

## Learning and Development Policy for Council Members

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The RCN runs a training and development programme for Council members. However, from time to time, Council Members may request to attend internal or external learning events, or it may be suggested that they attend, external or internal learning events that are outside of this programme in their capacity as a Council Member, to support them in their governing role.
- 1.2. This document forms the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) Learning and Development Policy for Council Members. It provides a definition of a 'learning and development event', details the aims and objectives of the policy and sets out the processes to follow when a Council member requests to attend a learning and development event that lies outside of the official training and development programme for Council members, or it is suggested that they do so.
- 1.3. Learning and development events differ from events that are defined as 'planned or public social occasions' and covered under the Council Member Attendance at Events Policy.
- 1.4. For the purposes of this document, the term "Member" shall mean an elected RCN Council member and the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Trade Union and Professional Nursing Committees. These members fulfil key governor roles.

### 2. Events

- 2.1. A learning and development event is one that allows members to develop and gain new knowledge and skills required for their governor role.
- 2.2. Learning and development events may be external or internal to the RCN. Types of learning and development events include, but are not limited to:
  - Training courses (internal or external)
  - One to one coaching, mentoring and counselling (external)
  - Workshops (internal or external)
  - Conferences (internal or external).
- 2.3. Where a member attends a Conference as a speaker or ambassador for the RCN, their attendance will fall under the Council Member Attendance at Events Policy. Where a member wishes to attend a conference to develop skills to help them in their role as a governor, this will fall under this policy.

- 2.4. Mentoring is provided for as part of the Council Members' Training and Development Programme. However, any additional mentoring, coaching and/or counselling would fall within this policy.
3. Aims and Objectives
- 3.1. The aims and objectives of this Policy are to:
- Ensure members have access to the learning and development opportunities required for their role as a governor of the RCN.
  - Ensure that learning and development opportunities are fairly distributed amongst members.
  - Ensure that members have the necessary knowledge, skills and experience to fulfil individual and organisational needs.
- 3.2. Funding for learning and development events is not unlimited. All events must be kept within the financial allocation for member training and development in the annual budget.
4. The process to follow when a member wishes to attend, or is asked to attend, a learning and development event
- 4.1. There are three scenarios for which a learning and development event may be identified/requested:
1. The member sources a learning and development opportunity they believe will assist them in their RCN governor role.
  2. It is suggested to a member that they attend a learning and development opportunity that will assist them in their RCN governor role.
  3. The Governance Team or another staff member, having analysed the skills matrix that all members complete or through networking, identify an opportunity for a member to attend a learning and development event that would address a skills gap.
- 4.2. In all cases, the Executive Director of Governance and Governance Team will assess the costs of the event against the budget in the first instance.
- 4.3. Where the budget is available, in deciding whether the member should be permitted to attend the learning and development event the Executive Director of Governance will liaise with the General Secretary and Chief Executive (or an appropriate deputy as required) and the Chair of Council, and take the following factors into consideration:
- The number of learning and development events the member has already attended in the last 12 months and the costs incurred.

- Matters of diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Whether the learning and development event is of direct relevance to the work that member carries out on a Council committee.
- Whether the learning and development event will address an individual's skills gap or address a skills gap among the members, which is related to their governing roles.

4.4. In relation to paragraph 4.3, the Chair of Council may not be involved in a decision about their own learning and development events. When deciding whether the Chair of Council should be permitted to attend a learning and development event, the Executive Director of Governance will liaise with the General Secretary and Chief Executive (or an appropriate deputy as required).

4.5. Where relevant, the Chair of a Council committee will be notified by the Executive Director of Governance as appropriate.

4.6. The Governance Team will keep up-to-date records of member attendance at events, and these will be reported to Council at appropriate intervals.

4.7. The member attending the learning and development event will be expected to report back to Council or the relevant Council committee on their attendance at the event and the learning taken from it.

## 5. Nolan principles

5.1. The RCN is committed to the Nolan principles. This policy will assist Council Members in adhering to, developing and role modelling these principles:

5.1.1 Selflessness: Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

5.1.2. Integrity: Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

5.1.3. Objectivity: Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

- 5.1.4 Accountability: Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
- 5.1.5 Openness: Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
- 5.1.6 Honesty: Holders of public office should be truthful.
- 5.1.7 Leadership: Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.