

How to justify your attendance at a Conference

Many budgets have been slashed, and NHS trusts and other healthcare providers are increasingly reducing or cutting training budgets to save costs. However, your continuing professional development is important for your practice and future career. Conferences, professional seminars and workshops are a great way to keep yourself and your CPD updated.

If you feel that the training you receive at a conference is worth the cost, then you'll probably need to justify it. Events can be difficult as there is the time off you'll need to attend, as well as the cost of travel and sometimes accommodation if it's too far from home. You need to prove the time away from your workplace is both value for money and will directly improve the care you provide your patients.

Benefits of participating in the conference

Here are some of the benefits of attending our events you may wish to flag with your employer:

- By supporting your attendance your employer is positively demonstrating their commitment to your continuing professional development. At this conference you can accrue hours of participatory CPD.
- Hear from eminent keynote speakers updating you on latest developments and best practice within nursing practice, making sure you stay updated on this fast paced area of care and are following the latest guidelines
- Real life case studies will focus on service developments. Understand different models and how these can be used to enhance patient care and outcomes.
- You can use this learning to produce written reflective pieces of learning for your portfolio of evidence for revalidation.
- Use the day away from work to reflect on what you can do to improve your own practice and be prepared for the future.
- Identify personal opportunities for lifelong learning.
- Utilise opportunities to network with colleagues
- Return to your workplace inspired, with fresh ideas and new learning to share with your wider team.
- You will discover new techniques, procedures and best practice that could be implemented in your work setting to improve patient care and outcomes.

Some tips to consider...

Attending the conference – Use the time at the event to network and make new connections, picking up tips and sharing best practice.

Evaluate your time – spend some time during and after the event writing notes and consolidating what you have learnt.

Update your CPD portfolio – All accredited courses or conferences will issue you with a certificate of attendance or completion. Make sure you transfer your reflections and learning's so you can validate your CPD.

Share best practice – Following the event, distribute the information amongst your team, act on it and follow up showing your employer where improvements have been made as a result of the event.

Highlight areas for improvement - This also allows you to highlight areas for improvements to ways of working and service delivery.

Disseminate the learning - Whenever you go to an event you can share what you've learnt by giving a presentation to your colleagues on what you've learned. By sharing the information, you reduce some of the jealousy felt because you got to go instead of them, and the training experience for others is invaluable. If you're uncomfortable presenting in front of others, then just concentrate on providing a good report.

Implementation is key - Implement at least one performance change you've learned. Be sure to document the savings, and emphasise that these savings would not have been made if you had not attended the event.

Compare and contrast - If you're trying to justify the cost of an event, simply compare it to almost any education course. RCN Events are almost always better value for money, we have an in-house team who have built up relationships with venues and suppliers to offer our service at the best possible price to you.

Requesting the time – The RCN has a letter template to help with requesting time off work to attend an RCN Event. The letter template helps to outline your objectives for attendance and the key learning outcomes, making sure you relate these to impacting best practice and patient care and provides the total cost of your attendance. If you would like a copy of this template please email rcnevents@rcn.org.uk.

RCN Events

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