to make a difference

Wear the badge on the outside.
Feel the pride on the inside.
Our representatives are vital links between the RCN and our members. They’re our ambassadors in the workplace, helping to influence policies, assist members and shape our profession.

The blend of personal attributes that are needed to be a good rep are rare qualities indeed. That’s why we do everything we can to support our representatives, giving them the time to grow and the tools to succeed. As well as a legal entitlement to reasonable paid time off work to fulfil your duties, you’ll benefit from comprehensive learning and development programmes that are tailored to your role.

If you’re hungry for a new challenge, then you could make a difference as an RCN representative in one of three roles:

**Learning reps**
- support the ambitions of our members by promoting learning and career development.

**Safety reps**
- help to ensure our members operate within a healthy and safe working environment.

**Stewards**
- protect the rights of our members, ensuring fair treatment on all employment-related matters.
As an RCN learning representative, your primary role would be supporting the ambitions of our members by promoting learning and development opportunities.

Providing nursing staff with high quality appraisals and good access to learning opportunities contributes to a positive patient experience. That means your role as a learning rep is really important for both patients and for the job satisfaction of your colleagues.

With close support from the RCN, your role will include:

- supporting members on the planning and managing of their learning and development
- enabling members to meet continuing professional development requirements for safe and effective practice
- promoting the latest opportunities, information, resources and support available to members
- empowering members to pursue their aspirations and progress their career with the support of the RCN.

The role of learning representative can be extremely fulfilling personally. It’s also vital in preventing repeated mistakes. You’ll work closely with RCN stewards to identify workplace errors that may have been caused by capability issues, before identifying proactive learning solutions.

“I love my role as an RCN learning rep. Not only have I helped to improve the knowledge, skills and confidence of the people I work with, but my personal development has been more than I could have ever imagined – I’ve grown both as a practitioner and as a person.”

An RCN Learning Rep.
As an RCN safety representative, your primary role would be ensuring our members operate within a healthy and safe working environment.

We know that unhealthy working environments can affect the physical and psychological health of nursing staff, which can in-turn harm the consistent delivery of quality patient care. That's why the role of safety rep is crucial for both members and for patients.

With close support from the RCN, your role would typically include:

- influencing the employer to work towards a healthy and safe working environment
- carrying out safety inspections and contributing to risk assessments in the workplace
- representing RCN members on any matters associated with workplace accidents or incidents
- working in partnership with employers to ensure full compliance with all relevant health and safety legislation.

As a safety representative, you'll have the opportunity to play a pivotal role in launching new initiatives. You will liaise at all levels across your workplace, contributing to strategic decision making to safeguard the wellbeing of your colleagues.

"As a safety rep, I’ve taken a central role to highlight the increasing frequency of attacks on nurses. I’ve been empowered to take policy to the highest level, whilst also ensuring the RCN has a vocal ambassador on a local level. I’m proud to be able to have a sincere and lasting impact on working practices."

An RCN Safety Rep.
As an RCN steward, your primary role would be to protect the rights of our members, ensuring fair treatment on all employment-related matters.

It’s a fact that workplaces with good employment practices have better patient outcomes, so the role of an RCN steward allows you to directly influence standards of patient care, whilst also improving the working lives of your colleagues.

With close support from the RCN, your role would include:

- preparing and presenting cases on behalf of our members
- giving support, advice and representation to members in cases of grievances, disciplinary procedures, or any concerns associated with employment conditions, equal opportunities or job evaluations
- contributing to the prevention and resolution of disputes in the workplace
- influencing positive employment relations, whilst educating RCN members regarding their rights as an employee
- forging partnerships with other unions and employers to ensure compliance with good employment practice.

As a steward, our members would look to you for help if they ever feel discriminated against at work, are unsure of their rights, or are concerned about poor working standards. That means you’ll be in a position to help members in a time of need, which can be extremely fulfilling both personally and professionally.

"I chose to become an RCN steward because I believe passionately that in order to support patients effectively, nurses and HCAs must also be supported. The role empowers me to tackle important issues, meaning I can have a genuine impact whilst promoting best practice."

An RCN Steward.
Proud to help fellow members

As a proud professional, there aren’t many things more rewarding than knowing you’ve made a difference. And as an RCN representative, that sense of personal fulfilment will be ever-present.

In return for your commitment, we’ll ensure you benefit from:

- support from a close network of RCN staff and reps
- development and continuing learning opportunities
- access to specialist resources within the RCN website
- inclusion at high profile national conferences and events.

As you’d expect, the RCN provides close support for all representatives. From the initial learning and development programme for newly accredited reps through to advanced skills workshops as part of your continuing learning and development, you can rest assured that we’ll be ready to help every step of the way.

You’ll work closely with a mentor who can offer ongoing advice and support that is tailored to your specific needs and founded on their own personal experiences.

You’ll also enjoy access to a dedicated support section on the RCN website, whilst receiving free subscriptions to Nursing Standard and the monthly Activate magazine.

Last but by no means least, as a valued member of our rep community, we’ll ensure you benefit from reasonable time off work – fully paid – to fulfil your additional duties to the best of your ability.

"The passion and commitment of our reps never ceases to amaze me. Through their support for RCN members, they directly influence working conditions, professional development and ultimately, patient care. I’ve always considered them to be the lifeblood of the RCN, and I know that health care just wouldn’t be the same without them."

Dr Peter Carter, Chief Executive & General Secretary
If you feel ready for the challenge, we'd be proud to have you represent us.

As you strive to make a difference in your role as a rep, there'll inevitably be times when you’ll feel tested. But we’ll be with you every step of the way, offering the support and development you need to overcome challenges and make a real and lasting impact in the workplace.

To find out more, speak to your local representative, get in touch with RCN Direct by calling 0345 772 6100, or contact your region or country office.
I confirm that I have discussed the RCN’s expectations of representatives, the L&D pathway for RCN reps and the application process with the named person above.

I agree to work in partnership with the learner and will follow the guidance within the RCN Dignity Charter for Members. I have explained my role, the mentorship support process and I am confident we both understand our responsibilities.

I agree

Region/Country

Branch

Signature

Date

For internal use only
1. Enquiry form received by RCN office

On / / By

Region/Country

Branch

2. Discussion about the role to be carried out by mentor using the RCN's statement of expectations

Name

3. Confirmation that the discussion has been carried out by mentor

Type of representative the prospective representative wants to become

☐ Steward ☐ Safety ☐ Learning

For the RCN Mentor, please tick and sign

I confirm that I have discussed the RCN’s expectations of representatives, the L&D pathway for RCN reps and the application process with the named person above. I agree to work in partnership with the learner and will follow the guidance within the RCN Dignity Charter for Members. I have explained my role, the mentorship support process and I am confident we both understand our responsibilities.

☐ I agree

Signature

Date / /

4. Information given to member – date of next branch meeting, contact details for link representative, branch and local RCN office

On / / By

Role

And MD record updated

On / / By

5. Completed and ratified application form received by RCN Office

From branch on date / /