

Role Descriptor: RCN Trade Union Committee Member

Reporting To: Council

Basis: In accordance with the RCN Elections Policy and Processes, Trade Union Committee Members are elected for four-year terms and half of the members refresh every two years.

Time commitment (including meetings): The estimated time commitment for Trade Union Committee Members is approximately 2 days per month on average, including some regional activity. This includes formal planned and ad hoc meetings, attending events, reading papers and engaging with members.

The Trade Union Committee meets at least 6 times per year in person, hybrid or online. The majority of these meetings are at RCN HQ (Cavendish Square, London). Trade Union Committee members are also expected, and are funded, to attend annual RCN Congress as well as the AGM meeting which is sometimes held outside of London. Ad hoc meetings of Trade Union Committee may be required between planned meetings for timely discussion and/or urgent decision making.

Trade Union Committee members sit in an ex-officio capacity on their country or regional Board which meets approximately 3 times per year or, in the case of the Nursing Support Worker and student members of the Committee, on the Nursing Support Workers and Students Committees respectively which meet approximately 5 times per year.

Expenses: Trade Union Committee members may reclaim all travelling and similar expenses in accordance with the RCN Expenses Policy.

Eligibility: The eligibility requirements applicable to the Trade Union Committee are set out in the RCN Elections Policy and Processes document. Depending on the category of member, different criteria apply; members of the Trade Union Committee, with the exception of the Student member, must however be RCN accredited representatives.

Purpose of the role: Trade Union Committee members hold key roles as governors of the RCN. Under the leadership of the Chair of the Trade Union Committee, Trade Union Committee members have a collective duty to be responsible and accountable to RCN Council to carry out governance functions as aligned to the trade union and employment relations functions of the RCN, as delegated by Council.

The Trade Union Committee aims to:

- provide leadership and direction on trade union matters and ensure the RCN has a clear vision for its activities as a special register trade union.

- act as an advocate for and voice of members in relation to employment relations matters.
- foster strong working relations with members and ensure their views and expertise on employment issues are harnessed and engaged.

Trade Union Committee members should not involve themselves in the day-to-day operations of the RCN, but may, from time to time, work with RCN staff members to achieve results. When representing the RCN in a public space in their capacity as a Trade Union Committee member, Trade Union Committee members should ensure that their actions do not bring the RCN and profession into disrepute, and they should take care not to take public positions contrary to those of the RCN.

Key responsibilities of the role include:

- Developing a clear vision for the RCN's trade union functions and activities and to champion and support the RCN in its role as a special register trade union.
- Driving work to protect and enhance members' pay, terms and conditions of employment including providing advice, making recommendations to RCN Council, and/or approving decisions on trade union and employment relations.
- Identifying key employment relations issues and leading the member voice in UK, national and local campaigns and being a sounding board for staff on specific trade union and employment relations issues.
- Engaging with members and ensuring that their feedback is taken into consideration during Trade Union Committee discussions in the interests of furthering the RCN purpose for the membership as a whole.
- Ensuring that the RCN provides members with appropriate representation and support.
- Timely information sharing and communication with RCN activists and the wider membership to ensure a shared understanding of the work being undertaken; promoting and disseminating completed pieces of work or policy positions; and growing the RCN's representative community to ensure the RCN has a visible face in the workplace.
- Acting as an advocate and ambassador for the RCN and nursing among members, the wider public and a broad range of stakeholder organisations including formally representing the College at stakeholder and other events and meetings which are held in furtherance of the RCN's strategic aims.

- Attending Trade Union Committee meetings as set out in the calendar of meetings, reading meeting papers in advance and participating constructively in debates about matters concerning the nursing profession in the four countries.
- Bringing impartiality and objectivity to meetings and decision-making and contributing to the creation and maintenance of an inclusive and open culture.
- Accepting collective responsibility for the decisions reached by Trade Union Committee. Members elected by particular constituencies should not act as if delegated by the group they represent and should not be bound in any way by mandates given to them by others.
- Fostering and maintaining constructive working relationships with fellow members of Trade Union Committee and key members of staff, including the relevant Executive Team leads, to ensure that roles are understood and responsibilities are met.
- Upholding the values, decisions and policies of the RCN, acting with integrity and committing to the highest standards of behaviour as set out in the RCN Respect Charter and Code of Conduct.
- Attending the RCN's annual Congress, the AGM and other General Meetings as required.
- Demonstrating a strong commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI).
- Committing to induction and learning and development opportunities in order to perform effectively as an individual and as part of Trade Union Committee.
- Depending on the role held, being a member of a constituency board or committee (for example, country or regional board, Student or Nursing Support Worker Committee).
- Maintaining up-to-date declaration of interests for publication on the website.
- Undertaking other specific activities on behalf of the RCN as discussed and agreed with the Chair of Trade Union Committee and the Executive Lead.

Person specification:

All Trade Union Committee members must be able to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and values:

1. an understanding of, and commitment to, the RCN, its purpose, its work and its role as a Trade Union and a professional membership body and Royal College and experience and knowledge of nursing and employment relations issues across the UK.
2. a passion for nursing and trade unionism and an understanding of the distinctiveness of the RCN as the voice of nursing and the need to promote it more widely
3. an understanding of the challenges and issues currently faced by nursing and health care nationally and internationally.
4. evidence that you value the contribution of accredited representatives and other RCN representative roles.
5. the ability to listen to, and speak up, for RCN members.
6. an active commitment to the RCN Respect Charter, EDI and the Nolan Principles.
7. a willingness and ability to devote the necessary time and effort.
8. a readiness to take and be accountable for decisions.
9. understanding and experience of governance, management and leadership.
10. integrity and commitment to act in the best interests of the RCN without regard to personal interest or benefit.
11. objectivity, fairness, independence of mind, integrity, wisdom, discretion, good judgement, and the gravitas to be taken seriously at the highest levels UK-wide and internationally.
12. The ability to give direct and honest opinions and add value to decision making by offering different perspectives and constructive suggestions.