

Ensuring high quality representation for members:

A statement of expectations for
RCN Reps



After applying to become an RCN rep, your branch will have 'ratified' your accreditation and sent you a letter welcoming you as an accredited RCN rep. To ensure both you and the RCN feel confident that we are providing high quality representation, there is a framework of mutual expectations we work within, which is designed to give you the best support and resources available.

There are five key expectations:

1. Taking part in supervision and support
2. Completing the Learning and Development (L&D) pathway
3. Taking part in continuing L&D
4. Maintaining a relationship with your branch and UK committee
5. Working within the parameters of your role, following agreed systems and processes, and maintaining measures to keep data safe and secure.

Each expectation requires us all to play our part and you will need to meet them to continue carrying out your work on behalf of the RCN.

At the end of the document we will discuss what happens if you are finding it challenging to meet these expectations.

1 Providing regular supervision and support with a member of staff

All reps should access support and supervision to strengthen the impact of their role in the workplace. The support and supervision starts from accreditation in the role and is tailored to individual needs and workplace context. You will be supported by an officer/appropriate staff member who understands what learning reps, safety reps and stewards do in practice and values their contribution.

We commit to:

- a member of staff who will provide regular supervision and support. This relationship will begin as soon as a member expresses an interest in becoming a rep and will continue throughout their learning and into practice
- contact sessions that meet agreed standards. These will be recorded using a standard template. There is a set of standards for stewards, which includes information about supervising casework, and a set for learning and safety reps. These sessions will be tailored to your role, experience, activity and workplace. This means that they could be taking place on a one-to-one basis or as a group, and can be face-to-face or virtual.

We expect you to:

- work with your supervisor to agree times which you know you will be able to protect for your session so you are not interrupted or called away
- reflect on your activity and complete the template so that you can have a meaningful and structured discussion with your supervisor.

2 Completing the L&D pathway for reps

When you are accredited, we will enroll you on the L&D pathway for RCN Reps.

The pathway is a blended learning experience that comprises both online self-directed learning, and three group learning events (that can take place either in person or online).

During your learning we commit to:

- support you through your learning journey with an L&D facilitator and a named supervising officer who will work in partnership with you to help you meet the requirements of the pathway
- provide learning that reflects your workplace and practice. Reps are active in a wide range of health care settings. It makes for a great mix during group learning and we try to be mindful that activities and conversations are inclusive of all members
- provide a positive and fun experience. You will learn in small groups in a very practical way. It's not formal and we encourage a safe and supportive learning environment to ensure you feel comfortable
- treat you in a respectful and dignified manner in accordance with the RCN's *Respect Charter* (see the next page)
- take care of all your information and work, keeping it safe and secure, in accordance with UK Data Protection requirements.

During your learning we expect you to:

- negotiate time off from work to undertake your learning (with the support from us if things get challenging)
- treat your facilitator, supervising officer and other participants in a respectful and dignified manner in accordance with the RCN's *Respect Charter* (see the next page)
- complete an assessment element for each part of the pathway (we have kept this simple, relevant, and easy to undertake)
- complete online General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) training
- complete Case Management Training (CMS) if you are completing the stewards' pathway.



RCN Respect Charter

our commitment to
working together

These declarations outline how all RCN stakeholders including staff, members and customers, regardless of their role, must approach working with each other at all times.

1. We acknowledge that our personal behaviour has an impact on others.
2. We value our differences and recognise that we will not always share the same views.
3. We grow from our mistakes by working and learning together.
4. We respect and preserve confidentiality.
5. We treat everyone with courtesy and respect, and act with integrity at all times.

In the event of these commitments being breached, incidents will be handled in accordance with our disciplinary policy, other relevant policy or framework.



Royal College
of Nursing

3 Taking part in continuing L&D

The health care agenda moves quickly and the RCN works locally and nationally to work with those challenges, issues and opportunities. Just as with your clinical role, as a rep you will need to stay up to date with the latest developments and continue to update your knowledge and skills.

We commit to providing:

- a programme of regional/country learning events and workshops. These will be co-designed with staff and reps and reflect the hot topics and issues reps are facing
- two Joint Reps Conferences a year which are designed and delivered in collaboration with the UK Reps committees
- a growing range of blended learning opportunities for reps who cannot attend face-to-face learning, or who are curious to explore their role further
- subject or issue-based resources and support from the RCN library team to help you navigate your self-directed learning.

We expect you to:

- engage with continuing L&D. Explore the learning offer and discuss with your supervisor how you can keep your skills up to date and what you might need to learn to support the priorities and activities of your branch, region or country
- reflect on your learning and consider how to apply it to your practice.

4 Maintaining a relationship with your branch and UK committee

Your local branch and UK committee members are there to support you in your role, but they also need to understand what is happening in your workplace. They can, in turn, influence your Board and UK committee and help the RCN to understand what matters to members and where we should be paying attention.

We commit to:

- providing flexible ways to engage with your branch. In recent years, technology has provided great new ways to compliment traditional face-to-face branch meetings including online meetings, social media and group chats.
- listening to the views from your workplace and supporting your branch to take them forward to your Board or UK committee
- supporting your activity and initiatives. Branches and committees can support you in your work in a number of ways such as: providing shared experience to help you find your way through a difficult issue, holding small pots of funding, helping to disseminate or engage members, and organising ways to celebrate your successes.

We expect you to:

- engage with your branch in ways that suit your work and life patterns
- support your fellow reps and branch members. As you grow in experience and confidence, you will have valuable knowledge and experience to share
- reconfirm your commitment to being a rep once a year at your branch AGM. Your branch will need to ratify that decision.

5 Working within the parameters of your role, following agreed systems and processes and maintaining measures to keep data safe and secure

During your time on the L&D pathway you will explore the parameters of your role. You will develop an understanding of what is required of each role and what systems and processes you will need to use to maintain our standard of high quality representation.

We commit to providing:

- good systems and processes that support the role and maintain assurance of high quality representation which will be outlined during your L&D pathway. New processes will be flagged up and we will support you to implement these
- the opportunity to feedback and influence the improvement of our ways of working
- an RCN email address to enable you to communicate safely and effectively
- cover for your travel costs and accommodation within the parameters of the RCN Expenses Policy for Unpaid Office Holders. Visit: rcn.org.uk/about-us/how-the-rcn-is-governed/our-governance-documents
- learning or training needed to understand relevant processes and use tools and systems (case management, membership communications etc.)
- a GDPR refresher course that is tailored to your role and reflects current practice.

We expect you to:

- use the agreed systems and processes
- treat all you encounter in a respectful and dignified manner in accordance with the RCN's *Respect Charter* (see page 4)
- use your RCN email appropriately in terms of both data protection and respectful and appropriate communication
- keep your membership and contact details up to date. Visit: my.rcn.org.uk
- undertake online GDPR refresher training every two years. You will be reminded and given a four month window to complete your refresher training. If you are not up to date, you will not be assigned any further work relating to members.

What if you find this challenging to meet?

On the L&D pathway and beyond, your L&D facilitator and named officer will be there to support you. This may mean helping you to manage difficult circumstances relating to your release from work, or supporting you to navigate work, life and learning commitments.

We know that life has a habit of getting in the way and if you are struggling, we may suggest extending your learning period, or taking a break, thereby putting you 'on hold' for a while.

The important thing is to keep in contact with your officer and your branch. You are part of our community and we are there to support you.