

Policy and process for when an accredited representative or member elected or appointed to Council, Board or a committee requests to take a temporary period of absence

1. Introduction

This policy and process sets out the process to be followed when:

- 1.1 an accredited representative or a member of Council, a board, or a committee asks to stand down temporarily from an RCN role and how cover for the role is organised
- 1.2 a member is not able to work but it is both appropriate and important for them to continue to carry out their RCN role(s).

2. Standing down for a temporary period

- 2.1 A member who would like to stand down temporarily from an RCN role should contact the relevant Chair or Board/Committee Secretary as follows:-

Accredited Representative or Country/Regional Board member – Board Chair or Country/Regional Director
Branch committee member – Board Chair Country/Regional Director
Forum Steering Committee Chair or Member – Chair of Forum Chairs/head of governance
Council – Chair of Council/head of governance
Other committees - Committee Chair / Secretary to the Committee.

- 2.2 A member who applies for an RCN fixed term staff role should declare any member roles they hold on their application form and if successful should notify the Chair immediately.
- 2.3 The member standing down temporarily will receive a letter from the Secretary to the Committee or Board confirming the length of

the period of absence. If the length of the period of absence cannot be determined at the outset, a date for a review discussion should be agreed.

3. Cover for the absence

- 3.1 In the case of a Council Member it is not possible to arrange for someone else to cover the role since this would be in contravention of trade union legislation. However, the Chair of Council could invite another member from that constituency's Board (country/regional seats) or representative committee (student, nursing support worker) to attend Council in their absence as a stand-in in a non-voting capacity. That member should be either the Board Chair or Vice Chair (country/regional seats) or Chair or Vice Chair (representative committees).
- 3.2 In the case of country and regional boards and other committees a member may be appointed temporarily to the role. The process for such an appointment would follow the RCN's policy and process on appointments for board and committee roles.

4. Extension of the agreed temporary period of absence

- 4.1 Should the member ask for their absence be extended for any reason the Chair, via the secretary, will write to both the member and, if appropriate, their replacement, setting out the new arrangements and agreeing a new end date.

5. Continuing in your RCN role while off work.

- 5.1 Members who are signed-off from work are asked to notify the RCN as soon as that happens to make sure they do not jeopardise their employment situation.
- 5.2 If they wish to continue in their RCN role during this time they should provide their employer with a letter from their GP or other relevant health professional confirming that it is appropriate for them to continue in their RCN role and their employer should write to the RCN confirming that they are happy for the member to do so.

Approved by Council 22 March 2021

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