

Role Descriptor: Vice-Chair of Congress

Title: Vice-Chair of Congress

Reporting To: Council

Basis: In accordance with RCN Standing Orders, the Vice-Chair of Congress is elected for a term of office covering the next two annual meetings of Congress from amongst the voting entities of RCN Congress. Depending on the dates of Congress, this is a term of c2 years. The Regulation on Terms of Office will apply in the case of re-appointment thereafter.

Time commitment (including meetings):

The Vice-Chair of Congress is a member of the Agenda Committee, therefore they are expected to attend Agenda Committee meetings and Congress. The Agenda Committee meets at least 5 times per year either at HQ or online/hybrid including an annual two-day meeting in January. The annual meeting of Congress takes place in a UK location outside of London. The duration of Congress is around 6 days for the Agenda Committee including twice daily meetings during Congress week.

Ad hoc meetings of the Agenda Committee may be required between planned meetings for timely discussion and/or decision making.

Eligibility: The Vice-Chair of Congress must have registered for and attended Congress in at least two of the last four years it has been held and must be a fully paid-up member in the Nurse membership category. They must also adhere to any other relevant eligibility requirements set out in the RCN Elections Policy and Processes document.

Purpose of the role

The Vice-Chair of Congress supports the Chair of Congress in the delivery and organisation of the annual meeting of RCN Congress, deputising for the Chair of Congress in their absence. The Agenda Committee is accountable to Council, and recommends to Council the agenda items for debate during Congress, as well as receiving and considering emergency agenda items during Congress week.

Key responsibilities include:

- Working in collaboration with the Chair of Congress in the best interests of the RCN.
- Fostering and maintaining constructive working relationships with the Chair of Council, General Secretary & Chief Executive and other key members of RCN Council and staff to successfully oversee and deliver the annual meeting of RCN Congress.

- As a member of Agenda Committee contributing to their role to deliver the business of the annual meeting of RCN Congress with a particular focus on supporting the Chair of Congress, and to help ensure the Agenda Committee fulfils its role and responsibilities in line with established policy and procedure.
- Assisting the Chair of Congress with elements of chairing RCN Congress including updating Congress delegates on the deliberations of the Agenda Committee meetings during Congress week and on media coverage received.

Deputising for the Chair of Congress when required or in their absence by:

- Chairing the annual meeting of RCN Congress and overseeing the formal processes that enable its smooth running and facilitating healthy and productive debate.
 - Working in collaboration with the other members of the Agenda Committee and Governance Team to ensure that rules and procedures for managing the meeting of Congress are observed and that business is managed effectively.
 - Chairing the Agenda Committee, ensuring that it functions effectively and meets its objectives in a collaborative and timely manner including meeting its obligations in respect of the annual planning cycle of RCN Congress, and that it acts in accordance with its terms of reference at all times.
 - Being accountable to Council for the effective delivery of the annual meeting of RCN Congress including reporting to Council on the activities of the Agenda Committee and updating Council on all Congress matters. This could involve attendance at Council meetings.
 - Ensuring the meaningful, effective and respectful participation by RCN members in Congress, ensuring that their views and opinions are fairly heard and considered.
 - Controlling and facilitating full and balanced discussions and managing matters raised from the floor with due care and consideration.
- Demonstrating a strong commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and leading by example.
 - Acting in the best interests of the RCN to enhance its reputation as a respected trade union and professional body for nursing staff.

- Upholding the values, decisions and policies of the RCN and acting as a role model to members and to nursing more widely.

The Vice-Chair of Congress should not involve themselves in the day-to-day administration and 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 Vice-Chair of Congress, they 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.

Person specification:

The Vice-Chair of Congress should be able to demonstrate:

1. A sound understanding of nursing and health issues across the UK and internationally.
2. A sound understanding of RCN Congress, including the needs of RCN members and the meeting rules and procedures.
3. An understanding of, and commitment to, the RCN, its purpose, its work and its role as a Trade Union and a professional membership body.
4. Integrity and commitment to act in the best interests of the RCN without regard to personal interest or benefit.
5. Objectivity, fairness, independence of mind, integrity, wisdom, discretion, good judgement, and the gravitas to be taken seriously at the highest levels.
6. The ability to give direct and honest opinions and add value to decision making by offering different perspectives and constructive suggestions.
7. The resilience and ability to take accountability for decisions and to chair the annual meeting of Congress (if required) which is attended by 2000+ delegates and attracts significant media and public attention.
8. The ability and skills to communicate confidently, facilitate effective debate with diplomacy and tact and to demonstrate sound cultural and political sensitivity.
9. Awareness of how the world is changing politically, economically and socially.
10. Commitment to the role of Vice-Chair of Congress.
11. Demonstrate active commitment to the RCN Respect Charter, promoting EDI and Nolan Principles and fostering inclusivity at Congress.

