

1. This report reflects work done by the Professional Nursing Committee since the last report to Council and an update from our meeting on 16 July 2024.
2. We were delighted to be joined at our meeting by the RCN Institute leadership team including Professor Jane Ball, Director of the

7. We reviewed our risk register and noted the addition of a third risk around student membership and support which covers the risk in the delivery and development of the Students Committee, ambassadors and student membership of the college.
8. We remain concerned about the decline in student nurse numbers and, with reduced applications reported again by UCAS, with the consequential impact on universities. We know that many universities are offering educators voluntary redundancy (and indeed making some redundant) despite the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan committing to doubling student numbers by 2030. We plan to work more closely with the Chair and members of the Students Committee to address these issues. We were assured that following submission of an emergency item to Congress on this topic, the Chair of the Education Forum would be involved in work being undertaken with regards to the education workforce.
9. For the first time, the whole of PNC was able to attend Congress this year. It was great for us all to be able to hear the debates and take part in events on the learning and wellbeing programme. We were able to cover almost all sessions relevant to the work of PNC. Later in our meeting we shared our reflections on Congress and discussed any learning for 2025.
10. Colin Baker, Vice Chair, provided feedback following his attendance as part of the RCN delegation at the [European Federation of Public Service Unions \(EPSU\) 11<sup>th</sup> Congress](#) which took place in Bucharest, Romania in June.

#### Deputy Chief Nursing Officer's Update

11. We were updated on the current key priorities of Lynn Woolsey and Nichola Ashby, our Deputy Chief Nurses.
12. This included an update on development of the RCN Institute of Nursing Excellence and on implementation of the recommendations arising from the Forums and Networks Review which is nearing completion.
13. The slow progress on the implementation of the review is one of the longest standing items on our risk register and we were pleased to see an improving picture with regards to the professional forums. We recognise that there is still a lot of work to do in relation to networks.

14. One of the recommendations which I have been lobbied on many times is the lack of a clear process for establishing and disestablishing forums. PNC reviewed and agreed the new process, which was subsequently approved at the July Council meeting.
15. We received an update on issues relating to students including the review into nursing and midwifery students' practice learning requirements across the UK announced by the NMC in January, and discussed reports we are hearing of a lack of NHS vacancies for newly registered nurses.
16. As noted above, we will be working more closely with the Students Committee in the coming weeks and months to address issues relating to nursing education. We had planned to meet in a joint workshop with the Students Committee the day after our meeting, to discuss some of these issues. Unfortunately, it was a difficult time of the year for our student colleagues, and so this has been delayed until the new year.
17. We noted that the RCN would be responding to the NHS Job Evaluation Group consultation on proposed revisions to the job evaluation matching profile for nursing and midwifery bands 4,5 and 6.
18. We reflected on the success of Congress 2024 and scheduled an additional meeting in August to agree Committee leads for each of the items RCN Council has allocated to PNC.
19. As reported above, PNC members attended many of the learning and wellbeing events to hear further from members with regards to several of our key workstreams and I very much enjoyed chairing the Mona Grey lecture and listening to Professor Jane Ball's presentation on the role of research evidence and ratios.

#### Public Affairs Team Update

20. We welcomed Liam Beattie from the Public Affairs Team to give us a post-general election update on the results across the UK, the new parliamentary make up and the latest happenings in Westminster.
21. He set out the key dates over the coming weeks, including the King's Speech, and highlighted the key actions for the RCN and how the RCN will seek to influence the new government.

## Assisted Dying Update

22. Following the debate at Congress, we were joined by the Chair of the Pain and Palliative Care Forum to discuss the current position across the UK with regards to assisted dying.
  
23. We discussed the challenges of the work underway with regards to assisted dying which we all recognise as a complex position across the different jurisdictions of the UK and the Crown dependencies, with legislation or consultation at different stages. We also



Rachel Hollis (Yorkshire and the Humber – CHAIR)  
Colin Baker (South West – VICE CHAIR)  
Oladunni Akinbulumo (North West)  
Alisha Brown (Student)  
Aquiline Chivinge (East Midlands)  
Mary Codling (South East)  
Tracie Culpitt (Nursing Support Worker)  
Donna Gallagher (Northern Ireland)  
Martha Gill (Scotland)  
Tim Grace (Northern)  
Sonia Henry (London)  
Raymond McMorrow (West Midlands)  
Carolyn Middleton (Wales)  
Alison Paterson (Eastern)

Apologies for the July meeting were received from Alisha Brown and Mary Codling.

Professor Nicola Ranger (Chief Nurse)  
Lynn Woolsey (Deputy Chief Nurse)  
Dr Nichola Ashby (Deputy Chief Nurse)  
Antonia Borneo (Associate Director of Policy & Public Affairs, UK & International)  
John Bryant (Head of Member Communications)  
Christine Callender (Head of Nursing Practice)  
Caroline Clinker (Governance Adviser)  
Patricia Hughes (Associate Director: Nursing Practice)  
Emily McWhirter (Associate Director: Leadership)  
Maxine Nunn (Performance, Risk and Assurance Manager)  
Wendy Preston (Head of Nursing Workforce)  
Jonathan Whale (Personal Assistant to the Deputy Chief Nurse)  
Marcus Wooton (Associate Director: International)  
Natalie Zara (Executive Director of Governance)