



Royal College
of Nursing
Northern Ireland

Received
16 OCT 2019
Chief Executive

Appendix A

Royal College of Nursing
17 Windsor Avenue
Belfast
BT9 6EE

Mr Anthony Tohill, Chief Executive
Mid Ulster District Council
76 - 78 Burn Road
COOKSTOWN
Co Tyrone
BT80 8DR

Pat Cullen
Director, Northern Ireland

Telephone 028 9038 4600

9 October 2019

Ref: PC/fa

Dear Mr Tohill

I am writing to you in my capacity as Director of the Royal College of Nursing in Northern Ireland, to inform the Council about developments related to the Royal College of Nursing's safe and effective care campaign and ballot in Northern Ireland.

Within the 5 Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland we now have over 3000 unfilled nursing posts. This equates to over 13% of the total nursing workforce, the highest in all the UK. We believe there is also a similar vacancy rate within the independent sector. Nurses' pay within the health service in Northern Ireland continues to fall behind England, Scotland and Wales. The cost to the public purse of filling nursing vacancies through nursing agencies increased to £50 million in 2018-19.

Nurses have reported serious concerns that there are not enough staff to provide safe and effective care for patients. Nurses are being left to manage high levels of risk daily. These experiences are having a direct impact upon the health and well-being of nurses, with sickness levels amongst nursing staff consequently increasing.

The RCN believes that the current nursing workforce crisis is having an impact upon the health and well-being of the people of Northern Ireland. Equally, nurse staffing issues are having a negative impact upon the productivity of medical staff within the HSC, leading to the longest waiting lists in all of the UK Countries and cancelled operations. These issues are a matter of public concern for the people of Northern Ireland.

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Patron
Her Majesty the Queen

President
Professor Anne Marie Rafferty CBE,
FRCN

Chief Executive & General
Secretary
Dame Donna Kinnair

Director, RCN Northern Ireland
Pat Cullen

RCN Northern Ireland
17 Windsor Avenue
Belfast
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*The RCN represents nurses
and nursing, promotes
excellence in practice and
shapes health policies*





Royal College of Nursing Northern Ireland

The RCN believes there is a clear link between cost-saving measures, inadequate workforce planning, pay disparity and the recruitment and retention of nursing staff. The palpable sense of disillusionment and even anger amongst RCN members in Northern Ireland over these issues continues to grow. As a result, and for the first time in its history, the RCN (UK) Council has now authorised the RCN in Northern Ireland to ballot members employed within the HSC in Northern Ireland for industrial action up to and including strike action.

Our dispute is not with patients or our professional colleagues, and we will make patient safety a priority during any action. Any strike action called by the RCN will ensure that patients are not put at any additional risk. The RCN will always ensure the maintenance of life-preserving services in acute and emergency situations, and we will ensure that robust contingency arrangements are in place in the event of a major incident.

This is a course of action that the RCN would prefer not to have to take but our members now feel that there is no alternative. I would be very happy to meet with you at any time, to further discuss our ballot and any impending action. Please contact fiona.adair@rcn.org.uk if you wish to arrange this.

Yours sincerely

Pat Cullen
Director

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Liam Hannaway
Chief Executive



Comhairle Ceantair
an Iúir, Mhúrn
agus an Dúin
**Newry, Mourne
and Down**
District Council

M/2

16 October 2019

Mr Anthony Tohill
CEO
Mid Ulster District Council
Council Offices
Circular Road
Dungannon
BT71 DT

Dear Mr Tohill

Re: Early Diagnosis of Bowel and Breast Cancer

At a meeting of Newry Mourne and Down District Council held on Monday 7 October 2019, the following Notice of Motion was agreed:

"Newry Mourne and Down District Council notes that early diagnosis of Bowel and Breast Cancer offers Patients the best chance of a successful treatment. England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland all currently use the faecal immunochemical test (FIT) and have a lowered age for screening. NHS England are currently trialling Breast Cancer Screening at the lower age of 47 and the upper age of 72.

This Council will write to the Permanent Secretary for Health Mr Richard Pangelley highlighting the difference in the screening service provision across the UK and Ireland and calling for a review into Bowel Cancer Screening services in the North and to follow the English NHS lead in trialling Breast Cancer Screening at a lower age here in Northern Ireland.

The Council will write to the 10 other Councils requesting that they join Newry, Mourne and Down District Council in calling on the Permanent Secretary to commit to a review of Bowel and Breast Cancer Screening as outlined."

Members were unanimous in their support for lowered age for breast and bowel cancer screening services in Northern Ireland, along with the use of Faecal Immunochemical tests for bowel cancer screening in line with England, Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council would ask for your support in calling on the Permanent Secretary to commit to a review of Bowel and Breast Screening.

Yours sincerely

Mr Liam Hannaway
Chief Executive

/DST

Chief Executive of each District Council

Local Government & Housing
Regulation Division
Level 4
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Town Parks
BELFAST
BT2 7EG

Email: Robert.Cousins@communities-ni.gov.uk

17 October 2019

Dear Chief Executive

HONOURS AWARDS

In January / February 2018 this division facilitated two Honours Awards awareness seminars in Ards & North Down and Causeway Coast & Glens district councils. These were met with fairly positive feedback from attendees and a number of actions were followed up on queries raised. In particular, the issue around timings of nominations was raised and clarification has since been provided to councils.

Since then we have produced Guidance to District Councils on the nomination process which was issued in January 2019 and is reattached for reference. We also issued the PowerPoint presentation used in the seminars.

It was agreed down the line to revisit councils to establish whether an appetite existed to organise and facilitate further Honours seminars/events in early 2020 with the various stakeholders including TEO Honours Secretariat.

This purpose of this memo is to ascertain whether a need currently exists within councils for us to consider running similar events for officials / elected members. This might be the more relevant since the local government elections in May 2019 will have brought an influx of new faces across the political parties.

I would be grateful for your views on the matter and if you could respond to me via the contact details shown above by **Friday 8 November 2019**.

Many thanks for your attention on this matter.

Yours sincerely

ROBERT COUSINS
Local Government & Housing Regulation Division

DfC GUIDANCE TO DISTRICT COUNCILS - NOMINATING SOMEONE FOR AN HONOUR

1. Introduction

- i. The Honours system is a process which begins with the Honours & Appointments Secretariat in London. It filters down to The Executive Office (TEO) and the Head of Civil Service (HOCS) in Northern Ireland and through the various government departments and divisions within those departments, seeking nominations for an award at the appropriate level.
- ii. Local Government & Housing Regulation Division (LGHRD) within the Department for Communities (DfC) manages honours nominations from district councils and liaises with the Permanent Secretary's Office during March and September each year. As this window to receive nominations is fairly tight, council officials and elected members are also encouraged to submit nominations on an ongoing basis. These are held by LGHRD and processed in line with departmental and Honours' Secretariat deadlines. This more flexible approach provides council staff with more time to develop the citation which is a key factor in a successful outcome.
- iii. TEO commission each Honours round to government departments and produce their own guidance to sponsoring bodies including "How to write an honours citation" and a citation form. This guidance is specific to district councils but also covers public nominations which are initially directed to TEO who then approach the appropriate department to agree sponsorship.

2. Types of Award

- i. The range of Awards is determined by the nature of the achievement of the individual and their contribution in "making a difference". A nominator may not be certain which award they wish to choose from the diverse range of awards but council nominations tend to fall into the following categories:
- ii. **OBE** - Distinguished regional or county-wide role in any field, through achievement or service to the community including notable practitioners known nationally. Typically a Chief Executive;

- iii. **MBE** - Achievement or service in and to the community which is outstanding in its field and has delivered sustained and real impact which stands out as an example to others. Typically a councillor, mayor, chair or member of staff; and
- iv. **BEM** - Achievement or contribution of a very “hands-on” service to the community in a local geographical area. This might take the form of sustained commitment in support of very local charitable and/or voluntary activity; or innovative work. Typically a councillor or member of staff depending on activities they are nominated for.
- v. If a council thinks another award may be more appropriate, the council should contact LGHRD for advice. Generally nominations are made for OBE, MBE or BEM, though on occasion advice is sought from TEO via Permanent Secretary’s Office on suggesting a change to what is more appropriate or likely to result in success for the nominee.

3. Route of Application

- i. There are two routes of application. These have different appeals for varied reasons in particular regarding confidentiality and at times when there are issues with the content of the citation.
- ii. Route 1 – This is the conventional route. Councils respond to the commissioning note from LGHRD and complete a Microsoft Word citation template (see Appendix 1) with the nominee’s details with content limited to 450 words. These nominations are usually forwarded to LGHRD via Chief Executive Personal Secretary (PS) staff for consideration either during the short bi-annual commissioning process or on an ongoing basis throughout the year. Queries from LGHRD are usually dealt with through PS staff or other staff depending on confidentiality of the nominee. Letters of support are not necessary where the nomination comes directly from a council.
- iii. Route 2 – This public nomination route is more accessible and provide enhanced confidentiality than applications routed through council. This route enables an individual to nominate a person for an honour and when doing so the **nominator details must be provided. Letters of support must be provided.** Queries about the application are handled between the TEO and the nominator. LGHRD has found, on occasion, that where queries are raised with the nominator there is a proportionately greater chance that feedback is not forthcoming. The link to this nomination form and guidance notes can be found here at <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/nomination-form-and-guidance-notes-uk-national-honour>

4. Principles in selection

- i. The success or otherwise of a nomination in the Honours process is ultimately determined by the Honours & Appointments Secretariat in London using their selection criteria. They apply the Prime Minister's strategic objectives which has merit as the overarching criterion for judging whether an individual deserves an honour.
- ii. Diversity is also an important criteria for example, where there continues to be an under-representation of females (particularly senior women) or members of black and ethnic minority groups. This needs to be addressed.
- iii. Candidates should be identified well in advance of retirement. In some cases, it may take a few years before an individual filters through the national element of the nomination and selection process before they are chosen at a local level. The general rule is that citations should be so timed that the individual concerned will receive the award prior to retirement, i.e. while they are still performing the services for which recognition is proposed. This does not, however, preclude an award being made after a nominee has actually retired.

5. Content of the Citation

- i. A high quality content citation is the one overriding factor in which the nominator can persuade group panels at various levels that the candidate merits receipt of an award, particularly for **voluntary and charitable services** undertaken. This cannot be overstated. In the past citations have often predominately focused on the 'day job', which is no longer viewed as of primary importance.
- ii. A greater emphasis is now placed on voluntary work either to supplement the main basis of a recommendation or for those engaged solely in voluntary activities. As well as recognising the contribution the nominee has made in a particular field it is important to recognise the contribution they have made in charitable or voluntary activities. People with clear evidence of voluntary and charitable contribution are more successful at committee stage.
- iii. A good citation will:
 - be well-constructed and compelling;
 - provide objective data to back up assertions being made about the candidate;
 - provide details of how the candidate has made a real difference;
 - show how a candidate has gone "beyond their job";
 - show how they stand out amongst their peers;
 - provide up-to-date and current information;

- provide details of their voluntary contribution; and
 - Show how they have “gone the extra mile”.
- iv. TEO have produced comprehensive guidance on “How to write an honours citation” (attached at Appendix 2).

6. Further information

- i. This guidance is complementary to that provided by TEO and provides information specifically for district councils about their input into the bi-annual request for nominations.
- ii. This guidance should provide council staff with sufficient information to interact effectively with the department in the Honours exercises. Queries arising during the process are often usually where most lesson are learned so please feel free to contact the LGHRD staff listed below as necessary.
- iii. Robert Cousins – Telephone: 028 9082 3387
Email: Robert.Cousins@communities-ni.gov.uk
OR
Piers Dalgarno – Telephone: 028 9082 3377
Email: Piers.Dalgarno@communities-ni.gov.uk

Local Government & Housing Regulation Division

January 2019

Oifig an Tánaiste
Aire Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála
Office of the Tánaiste
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade

Appendix D



Received
25 OCT 2019
Chief Executive

Councillor Martin Kearney
Chair
Mid Ulster District Council
Burn road
Cookstown
BT80 8DT

22 October 2019

Our Ref: IUKA190432

Dear Councillor Kearney,

The Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr. Simon Coveney T.D., has asked me to thank you for your correspondence of 1 August 2019 to the Taoiseach, conveyed to the Tánaiste for attention.

I wish to apologise for the delay in responding to you, which is due to the high volume of correspondence received by the Department at present.

The Tánaiste has asked me to say that the motion passed by the Mid Ulster District Council in respect of the referendum to extend the franchise for Presidential elections to all Irish citizens resident in Northern Ireland and around the world has been noted and that he appreciates the Council's positive engagement on this important issue.

Thanks to the pioneering work of Ireland's past and current Presidents, the modern Presidency of Ireland has evolved into a powerful democratic symbol. The Presidency is also characterised by deepening peace and reconciliation on the island, and fostering inclusiveness amongst the global Irish family.

The Government believes that it is time to build on that symbolism with a practical proposal to enhance the Presidency's democratic and representative foundations. This would be a tangible recognition of the birthright in the Good Friday Agreement and under the Constitution for every person born on the island of Ireland to be part of the Irish Nation.

In this regard, the Government published the Thirty-ninth Amendment of the Constitution (Presidential Elections) Bill 2019 on 16 September 2019, which proposes to extend voting rights at presidential elections to all Irish citizens of voting age, irrespective of where they may live. Furthermore, the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs announced an order establishing an independent statutory Referendum Commission on 26 September 2019, which will prepare, publish and distribute to the electorate statements containing a general explanation of the subject matter of the referendum, once the Bill has completed all stages in the Oireachtas.

Yours sincerely,



Clare Brosnan
Private Secretary



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Councillor Martin Kearney
Chair of Council
Cookstown Office
Burn Road
Cookstown
BT80 8DT

5 November 2019

Dear Martin,

Thank you for your letter to the Prime Minister passing on the resolution of Mid Ulster Council regarding the election of the Irish Head of State. I am responding on the Prime Minister's behalf.

I am happy to make it clear that Irish citizens, resident in any part of the UK, can vote in all UK elections held in the area in which they live. Irish citizens can stand as candidates in all UK elections at which they can vote. These rights have been explicitly enshrined in UK law for over seventy years and currently derive from the Representation of the People Act 1983.

British citizens resident in Ireland currently have reciprocal voting rights in equivalent elections, so they may vote in Dail and local elections. Irish law is clear that British citizens are, however, not entitled to vote in referendums in Ireland, or in Presidential elections as there is no equivalent election for head of state in the UK.

All decisions concerning voting rights in Irish elections or referenda are entirely a matter for the Irish government. If, following their referendum on the matter, the Irish government decided to enfranchise Irish citizens living outside Ireland in respect of Presidential elections that will be a matter for them and not a matter for the UK Government.

RT HON JULIAN SMITH MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

Marie Ward
Chief Executive



Comhairle Ceantair
**an Iúir, Mhúrn
agus an Dúin**
**Newry, Mourne
and Down**
District Council

Our ref: C/186/2019

11 November 2019

Mr Anthony Tohill
CEO
Mid Ulster District Council
Council Offices
Circular Road
Dungannon
BT71 DT

Dear Mr Tohill

Re: Location of Welfare Appeals

At a meeting of Newry Mourne and Down District Council held on Monday 4 November 2019, the following Notice of Motion was agreed:

"This Council calls on the Appeals Service NI to cease the practice of holding Welfare appeals at local Courthouses, states that these venues are unacceptable for such tribunals as it further traumatises already vulnerable appellants.

Furthermore, that this Council explores the use of disability charities premises to host appeals, as these are less formidable venues, more informal settings, with staff who are accustomed to welcoming and receiving people and putting them at their ease.

Council notes the protracted delays in getting appeals heard and calls on the Chief Executive to write to the head of the Appeals Service NI, and the Permanent Secretary for DFC, requesting an immediate review of venues for such appeals and the formation of a review panel tasked with addressing the unacceptable delays to appeals being heard.

Council write to the 10 other Councils asking them to support this Motion".

Members were unanimous in their support for this motion and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council would ask for your support in calling on the Appeals Service NI to cease the practice of holding Welfare appeals at local courthouses.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Marie Ward
Chief Executive

From the Chief Medical Officer
Dr Michael McBride



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

www.health-ni.gov.uk

Cllr Martin Kearney
 Chair
 Mid Ulster District Council
 Cookstown Office
 Burn Road
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 BT80 8DT

Castle Buildings
 Stormont Estate
 Belfast BT4 3SQ
 Tel: 028 90 520658
 Fax: 028 90 520573
 Email: michael.mcbride@health-ni.gov.uk

Your Ref:
 Our Ref:
 Date: 11 October 2019

Dear Cllr Kearney

Thank you for your invitation to meet with Council members and partners in the community and voluntary sector to explore how we can work together in delivering the Protect Life 2 Strategy for preventing suicide and self-harm.

I welcome the Council's proactivity in this regard and would be pleased to host a meeting with a Council delegation. Action 4.1 of the strategy states that we need to *ensure effective co-ordination with Council community planning on suicide prevention by embedding suicide prevention in all District Council Community Plans*. There are also a range of other actions within the Strategy that the Council could potentially contribute towards.

I would also wish to include Public Health Agency officials in our meeting, as they have a central role in coordinating implementation of the strategy in the Mid Ulster area.

Please contact my personal secretary, Jane Carson, (Jane.Carson@health-ni.gov.uk tel: 028 90520658) to make the necessary arrangements.

Yours sincerely

DR MICHAEL McBRIDE
 Chief Medical Officer

