The Royal College of Nursing Trade Union Committee – terms of reference

1. Name of Committee

The Royal College of Nursing Trade Union Committee

2. Purpose of the Committee

The purpose of the committee is to undertake on behalf of RCN Council that part of the work of the RCN related to its role as a special register independent trade union.

3. Role of the Committee

The role of the committee is:

- to be accountable to RCN Council for its work and the decisions it takes;
- to set the priorities for the RCN in relation to its role as a special register independent trade union and ensure they are actioned;
- to work with Country and Regional Boards to ensure that the priorities for the RCN in relation to its role as a special register independent trade union are actioned locally;
- to enable members to participate in the work of the Committee and ensure that their views, ideas and concerns inform decision-making and influence our trade union activity;
- to ensure that the Committee works in partnership with external stakeholders;
- to be mindful whilst undertaking it’s work of the need to respond flexibly to business, financial, legal or other needs that may arise.

4. Responsibilities

- to shape, support and promote, on behalf of Council, all of the trade union functions of the RCN across all sectors. In particular:
Collective bargaining

- Through collective bargaining and partnership working, at national and local levels, to ensure that the ‘members’ voice’ is engaged and reflected in RCN collective activity
- By all relevant mechanisms, to work to protect and enhance members’ pay, terms and conditions of employment

Organising

- To extend and enhance, across all members’ working environments, the RCN’s influence and impact on employment relations issues, in all four countries of the United Kingdom
- To ensure that the RCN has the capability, through its recruitment, organising, and other activities, to provide effective and high quality representation of members, individual and collective, in need of support in their work and professional lives

Representation

- To ensure fair and effective representation of members experiencing difficulties in their workplaces
- To ensure that RCN representatives are valued and supported, and to be responsible for their recruitment, retention, competencies, training and development
- To ensure that the RCN’s case management arrangements are fit for purpose, and designed to deliver high quality representation that will achieve the best possible outcomes for members

Equalities and inclusion

- To support, promote and oversee the RCN’s equalities and inclusion work, ensuring that the RCN strategy is embedded in all of the RCN’s structures and activities
- to shape and influence the public policy and the political and lobbying agenda on issues related to the work of the RCN in its role as an independent special register trade union;
- to make recommendations to RCN Council on strategic policy priorities and forward planning;
- to commission and quality assure project work in the priority areas identified
• to champion work on relevant RCN Congress items, once approved by Council;

• to oversee the governance of the UK Representative Committees and ensure that their work is integrated into the RCN’s work related to its role as a special register trade union and the delivery of its priorities in addition to reflecting the particular needs of accredited representatives;

• to be accountable for and monitor the RCN’s performance as an independent (‘special register’) trade union and the Committee’s performance and effectiveness against key performance indicators, its annual plan and budget.

5. Membership of the Committee

Members of the Committee must meet the criteria set out in the RCN elections policy and process document.

6. Elections to the Committee

Elections to the Committee will be conducted in accordance with the RCN elections policy and process document and the specific election procedures for the committee, as agreed by RCN Council.

7. Term of office

The term of office of members of the Committee shall be four years and the number of terms of office shall be consistent with the RCN’s Regulation on Terms of Office.

One half of the Committee shall retire every two years.

8. Mid-term (casual) vacancies

A vacancy on the Committee shall be filled in accordance with the RCN elections policy and process document.

9. Chair and vice chair of the Committee

There shall be a Chair and vice chair of the committee elected by members of the committee every two years following elections to the committee.
10. Meetings and quorum

Meetings of the Committee shall take place a minimum of three times a year.

The quorum for each meeting shall be half its membership, or if an odd number (for example in the case of vacancies on the committee) rounded up.

11. Reporting to RCN Council

The Committee will provide a report to RCN Council at each of its meetings or as determined by RCN Council.

12. Secretariat to the Committee

The Secretariat to the Committee shall be provided by the RCN Group Secretary or their delegates

13. Removal from the Committee

A Committee member may be removed before the end of their term of office on the grounds that they have:

a) exceeded their powers in a way that is detrimental to the RCN
b) failed to discharge their duties
c) acted in breach of the RCN’s Dignity Charter
d) acted in a manner likely to bring the RCN into disrepute

The policies and processes laid down by RCN Council in relation to disciplinary and competence matters will be followed in such circumstances.
Schedule 1 – Delegated Policies

The following bullet points are the areas of work that have been delegated to the Trade Committee by the RCN Council, and are therefore within the Committee’s remit it to provide expert advice and strategic direction on:

- Collective Bargaining
- Organising
- Representation
- Membership
- Equalities and Inclusion
- Public policy related to the work of the RCN in its role as a special register trade union
- Political affairs and the lobbying agenda related to the work of the RCN in its role as a special register trade union.

Schedule 2 – The Reporters

(To be completed by the Committee)