

Terms of Reference: RCN Forum Chairs Group

1. Name of Committee
Forum Chairs Group
2. Purpose
 - 2.1 The representative body of Forum Chairs which reports to the Professional Nursing Committee (PNC)
3. Delegated responsibilities
 - 3.1 The role of the Forum Chairs Group is:
 - a) To promote the role and value of forums within the RCN and ensure their voice is heard across the organisation and at Congress.
 - b) To influence the strategic direction of the RCN and help ensure that its priorities reflect the needs of forum members.
 - c) To identify those priority issues on which the forums can work together to influence and shape content and to support the development of RCN policy and approach to professional issues.
 - d) To work together to promote the work of forums and encourage all RCN members to take an active role in forum work.
 - e) To showcase work and to generate ideas, to share best practice between forums and to create opportunities for joint work.
4. Reporting and accountability
 - 4.1 The Forum Chairs Group is responsible and accountable to the Professional Nursing Committee.
 - 4.2 Formal minutes of meetings will be kept and approved at subsequent meetings of the Forum Chairs Group.
 - 4.3 The Forums Chairs Group will work closely with the Forums Co-ordinating Committee to keep each other informed.
 - 4.4 Formal minutes of meetings of the Forum Chairs Group will be made available to the Professional Nursing Committee and the Forums Co-ordinating Committee on request.

4.5 At the request of the Professional Nursing Committee, the Chair of the Forum Chairs Group will attend two Professional Nursing Committee meetings a year to deliver an update.

5. Meetings and quorum

5.1 The Forum Chairs Group will meet at least 4 times a year.

5.2 Special ad hoc meetings may also be called if the business of the Forum Chairs Group is of such urgency that it cannot wait until the next meeting.

5.3 The quorum for carrying on business is half the Group.

5.4 The rules and procedures in the RCN Policy and Process for Running Meetings apply to the Forum Chairs Group.

6. Membership

6.1 The Forum Chairs Group will comprise the elected Chair of each of the RCN's forums.

6.2 If a Forum Chair is unable to attend a meeting, a member of the relevant forum steering committee should be selected by the Chair to deputise for them.

6.3 It is expected that each forum is represented at half of the Forum Chairs Group meetings throughout the year.

7. Observers

7.1 Observers may attend meetings at the discretion of the Chair of the Forum Chairs Group. Observers can speak and/or participate in the meeting only with the permission of, or at the request of, the Chair.

7.2 Individuals attending in observer status will receive those papers relating to the areas relevant to their observer role.

7.3 Observers will not usually attend private or confidential sessions of the Forum Chairs Group.

8. Election to the Forum Chairs Group

- 8.1 The RCN Elections and Appointments Policy and Processes do not apply to the Forum Chairs Group as membership is by virtue of having been elected Chair of one of the RCN's forums.
9. Terms of office
 - 9.1 Forum Chairs will cease to be a member of the Forum Chairs Group when their term of office as an RCN Forum Chair comes to an end.
 - 9.2 The RCN Office Holder Eligibility Regulations shall apply in respect of serving more than one term as a Forum Chair.
10. Mid-term (casual) vacancies
 - 10.1 Due to the make-up of the Forum Chairs Group, casual vacancies would not occur.
11. Chair and Vice-Chair
 - 11.1 In accordance with Rule 2.2 in the Royal Charter the Forum Chairs Group shall have a Chair. A Vice-Chair shall also be elected.
 - 11.2 The Chair and Vice Chair shall be elected every two years by the members of the Group from within the Group.
 - 11.3 The terms of office for the Chair and Vice-Chair shall each be for two years.
 - 11.4 The RCN Office Holder Eligibility Regulations shall apply in respect of serving more than one term.
 - 11.5 The Chair and Vice-Chair must relinquish these roles at the end of the term of office for the role, or if, for whatever reason, they cease to be a member of the Forum Chairs Group including reaching the end of their Forum Chair term of office.
 - 11.6 The process for the election of Chair and Vice-Chair will be conducted in accordance with the RCN Elections and Appointments Policy and Processes.
12. Staff support, advice and guidance
 - 12.1 The lead Executive Director will be the RCN Chief Nursing Officer who will ensure support and advice to the Forum Chairs Group as appropriate.
 - 12.2 Committee members and staff will work together positively and constructively, in line with the RCN's Respect Charter, to deliver

the purposes of the Group and within the RCN Governance Operating Framework.

- 12.3 In the unlikely event that key professional advice presented by staff is not accepted by the Forum Chairs Group the advice and reasons for not accepting the professional advice will be fully documented in the minutes of the meeting. Should the responsible director conclude this position poses a risk to the organisation and its members, the circumstances will be brought to the attention of the General Secretary and Chief Executive who will assess the seriousness of the position and advise the Chair of Council accordingly. Should a resolved position not be reached the matter will be escalated to RCN Council for a determination on the way forward.
- 12.4 The Executive Director of Governance will ensure that Secretariat support is provided by the Governance Directorate.
13. Removal from the Forum Chairs Group
 - 13.1 A Forum Chair may be removed from office before the end of their term if they:
 - a) have exceeded their powers in a way that is detrimental to the RCN.
 - b) have failed to discharge their duties.
 - c) have acted in breach of the RCN's Code of Conduct and/or Respect Charter.
 - d) have acted in a manner likely to bring the RCN into disrepute.
 - e) have failed to attend steering committee meetings.
 - f) have any active cautions from the NMC, or other regulator, against their name, are currently subject to any NMC, or other regulator's, sanction, and/or they are subject to any ongoing disciplinary proceedings with any of their employers or professional disciplinary proceedings before the NMC or another regulator.
 - g) are subject to ongoing disciplinary proceedings in respect of any role they hold at the RCN and/or currently subject to any RCN disciplinary sanction.
 - 13.2 Any Forum Chair removed from office before the end of their term will no longer be a member of the Forum Chairs Group.
 - 13.3 The processes for such removal will be in accordance with the Member Resolution and Disciplinary Policy.

The terms of reference will be reviewed every three years at a meeting of the Forum Chairs Group but may be reviewed sooner if necessary. Any recommended changes will be subsequently approved by the Professional Nursing Committee.

They should be read in conjunction with the RCN Governance Operating Framework, the RCN Group Scheme of Delegation and other documents referred to above.

Version control:

Reviewed by the Forum Chairs Committee on February 2025.

Amendments approved by Professional Nursing Committee on 3 April 2025 (NB: title was changed from Forum Chairs Committee to Forum Chairs Group).

Reviewed by the Forum Chairs Group in February 2026.

Reviewed and updated on 2 March 2026 in light of changes arising from the RCN Office Holder Eligibility Regulations, which came into effect on 1 January 2026, and to ensure the harmonisation of language and policy titles across all Committee and Board terms of reference.