



RCN Stewards

Role descriptor

When members face difficult employment issues, RCN stewards ensure that they feel empowered to speak up and engage in formal processes. Stewards also represent them when needed.

RCN stewards build strong relationships in their workplace to identify individual and collective issues and engage with employers to advocate for needed changes being made and fair processes being followed.

UK trade union stewards have legal protections, including protection from unfair dismissal for trade union activities and the right to paid time off for union duties and training. These rights are outlined in UK law, detailed under the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Acts 1992.

As an RCN steward, your role may include the duties below.

Engaging members

- Ensure you make regular visits across your workplace to meet members, including student members, and identify issues which may need raising with management.
- Take part in orientations for new starters, including for students.

Tackling issues

- Undertake casework and/or other representation of members (whether individual, group, or collective) on issues such as grievances, disciplinarys, conduct or capability, sickness absence and return to work, flexible working requests, and job evaluation, in line with the needs of your workplace.
- Work with RCN health and safety reps and RCN learning reps on cases where relevant.

Creating long-term change and improvements at work

- Represent and negotiate for members and the workforce on staff side and in partnership forums (eg, Joint Consultative Negotiating Committee, Health and Safety Committee, Learning and Development Committee, etc.)
- Communicate national RCN campaigns to members and co-ordinate activities where relevant.
- Run local and workplace specific campaigns and activities to win positive change for members where needed.

Ensuring an equal and fair workplace and profession

- Represent members facing discrimination and unfair treatment.
- Campaign for inclusive policies and cultures.
- Monitor any disparities in pay, conditions and treatment between employees from different backgrounds and communities, and advocate for these to be acted upon.
- Ensure RCN meetings and communications reflect the diversity of the workforce.
- Promote allyship and challenge exclusionary behaviours in the workplace and RCN spaces.
- Engage with staff EDI networks and/or leads, self-organised groups and RCN networks.
- Ensure RCN reps and members are supported and encouraged to contribute to workplace EDI initiatives and policies.

Co-ordinating RCN presence in the workplace

- Hold regular meetings with fellow reps to coordinate efforts and ensure all members in your workplace are kept updated on RCN activity.
- Serve as a contact point for RCN activists such as student ambassadors and voting volunteers.
- Ensure your RCN contact details and availability are clear to all members.
- Keep noticeboards and intranet updated with RCN materials and meeting info.
- Recruit and support new reps and members, including student members.

Engaging with the RCN

- Attend and update branch meetings and AGMs when possible.
- Work with RCN officers and your region to share workplace insights.
- Participate in support and supervision with your RCN officer.
- Maintain and develop your rep skills through ongoing learning and development.
- Record rep activities on the RCN system provided.

Please note that members who are stewards, health and safety reps or learning reps, and who hold principal governance committee roles within the RCN, may be unable to carry out the full remit of the role due to their additional governance responsibilities.

Additionally, to be clear, representatives elected into principal governance roles such as the RCN Trade Union Committee, RCN Professional Nursing Committee or RCN Council should not be placed on hold where they are fulfilling their national governance duties and responsibilities.