worker Committee.

## **Introduction to the Director of Policy, Communications and Marketing**

21. After having been unable to attend our last two meetings, Phil Ball joined us to introduce himself as the Director of Policy, Communications and Marketing and provide an overview of his portfolio. We look forward to working with him over the coming months.

## **RCN Institute of Excellence**

22. We received an update on next steps in development of the RCN Institute of Excellence and received an overview of the five academies that will constitute the Institute.
23. Many of our priority work areas – including safe staffing, education, learning and development, research, the professional framework, and nursing policy – will migrate to the Institute and we continue our engagement in its development and alignment with our work programme.

## **RCN Position Statement on Nursing Associates Extended Scope of Practice**

24. The Committee reviewed the agreed position statement on the scope of practice of the Nursing Associate which came back to the Committee in the light of recent developments in the other three countries of the UK, most notably in Wales, since it was signed off.
25. Nicola Ranger outlined recent developments in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland in relation to the potential further development of Band 4 roles and the possible introduction of the Nursing Associate role in these countries. We agreed that there was no need to amend the position statement as the points made in relation to the potential for the development of the role outside England addressed the need for the evaluation of the role as implemented in England and the need to develop an England-wide employer code.
26. We concluded that the position statement was clear that Nursing Associates should not be asked to carry out any duty outside their scope of practice, as defined by the NMC, and should therefore not be used as substitutes for registered nurses. The NA role should be in addition to the registered nursing workforce, not a replacement, and this was clear in the statement. It was agreed to publish the position statement agreed and signed off by both PNC and Council as soon as possible.

## **RCN Position Statement on Substitution**

27. We looked in detail at the supporting evidence which has been gathered to inform a revised position statement concerning the risks of substituting registered nurses with other health workers. The RCN's original position statement, '[valuing the role of the registered nurse](#)', was published in 2021.
28. We considered whether publishing an updated position statement on substitution was required as we are developing the position on the ratio of patients to the registered nurse and have recently agreed the position on the specific concerns related to the scope of practice of the Nursing Associate in England.
29. We agreed that the 2021 statement covered the key concerns on substitution but that it needed to be made more easily available to members and stakeholders and that it should be reissued with the inclusion of a selection of case studies, to help illustrate the risks of substitution of the registered nurse.

## **Forums and Networks Review**

30. We agreed that a comprehensive update on implementation of the recommendations arising from the Forums and Networks Review will be presented to our next meeting in October.
31. Nicola Ranger is working on a paper to the Governance Support Committee, now taking place in November, requesting a review of the forums governance processes highlighted in the review, including the steering committee members appointments process and the Forum Chairs election process plus the three-year membership rule that applies across all the RCN's committees.

## **UK Staffing for Safe and Effective Care (SSEC)**

32. At every meeting, we receive an update from the Chair of the UK Programme Board for Staffing for Safe and Effective Care (SSEC) on activity across the four countries.
33. We discussed the strides other countries have made in ensuring safe nurse staffing levels, and how the RCN can use its influence to achieve similar results in the UK. We discussed the plans for this work for the remainder of the year, and in the lead up to Congress 2024, with reference to the development of the College's policy position on ratios - maximum patients to registered nurse safety standards. Staffing levels are our members' top priority, and the Committee continues to have a laser focus on doing everything it can to drive this work forward.
34. Under this item we heard about plans for an international safe staffing summit for invited UK workforce leaders and senior managers being arranged for 12-13 December at RCN HQ. This will feature international nurse leaders and UK academic workforce specialists as keynote speakers who will lay out their own experiences of campaigning for SSEC, including ratios, and the necessity of doing so. I will be attending alongside other members of PNC.

## **Other Business**

35. We noted plans for the RCN's first ever [Nursing Support Workers Day Conference](#) taking place on 23 November at RCN HQ. Registration is now open (for Nursing Support Worker members only).
36. We also discussed concerns that had been raised by members regarding the Oliver McGowan mandatory training on learning disability and autism, the government's preferred and recommended training for health and social care staff. The RCN has formally raised these concerns on behalf of members.

## **Next Meeting**

37. The next formal PNC meeting takes place on 19 October 2023.
38. We also held a joint meeting with the Trade Union Committee on 4 October at which we learnt more about the RCN's new five-year strategy and how this will be delivered and reported on. We also received an extremely informative and thought-provoking presentation on governance at the RCN from Bates Wells.

## **Committee Membership**

Rachel Hollis (Yorkshire and the Humber – CHAIR)  
Siobhan Donald (Northern Ireland – VICE CHAIR)  
Mary Codling (South East)  
Martha Gill (Scotland)  
Tracie Culpitt (Nursing Support Worker)  
Tim Grace (Northern)  
Ray McMorrow (West Midlands)  
Sue Haines (East Midlands)  
Paul Trevatt (London)  
Carolyn Middleton (Wales)  
Suzanne Davies (Student)  
Alison Paterson (Eastern)  
Sally Young (North West)  
Colin Baker (South West)

Apologies for the September meeting were received from Tim Grace, Ray McMorrow and Paul Trevatt.

## **Staff Attendance**

Professor Nicola Ranger (Chief Nurse)  
Wendy Preston (Head of Nursing Practice)  
John Bryant (Head of Member Communications)  
Maxine Nunn (Performance, Risk and Assurance Manager)  
Caroline Clinker (Governance Adviser)

**Rachel Hollis**  
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