

Terms of Reference: RCN UK Nursing Support Workers Committee

1. Name of Committee
 - 1.1 Nursing Support Workers Committee
2. Purpose
 - 2.1 RCN Council has established the Nursing Support Workers Committee in accordance with Schedule Rule 2.1 of the RCN Royal Charter.
 - 2.2 The Nursing Support Workers Committee represents the RCN members defined under Standing Order 5.2 and the regulation on RCN membership – definitions of membership.
 - 2.3 The remit of the Committee is to provide a voice for Health Care Support Workers, Health Care Assistants, Assistant Practitioners, Nursing Associates and Trainee Nursing Associate members of the RCN and report through the three ex-officio members to RCN Council, the RCN Trade Union Committee and the RCN Professional Nursing Committee.
3. Delegated responsibilities
 - 3.1 The role of the Nursing Support Workers Committee is:
 - a) To contribute to the development of RCN policy relating to Nursing Support Worker members within principles established by RCN Council;
 - b) To advise and be consulted on activity relating to Nursing Support Worker members including recruitment of new members into the RCN through the RCN Boards;
 - c) To liaise and communicate with Nursing Support Worker Members by linking with RCN Boards and put forward their views, ideas and concerns;
 - d) To work in partnership with external stakeholders in line with the decisions of RCN Council and its committees where relevant to Nursing Support Workers;
 - e) To advise and be consulted on RCN strategy and planning where it pertains to Nursing Support Worker members;
 - f) Through the three ex-officio members on the Committee, to ensure that issues specific to Nursing Support Worker

members that may have UK-wide implications are raised with RCN Council, the RCN Trade Union Committee and the RCN Professional Nursing Committee;

- g) To encourage, promote, facilitate and support the advancement of nursing in relation to Nursing Support Worker members in line with RCN strategy and policy;
- h) To ensure that Nursing Support Worker members are embedded in the activities of the RCN at all levels: local, regional, national, and international

4. Reporting and accountability

- 4.1 The Nursing Support Workers Committee is responsible and accountable to RCN Council.
- 4.2 Formal minutes of meetings will be kept and approved at subsequent meetings of the Nursing Support Workers Committee.
- 4.3 The deliberations of the Nursing Support Workers Committee shall be reported to RCN Council and any resolution passed or decision taken shall be reported to RCN Council.
- 4.4 Key messages from Nursing Support Workers Committee meetings will be disseminated via a report to members shared on the RCN website and with Boards/ other RCN committees.
- 4.5 The Nursing Support Workers Committee may set up such sub-committees or other groups as it thinks fit to further its work, but these shall be approved by RCN Council.

5. Meetings and quorum

- 5.1 The Nursing Support Workers Committee will meet at least three times a year. The dates of the meetings shall be agreed by RCN Council in the year preceding that in which the meetings are to be held.
- 5.2 The quorum for decision-making in a meeting is half the Committee.
- 5.3 The quorum for a decision made outside of a meeting via electronic means is at least half the Committee who must put their agreement in writing for the decision to be approved.
- 5.4 Special ad hoc meetings may also be called if the business of the Nursing Support Workers Committee is of such urgency that it cannot wait until the next meeting.

- 5.5 The rules and procedures in the RCN Policy and Process for Running Meetings apply to the Nursing Support Workers Committee.
6. Membership
- 6.1 Members of the Nursing Support Workers Committee must be a member of the Nursing Support Worker constituency as defined under Standing Order 5.2 and the regulation on RCN membership - definitions of membership.
- 6.2 There shall be no more than 15 members of the Nursing Support Workers Committee constituted as follows:
- the Nursing Support Worker member of RCN Council (ex-officio member);
 - the Nursing Support Worker member of the Trade Union Committee (ex-officio member);
 - the Nursing Support Worker member of the Professional Nursing Committee (ex-officio member);
 - one member from each of the twelve RCN UK countries and regions, to be elected by Nursing Support Worker members in each respective country and region.
7. Observers
- 7.1 Observers may attend meetings at the discretion of the Chair and the agreement of the Nursing Support Workers Committee. 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 Nursing Support Workers Committee.
8. Election to the Nursing Support Workers Committee
- 8.1 Elections to the Committee will be conducted in accordance with the RCN Elections and Appointments Policy and Processes and with the specific procedure for each election.
- 8.2 One half of the elected Committee members shall retire every two years.

9. Terms of office
 - 9.1 Terms of office will be for four years except for casual vacancies which will be to the end of the vacant term.
 - 9.2 The RCN Office Holder Eligibility Regulations shall apply in respect of serving more than one term.
 - 9.3 The terms of office of ex-officio members of the Committee will follow the individual member's elected term of office.
10. Mid-Term (casual) vacancies
 - 10.1 A casual vacancy on the Nursing Support Workers Committee shall be filled in accordance with the *RCN's Process for Filling Casual Vacancies*.
11. Chair and Vice-Chair
 - 11.1 In accordance with Rule 2.2 in the RCN Royal Charter the Nursing Support Workers Committee 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 Committee from within the Committee.
 - 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 Nursing Support Workers Committee including reaching the end of their term of office on the Committee.
 - 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 Nursing Support Workers Committee 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 Committee 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 Nursing Support Workers Committee, 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 Nursing Support Workers Committee
- 13.1 A Nursing Support Workers Committee member may be removed before the end of their term of office on the grounds 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 three consecutive meetings (excluding special ad hoc meetings);
 - f) have any active cautions from the NMC¹, 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 The processes for such removal will be in accordance with the RCN Member Resolution and Disciplinary Policy.

¹ Nursing Associates only.

These terms of reference will be reviewed every three years at a meeting of the Nursing Support Workers Committee but may be reviewed sooner if necessary. Any recommended changes will be subsequently approved by RCN Council.

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:

Approved by RCN Council 27 July 2023.

Reviewed by the Nursing Support Workers Committee 25 February 2025.

Amended 28 April 2025 following changes to the template agreed by RCN Council in April 2025.

Reviewed by the Nursing Support Workers Committee 26 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.