

RCN Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct provides guidance on the expected behaviour of all members of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) and sets out the standards of conduct that support our values in the work that we do.

1 RCN Principles

- 1.1. The RCN is committed to promoting an inclusive culture for all members.
- 1.2. The RCN welcomes open debate and the free exchange of ideas: where every member feels able to contribute and is assured that their points of view and differences of opinion will be valued and respected.
- 1.3. This code establishes parity between staff and members, holding both to the same standard of conduct.
- 1.4. The RCN will support members and staff who challenge poor conduct and behaviours.
- 1.5. Breaches of this code will be addressed in accordance with The RCN Member Resolution and Disciplinary Policy.

2 RCN Members conduct

- 2.1 Members must comply with all relevant RCN policies.
- 2.2 Members must conduct themselves in a way that reflects the professional standards of its membership and ensures that the RCN continues to be held in high regard.
- 2.3 Members are expected to maintain high standards of personal conduct and treat staff and other members with respect.
- 2.4 Members are responsible for promoting positive behaviours, constructively challenging poor behaviours and reporting concerns where appropriate.

3 RCN Elected and appointed members conduct

Members holding elected or appointed positions have a responsibility to be positive role models, setting an example through their conduct and promoting behaviours that align with the values and standards of the RCN.

In addition to the principles outlined above, all members holding elected or appointed roles are expected to:

3.1 Be respectful to others

- 3.1.1. Recognise that everyone has the right to contribute and should be encouraged to share their views, opinions and ideas. All contributions are valued.
- 3.1.2. Conduct work in a constructive manner, demonstrating a clear commitment to ensuring that all individuals are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect at all times.
- 3.1.3. Promote inclusive teamwork where each person's unique contribution is valued and recognised; enabling individuals to participate fully with dignity and respect.
- 3.1.4. Listen actively and respectfully to others and remain open to different perspectives and opinions.
- 3.1.5. Support decisions reached through democratic, open and collective debate processes.
- 3.1.6. Promote a culture in which individuals feel safe and confident to raise concerns about conduct and behaviour that is offensive, inappropriate or unacceptable.

3.2 Be an advocate for members

- 3.2.1. Where appropriate seek and consider the views of your constituents on issues that affect them.
- 3.2.2. Share relevant information and provide feedback on outcomes where these are not confidential.
- 3.2.3. Ensure that the views of constituents are clearly communicated at meetings and considered in decision-making and voting.
- 3.2.4. Act in the best interests of members.
- 3.2.5. Continue to be approachable and available to your constituents.

3.3 Be Accountable

- 3.3.1. Those holding governance roles must comply with the RCN Council, board and committee members - fit and proper persons criteria.
- 3.3.2. Members must act in accordance with the Standing Orders, Regulations and Royal Charter of the Royal College of Nursing.
- 3.3.3. Members must promote the success of the College for the benefit of its members and exercise reasonable care, skill and diligence in all their duties.

- 3.3.4 Members must be aware of potential conflicts of interest and recognise where their judgement could be influenced by a secondary interest. Members are required to complete and regularly update the register of interests. Where a potential conflict of interest arises, it must be declared in advance of any discussion or decision. This may limit their participation in related discussion and/or decision-making.
- 3.3.5. Members must maintain confidentiality. Information relating to, or held by the RCN, that had not been formally placed in the public domain may only be shared with those authorised to receive it and must be solely for the benefit of the College.

This code of conduct should be read in conjunction with the following:

- The RCN Respect Charter.
- The NMC Code Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates.
- The RCN Council, board and committee members -fit and proper persons criteria.
- The RCN Customer Complaints Policy.
- The RCN Member Resolution and Disciplinary Policy.
- The RCN Policy and process on whistleblowing for Council, boards and committees. The RCN Expenses Policy and Guidance for Unpaid Office Holders.
- The RCN Conflict of Interest/Gifts and Hospitality Policy: RCN Office Holders.
- The RCN Safety and Conduct at RCN Events Policy.
- The RCN Social Media Policy for Members.
- Any other relevant RCN Policies as appropriate.

Reviewed and approved by Council on 07 October 2026

Approved by RCN Council 27 November 2019