

## **RCN branch committee – terms of reference**

### **1. Role and purpose of the committee**

The branch committee is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the priorities and activities determined by RCN Council through its country or regional board are carried out through the branch.
- Liaising with and communicating with members in the branch, through branch meetings and other methods, to find out their views, ideas and concerns and ensuring they are raised with the country or regional board through agreed consultation and reporting processes.
- Working with the country or regional board to ensure the RCN works in partnership with employers, educational institutions, and other local stakeholders
- Recruiting and retaining members
- Promoting the role of accredited representatives and accrediting and disaccrediting them in line with the process agreed by Council.
- Ensuring the branch is represented and votes at RCN Congress
- Ensuring that branch members attend and participate in the RCN's general meetings
- Championing the RCN and promoting the advancement of nursing itself
- Holding events, meetings and other activities to promote learning and development as well as communicating and networking
- Co-ordinating collective branch action on any matter affecting the interests of nurses and the nursing profession in line with RCN policy and the regulation for RCN Members on Industrial Action
- Signposting members to RCN benefits and services
- Supporting nominations for elected roles in the RCN including President, Deputy President, Council, board members and Chair and Vice Chair of Congress
- To submit proposed agenda items for Congress ensuring that branch members have an opportunity to contribute to and develop proposed agenda items.

### **2 Membership and officers of the committee**

The branch committee will be made up of between three and six members. The branch should elect a chair, secretary and treasurer and up to three other members. The other three committee members could be elected as a committee member or into a specific role such as public relations officer, marketing and recruitment officer, Honorary President, or workplace “link” officer/s – it is up to the branch to decide what works best for them.

All members of the committee may sign documentation on behalf of the branch – for example, to support election nominations or Congress agenda submissions.

Members of the committee must be in current membership of the RCN. They can be in any membership category paying full or discounted payment plans. There is no qualifying RCN membership period.

If the committee is unable to elect a chair, secretary or treasurer then, as a last resort, the branch may wish to consider one of the following arrangements for an agreed temporary period:

Two members may wish to share the vacant role.

Committee members may wish to take on the vacant role for short periods of time in rotation.

Members may wish to take on more than one role (eg Chair and Secretary) – noting that where there is a requirement for two or more committee members to sign on behalf of the branch they must ensure that requirement is still followed.

### **3 Elections to the committee**

The committee is elected annually at the AGM under the guidance of a returning officer. The procedure for the elections is set out in the *Election policy and process for branch committee members*.

### **4 Terms of office**

Branch committee members are elected annually. However, there is a maximum term of office of eight consecutive years in total on the committee. Following which there must be a two year break before a member can rejoin up to a maximum of another four years. No more than 12 years can be served in total.

The exception is where branches are merging or when the Branch is unable to elect at least three members of the Committee. In which case, a member may serve an additional year to oversee the transition in the case of a merger or to enable succession planning in a case where it was not possible to elect three committee members.

### **5 Mid-term (casual) vacancies**

If a vacancy occurs mid-term expressions of interest should be sought from amongst the branch membership. If more than one member is interested in putting themselves forward then an election can be held at either the next branch meeting or by email ballot - for more information see the *Election policy and process for branch committee members*

## **6 Meetings of the branch committee, making decisions & ways of working**

Meetings of the branch committee shall take place a minimum of twice a year. Meetings should be planned in advance in advance of a calendar year. However, ad hoc meetings can also be called as long as all the committee members are in agreement about when and where the meeting should be held.

The committee may also make decisions on behalf of the branch by email, teleconference or other ways of working between formal committee meetings.

The quorum for each meeting shall be half the branch committee or, if an odd number, rounded up (ie if there are only three people on the committee then you need two to be quorate). If the committee makes decisions in the ways described in the paragraph above they must ensure a quorum is also achieved.

All decisions require a majority of those voting to be passed. The Chair has the casting vote in instances where there is an equality of votes.

Another member of the committee may chair a meeting in the absence of the chair.

Example:- a branch committee of six starts an email communication between themselves to discuss and agree plans for a forthcoming branch professional development event. Two of the committee are on holiday so cannot take part in the discussion. However, the remaining four form a “quorum” and so can make the decisions required as long as at least three of them agree to any proposal.

## **7 Removal from the branch committee**

A branch committee member may be removed before the end of their term of office on the grounds that such a member of the branch has:

- 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. Advice must be sought from the RCN country or regional office before action

is taken.

**8. Branch unable to elect a committee**

If a branch is unable to elect a committee then the relevant Board should make temporary arrangements with their country/regional officers to maintain the branch for up to six months. Following that steps will be taken to close the branch in line with the provisions in the Regulation for branches.

**Approved by RCN Council**

**Date: 3 December 2015**

**Amended June 2021**