

EDI Committee

Draft minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2024,
at Sarah Swift (G01) - RCN HQ, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN

Present:

Jane Cantrell	RCN Foundation Board
Lauren Healan	Student Committee
Lucy Kallen	External Adviser
Roger Kline	External Adviser
Alison Paterson	Professional Nursing Committee
Mehvish Shaffi-Ajibola	External Adviser
Sandra-Jane Stock	Nursing Support Workers Committee
Paul Vaughan	Council Member (Chair of Council)
Sarah Walsh	RCNi Board of Directors
Stephen Watson	Council Member

In attendance:

Patricia Mbasani	Chief People Officer
Wendy Irwin	Diversity and Equalities Co-Ordinator
Kate Thornton	Governance Adviser

Apologies

Jackie Davies	Trade Union Committee
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1 Welcome and Introduction

- 1.1 Chief People Officer, Patricia Mbasani, welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee. It was noted that the Chief People Officer was the Executive Team lead for EDI and would chair the Committee meeting in the absence of a Committee Chair. A Committee Chair and Vice Chair would be elected following the meeting, via email. It was noted all members of the Committee were eligible for the role of Chair and Vice Chair.
- 1.2 As it was the first meeting of the Committee, Committee members introduced themselves and their representation on the Committee.

2 Induction to the RCN

- 2.1 The Committee welcomed Governance Secretariat Manager, Jenny Nicholas, to the meeting, who gave a presentation on the overview of the RCN Group, the RCN's governance structure and the role of committees.
- 2.2 The presentation also included an explanation on conflicts of interest and a brief explanation on the Culture and Governance Review, which was discussed in more detail later on the agenda.
- 2.3 It was agreed to share copies of the KPMG and Carr Reviews with the Committee.
- 2.4 Action: Governance to send copies of the KPMG and Carr Reviews to Committee members.
- 2.5 It was noted that the Committee membership included members from the RCN Group: RCNi and the RCN Foundation, who would be bound by their organisations legal and strategic considerations. It was acknowledged that the core principles of the EDI Strategy were applicable across the three organisations in the RCN Group.
- 2.6 The Committee was particularly interested in its role, as an advisory committee, and its routes of influence within the RCN's governance structure.
- 2.7 It was noted that as the EDI Committee is advisory, its influence lay in its advice to Council. The Committee's role is to monitor activity and provide expert advice and support to RCN Council, Committees and staff, on EDI activities respectively.
- 2.8 Governance Secretariat Manager confirmed that the Committee held responsibility to oversee the EDI Strategy and would have influence in the development and progress of the strategy. It was advised that while the EDI Committee could advise or make recommendations to Council, Committee and staff, it cannot enforce that those recommendations are adopted.

- 2.9 It was noted that the staff leads for EDI and those with operational responsibility for oversight of the EDI Strategy were the Chief People Officer, Patricia Mbasani, and Diversity and Equalities Co-Ordinator, Wendy Irwin.

3 Summary of the Governance Reviews

- 3.1. Executive Director of Governance, Natalie Zara, gave the Committee a presentation on the Governance and Culture Review. The Committee was given the history of the KPMG and Carr reviews which had been consolidated into the Governance and Culture Reviews.
- 3.2. The Committee was advised that following detailed analysis of all recommendations from previous governance and culture reviews of the College, that 38 unique recommendations (URs) were identified and aligned to four operational workstreams: 1. Governance, 2. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, 3. Culture, Training and Development, and 4. Congress. It was noted that from the 38 URs, 221 separate outputs were identified; the progress of this work was overseen by a Partnership Board that is co-chaired by Natalie Zara, and Governance Committee member, Carol Popplestone.
- 3.3. The Committee discussed the composition of the Committee and reflected on whether it felt representative of the nursing workforce. The Committee concluded that what was most important was the committees thinking and its role modelling of accountability and inclusive ways of thinking.
- 3.4. The Committee discussed the importance of being mindful of who was communicating to members. It was noted that it was important that those speaking on behalf of the College were not only inclusive in their voice but also individuals that made members feel safe and were trusted.
- 3.5. The Committee valued the insight into the evolution of the College in relation to these reports and the milestones already achieved. It was noted that updates on the Governance and Cultures Reviews was [available on the RCN website](#).

4 Review terms of reference

- 4.1 Governance Adviser, Kate Thornton, presented the EDI Committee terms of reference for discussion. It was noted that the terms of reference had been drafted originally for an EDI Partnership Group, rather than a committee, which would function differently and have different oversight responsibilities. It was proposed that amendments be made to section 3: *delegated responsibilities* to better reflect the role of the Committee supported by operational staff leads.
- 4.2 The Committee agreed to remove sections 3.1 d, e, g and n. The Committee agreed to amend the wording of section 3.1 l. The Committee agreed to amend the job title for the Executive Team lead for the Committee in sections 5.5 and 12.1.

- 4.3 The Committee agreed to review the revised terms of reference following the meeting and feedback any further suggested amendments via email prior to the terms of reference being submitted to Council for approval.
- 4.4 Action: Governance to circulate the revised terms of reference for Committee members to review prior to them being submitted to Council for approval.

5 Development of the RCN Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

- 5.1. Diversity and Equalities Co-ordinator, Wendy Irwin, gave the Committee the history of previous EDI strategies and presented the origin of the strategy published in May 2024. It was noted that the strategy was member facing and committed the College to outcomes. Other work was due to take place on a staff facing strategy.
- 5.2. The Diversity and Equalities Co-ordinator was candid in the explanation of where the EDI strategies developed between 2017 – 2022 had not been successful and how those lessons learnt had been incorporated into the EDI Strategy published in 2024.
- 5.3. The Committee discussed the importance of accountability, leadership, metrics, narrative and voice in the success of not only the EDI Strategy but the cultural shift the RCN aims to drive forward in the College and the nursing workforce.
- 5.4. The Diversity and Equalities Co-ordinator noted that nurses and nursing is a diverse, complex and changing profession. It would be essential therefore, that RCN activity was suffused with this understanding and reflect this complexity and difference throughout all activity.
- 5.5. The Committee discussed challenges the RCN had faced in the EDI space. It was felt that institutional racism within the College needed to be addressed. It was felt that the RCN was not a strong voice in this space and should be to support members of the nursing workforce who felt unheard. The Committee noted the importance of belonging, representation and relatability.
- 5.6. The Diversity and Equalities Co-ordinator felt that there were some aspects of the strategy that could be implemented readily, for example EDI assessments in RCN governance reporting. The Committee identified the training and support for RCN reps as an important focus given their member facing role.
- 5.7. The Committee was advised that the strategy was in the process of being broken down into discrete actions, outcomes and deliverables which would then be rolled out across the College for implementation; direction and progress of which will be overseen by the EDI Committee. The Diversity and Equalities Co-ordinator noted that the implementation of the EDI Strategy would be supported by evidence based, be well structured and resources, focus on accountability and be supported by relevant metrics.
- 5.8. Having discussed the evolution of the current EDI Strategy, the Committee took the opportunity to discuss what they felt success would look like and what

members should be able to feel, see and hear from the RCN were the Committee and the EDI Strategy was successful.

5.9. During the discussion, Committee members reflected the following:

- Empathy in decision making
- Review and reflection to be integrated in decision making, allowing for positive changes as a learning organisation
- The RCN and its members to have the confidence to have uncomfortable conversations in a mature and meaningful way
- EDI to not be seen as an 'add on' to activities
- Conversations to be converted into action
- To make a sustainable difference as leaders
- For the RCN to be less defensive when challenged in the EDI space
- Using metric to expand the relevance of EDI considerations to those outside specific self-identified groupings
- Process and structures are in place to support growth as an organisation and to support members and staff
- For the organisation to have a curious 'so what?' evaluation to its decision making
- The RCN needed to get 'its own house' in order before it moved into encouraging members to drive cultural change in their workplaces
- Acknowledge that incremental change was still change
- Hearing through lived experience that staff and members felt change through the implementation of the EDI Strategy
- To see less hurt in staff and members
- To be curious in changes in language and to be comfortable with that language
- To acknowledge the cultural differences and similarities between communities of people collectively referred to as the 'global majority', whilst also encouraging those communities to work together.

5.10. It was agreed that the discussion had laid a positive foundation for this new Committee's ways of working.

6 Any other business

- 6.1 The Committee agreed to cancel its scheduled meetings on 31 July and 23 October, preferring to hold a meeting late September/early October. This decision reflected the timeline for the EDI Strategy to be converted to a project plan for the Committee to discuss.
- 6.2 Action: Governance to reschedule Committee meetings July – October.

Date of next meeting: 8 October 2024

Meeting	Meeting Date	Agenda item	Action	Member owner / Committee lead	Staff Lead	Deadline	Status
EDI Committee	2024.06.19	2. Introduction to the RCN	Governance to send copies of the KPMG and Carr Reviews to Committee members.		Kate Thornton	June	Complete
EDI Committee	2024.06.19	4. Review terms of reference	Governance to circulate the revised terms of reference for Committee members to review prior to them being submitted to Council for approval.		Kate Thornton	June	Complete
EDI Committee	2024.06.19	6. Any other business	Governance to reschedule Committee meetings July – October.		Kate Thornton	June	Complete