

| |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Who does this policy apply to? |
| This policy applies to elected RCN Council Members. |
| Purpose and description of the document |
| This policy provides a definition of 'event' and details the aims and objectives of the policy. It also sets out the processes to follow when Officers and Council Members are requested to attend events. |
| Document name |
| Attendance at events policy for RCN Council members |
| Author/s |
| Executive Director of Governance |
| Status and version |
| Approved – Version 1 |
| Policy owner |
| Executive Director of Governance |
| Date policy approved and by whom |
| RCN Council 24 July 2024 |
| Date of implementation |
| July 2024 |
| Date of next review |
| July 2027 |
| Department responsible for review |
| Governance Department |

CONTENTS

| Section no. | Section title | Page |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| | Document details | |
| 1.0 | Introduction | 3 |
| 2.0 | Events | 3 |
| 3.0 | Aims and Objectives | 3 |
| 4.0 | Events attended by specific Council Members by virtue of the office that they hold | 4 |
| 5.0 | Congress and the Annual General Meeting (AGM) | 5 |
| 6.0 | The process to follow when general Council Member attendance is required at events | 5 |
| 7.0 | General principles | 6 |
| | | |
| Appendix A | Yearly events attended by the Chair and the President of the RCN | 8 |

Attendance at Events Policy for Council Members

1. Introduction

- 1.1 From time-to-time Council Members are asked to attend external or internal events in their capacity as a Council Member. Some of these events are annual and others arise on an ad hoc basis.
- 1.2 This document forms the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) Attendance at Events Policy for Council Members. It provides a definition of 'event', details the aims and objectives of the policy and sets out the processes to follow when Officers and Council Members are requested to attend events.
- 1.3 Events differ from learning opportunities and this policy sits outside the Learning and Development Policy for Council Members.
- 1.4 For the purposes of this document, the term "Member" shall mean an elected RCN Council member.

2. Events

- 2.1 An event is defined as 'a planned public or social occasion'.
- 2.2 Events may be external or internal to the RCN. Types of events include, but are not limited to:
 - Award ceremonies (internal or external)
 - Conferences (internal or external).
 - Remembrance events (external).
 - Congress (internal).
 - Strike action (internal).
- 2.3 Conferences can be events or learning opportunities. For clarification, where a Council member attends a Conference as a speaker or ambassador for the RCN, their attendance will fall under this policy. Where a member wishes to attend a conference for their own personal development, this will fall under the Council Members Learning and Development Policy.

3. Aims and Objectives

- 3.1 The aims and objectives of this Policy are to:
 - Guarantee Council member attendance at events where required.
 - Ensure that opportunities to attend events are fairly distributed amongst Council members.
 - Avoid an overrepresentation of Council members at single events for which not all Council members are invited to attend.

3.2 The attendance of Council members at events will be achieved by remaining within a realistic financial allocation for events attendance in the annual budget.

4. Events attended by specific Council Members by virtue of the office that they hold

4.1. By virtue of the office they hold, the RCN President and RCN Chair of Council are required to attend certain events throughout the year. The details of these are set out at Appendix A. In addition, there are occasions when the Chair of the Trade Union Committee, Chair of the Professional Nursing Committee or individual Council Members are specifically invited to attend. This section sets out the processes to follow on these occasions.

4.2. The process for ensuring the attendance of these individuals is set out below:

4.2.1. **Events attended by the RCN President:** in the event that the President cannot attend, where appropriate the invitation will be extended to the Deputy President.

In the event that neither the President nor the Deputy President can attend, where the event organisers have indicated that another Council member may attend in their place, consideration will be given to sending another Council member in accordance with the process set out in section 6.

4.2.2. **Events attended by the RCN Chair:** in the event that the Chair cannot attend, where appropriate the invitation will be extended to the Vice Chair.

In the event that neither the Chair nor the Vice Chair can attend, where the event organisers have indicated that another Council member may attend in their place, consideration will be given to sending another Council member in accordance with the process set out in section 6.

4.2.3. **Events attended by the Chairs of the Professional Nursing and Trade Union Committees:** within the events attendance budget, held by the Governance Directorate, there is provision for events that require the attendance of the Chair of the PNC and/or TUC. Where the invitation is specific to one or both of these roles, they will be funded to attend.

In the event that the Chair of the committee in question is not able to attend, where appropriate the invitation will be extended to their Vice Chair.

In the event that neither the PNC/TUC Chair nor their Vice Chairs can attend, where the event organisers have indicated that another Council or Committee Member may attend in their place, consideration will be

given to sending another Council Member or another PNC/TUC Member in accordance with the process set out in section 6.

- 4.2.4. **Events for which the attendance of specific Council Members is requested:** Requests for a specific Council Member to attend a specific event by virtue of the office that they hold are received by the Governance Team from time to time. For example, a request that the Northern Ireland Council Member attends the Northern Ireland Nurse of the Year awards. The Member will be funded to attend these events provided that the Executive Director of Governance is satisfied that the Council Member is invited to the event because of the role that they hold.

Where an invitation is sent directly to a Council Member, in their capacity as a Council Member, it should be sent to the Governance Team to log to ensure that due diligence and process is followed.

In the event that the Member in question is not able to attend, consideration will be given to sending another Council Member only where the event organiser requests an alternate, in which case the process set out in section 6 will be applied.

- 4.2.5. **Events for which staff members request the attendance of specific Council Members:** Sometimes, a member of staff might request that a specific Council Member (or person identified in paragraph 6.5.), accompanies them to a national/international event. The decision to permit this will be taken by the Chair of Council, in conjunction with the Executive Director of Governance. Depending on the level of cost, the staff member making the request may need to supply or part-supply the funds from their budget and advice on this will be given by the Executive Director of Governance.

5. Congress and the Annual General Meeting (AGM)

- 5.1. All currently serving Council Members are expected to attend Congress and will be fully funded by the RCN without exception.
- 5.2 All currently serving Council Members are expected to attend the AGM.

6. The process to follow when general Council Member attendance is required at events

- 6.1. Where an invitation for one or more Council Members is received by the Governance Team, the Governance Team will assess the costs involved in sending Council Members to the event against the financial allocation for the year.
- 6.2. As a general rule, these costs should not exceed the limits set out in the RCN's Expense Policy, but invitations will be assessed on a case-by-case

basis. Events costs that exceed this budget, will require consideration by, and approval from, the Executive Director of Governance.

- 6.3. Normally, opportunities to attend events will be limited to two Council members. However, consideration will be given by the Executive Director of Governance, in conjunction with the Chair of Council, to allowing more Council Members to attend depending on the nature and significance of the event, the amount in the events attendance budget and the level of costs incurred overall.
- 6.4. The Governance Team will liaise with the Chair of Council to invite expressions of interest from Council Members stating why they would like to attend. The decision as to which Council Members should be permitted to attend the event in question lies with the Chair of Council who will take the following factors into consideration:
 - The number of events the Council Member has already attended in the last 12 months.
 - Whether it is a regional/country event and the Council Member for that region/country is the most appropriate person to attend.
 - Matters of diversity, equity and inclusion.
 - Whether the event is of direct relevance to the work that a Council Member carries out on a committee.
- 6.5. On occasion, it may be considered that a committee member who is not a Council Member may be a more appropriate choice to attend an event. For example, the Chair of the Professional Nursing Committee, the Chair of the Trade Union Committee or members of those committees. This decision will be at the discretion of the Chair of Council, having taken into account the factors listed at paragraph 6.4.
- 6.6. For all events, where someone is unable to attend at very late notice, the Governance Team will make every effort to find another Council Member to attend in their place, taking into account the processes outlined in paragraph 4.2 and in this section. However, where timings are particularly tight, the decision to send an alternate Council Member will lie with the Chair of Council.
- 6.7. Under the direction of the Governance Administration Manager, the Governance Team will keep up-to-date records of Council Members attendance at events.

7. General principles

- 7.1 The RCN is committed to the Nolan principles. An effective Attendance at Events Policy for Council Members will assist Council Members in adhering to these principles:

- 7.1.1 **Selflessness:** Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

- 7.1.2 **Integrity:** Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
- 7.1.3 **Objectivity:** Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
- 7.1.4 **Accountability:** Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
- 7.1.5 **Openness:** Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
- 7.1.6 **Honesty:** Holders of public office should be truthful.
- 7.1.7 **Leadership:** Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Appendix A

Yearly events attended by the Chair and the President of the RCN.

President

RCN AGM

RCN Congress

RCNF Impact Awards

RCN Scotland Nurse of the Year Awards

RCN Wales Nurse of the Year Awards

RCN Northern Ireland Nurse of the Year Awards

RCN Scotland Reps Conference

RCN Nurse of the Year Awards (Nursing Standards)

Nursing Times Nurse of the Year Awards

Field of remembrance

Joint Reps Conferences (if invited as a Speaker)

Chair of Council

RCN AGM

RCN Congress

Joint Reps Conferences

RCNF Impact Awards

RCN Scotland Nurse of the Year Awards

RCN Northern Ireland Nurse of the Year Awards

RCN Scotland Reps Conference