



Royal College  
of Midwives

Role definition for RCM

**health and  
safety**  
representatives



# Role Definition for RCM Health and Safety Representatives

RCM health and safety representatives represent and support members in the workplace in all matters relating to health, safety and well-being in the workplace.

They are advocates of the RCM and act in the best interests of the RCM and the members they represent - this includes ensuring that members are working in maternity services that enable them to deliver high quality care to women. It is a responsible and demanding role. Health and safety representatives are expected to attend training courses and work with their National/Regional Officers in the development of their knowledge and skills. RCM health and safety representatives are entitled to time off with pay to undertake their role and to be trained. The training provided by the RCM will support the acquisition of a range of transferable knowledge and skills that will support future career progression as well as increasing personal confidence and self-esteem.



# To represent members on health, safety and well-being in the workplace

Task	Knowledge	Skill	Expectation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attend Safety Committee and other meetings</li><li>• Provide representation on health, safety and well-being matters on behalf of members</li><li>• Meet with external bodies as appropriate</li><li>• Communicate safe working practices to members</li><li>• Seek involvement in new working practices/ procedures</li><li>• Undertake the legal functions of the health and safety rep as set out in Regulation 4 (1) of the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Knowledge of relevant Health and Safety law and regulations</li><li>• Understanding of safe working practices and processes</li><li>• Knowledge of how to undertake workplace inspections and investigations.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ability to analyse documents and other information</li><li>• Ability to perform the functions of the safety rep, including investigative skills.</li><li>• Ability to communicate complex information in a clear and succinct way</li><li>• Able to advocate on behalf of members to management and other bodies</li><li>• Analytical.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keeps up to date with changes in legislation and other regulations</li><li>• Proactive in seeking opportunities to speak to managers about health, safety and well-being issues and respond to consultation documents</li><li>• Works collaboratively with other trade unions</li><li>• Writes in a style that is brief and succinct.</li></ul>



# To use the Health and Safety role to organise the workplace

Task	Knowledge	Skill	Expectation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assist with RCM workplace activities, e.g. learning events</li><li>• Identify health, safety and well-being concerns and conduct trend analysis</li><li>• Improve recognition of the Health and Safety role with management</li><li>• Build strong and effective working relationships with other RCM Workplace Representatives, Branch Officers, National/Regional Officers, Learning Organisers, Senior Organisers and Organisers</li><li>• Establish records and data that assists with organising</li><li>• Work closely with other recognised trade unions on matters of common concern.</li><li>• Lead on campaigns related to health, safety and well-being in the workplace.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understanding of workplace organising techniques and practices</li><li>• Comprehensive knowledge of the role and functions of the health and safety representative</li><li>• Understanding and knowledge of health, safety and well-being issues that are of concern to members</li><li>• Knows other RCM reps, National/Regional Officers and Organisers and Health and Safety reps of other unions</li><li>• Knowledge of campaigning techniques.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ability to translate health, safety and well-being issues into opportunities for workplace organising</li><li>• Ability to advocate on behalf of members</li><li>• Excellent interpersonal skills Ability to think and act strategically</li><li>• Ability to communicate with members, other RCM reps and National/Regional Officers, Learning Organisers, Senior Organisers and Organisers and health and safety representatives of other trade unions.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work as part of a team</li><li>• Be proactive.</li></ul>

# 3.

## To assist in the recruitment and retention of members

Task	Knowledge	Skill	Expectation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify and recruit non-members</li><li>• Participate in induction day for new staff joining Trust/Health Board</li><li>• Work with RCM Stewards and Learning Representatives on recruitment and retention of members.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A knowledge of RCM organisation and the benefits of membership</li><li>• How to access a current membership listing</li><li>• Knowledge of Trust/Health Board induction days.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Good communication skills.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enthusiastic, professional and supportive of members</li><li>• Takes opportunity to discuss benefits of joining RCM with non-members.</li><li>• Enthusiastic, professional and supportive.</li></ul>

# 4.

## To undertake negotiations on behalf of the RCM members\*

Task	Knowledge	Skill	Expectation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that RCM members are represented on the Safety Committee</li> <li>• Work in partnership with other NHS unions and other stakeholders as appropriate</li> <li>• Advise or share information with the National/Regional Officers of any health, safety and well-being changes that are affecting the maternity services and/or RCM members</li> <li>• Negotiate with management on any workplace changes that may affect the health, safety and well-being of RCM members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding/ knowledge of Health Board/Trust health and safety policies/ procedures</li> <li>• Awareness and knowledge of health and safety law</li> <li>• Knowledge of RCM health, safety and well-being policies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiating and influencing skills</li> <li>• Ability to develop effective relationships with members, other reps and RCM Regional/National Officers</li> <li>• Ability to develop effective working relationship with managers</li> <li>• Ability to advocate on behalf of RCM members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops a good understanding and relationship with members</li> <li>• Works with the National/Regional Officers to ensure that the RCM is always represented appropriately</li> <li>• Keeps members informed of progress and outcome of negotiations</li> <li>• Maintains regular contacts with managers and involves the National/Regional Officers as appropriate.</li> </ul>

\*An RCM Health and Safety Rep that is a MSW member will not be required to represent midwife members either individually or collectively on clinical/professional issues. If it is unclear as to whether the issue is clinical/professional advice should be sought from the National/Regional Officer.

# 5.

## To act as spokesperson on health, safety and well-being on behalf of RCM members

Task	Knowledge	Skill	Expectation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be the RCM lead support on bullying and undermining behaviour issues in the workplace</li><li>• Build and establish relationship with the members at workplace or thorough the branches</li><li>• Provide advice or support on health, safety and well-being to our members</li><li>• Identify opportunities and issues affecting the RCM and its members.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Knowledge of anti-bullying and undermining behaviour policies, toolkits etc.</li><li>• Understanding and relevant knowledge of the local/RCM policies on health, safety and well-being</li><li>• Knowledge of local/national midwifery issues.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ability to network</li><li>• Ability to understand the health, safety and well-being constraints and issues facing the midwives</li><li>• Ability to promote RCM policy and the views of the members.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creates rapport with members and other stakeholders</li><li>• Represent the viewpoint of members/RCM.</li></ul>

# 6.

## To maintain Health and Safety Rep professional development

Task	Knowledge	Skill	Expectation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To attend the Health and Safety Representative Introductory training course provided by the RCM</li> <li>• To attend ongoing training/development offered by the RCM</li> <li>• To attend regional study/training days provided by the National/Regional Officers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of local and national policies affecting the midwives in respect to health, safety and well-being</li> <li>• Understanding of the national and local agreement on facilities for accredited health and safety representatives to undertake their roles effectively.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to manage time to balance the work of being a health and safety representative and carrying out contractual duties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be prepared to undertake training required for the development of the health and safety role</li> <li>• To be motivated and committed to own development.</li> </ul>



# Branch Handbook

This handbook has been produced by the Royal College of Midwives as a user friendly guide to support Branch Officers, Workplace Representatives and Maternity Support Worker Advocates with the smooth running of their local Branch in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

<https://www.rcm.org.uk/reps-and-branches/branches>



## RCM i-learn courses

Continue building your knowledge and skills by following short online modules to compliment your study on residential courses and regional seminars. Courses currently available include:

- An introduction to RCM i-folio
- An introduction to reflection
- Appraisal skills for midwifery managers
- Building resilient practitioners
- Developing a culture of compassionate care
- Developing your study skills
- Leadership – everybody’s business
- Leadership framework – from theory to practice
- Lone working – advice and good practice
- Managing change for midwifery managers
- Preparing for your appraisal
- Professional update – standing up for high standards
- Promoting compassionate and supportive workplaces
- Revalidation: all you need to know
- Standing up for higher standards
- The Changing NHS Tips and tricks for CVs and interviews
- Undermining and bullying behaviour in the workplace
- Understanding pregnancy and maternity rights at work



# TUC Courses

Information about all TUC course is available from the TUC Education website <https://www.tuceducation.org.uk/findacourse> which includes a course directory for reps to look up and apply for any course (classroom or online) across the UK. The site allows support to existing learners and embeds online and blended learning across the programme, with easy access for reps to TUC resources. [www.tuceducation.org.uk/newonlinecourses](https://www.tuceducation.org.uk/newonlinecourses)



The core courses delivering the skills reps need to be effective in the workplace include:

- Union Reps Stage 1
- Employment Law Stage 2)
- Health & Safety Stage 1
- Next Steps for Safety Reps Stage 2
- Union Learning Reps Stage 1
- Union Learning Reps Stage 2

# Union Learn with the TUC

Learning Representatives signing up to the new Union Learning Reps Stage 1 and 2 courses will automatically be signposted to the ULR Zone of the TUC Education site which will provide them with useful resources as new reps. The Union Learning Reps Stage 2 course includes a module on supporting learners. The new Union Reps Stage 1 online includes the role of the union learning representative and the learning agenda within it.



## eNotes

The site is also home to eNotes, a resource developed to help union reps stay up to date on key workplace issues. Each eNote is a self-contained e-learning module that contains a mixture of text, video and quizzes, lasting between 20 and 45 minutes. There are over 30 eNotes currently available from the TUC Education website including:

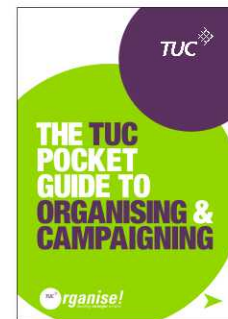
- Trade Union Act
- Health and safety and organising
- Facility time
- Building a stronger workplace union

## TUC Apps

TUC's online community for union reps which can be found on the App Store/Google Apps

This app has been designed to help ULRs effectively carry out their role in supporting union learners and help bring learning into the workplace

A handy guide for union members, reps, organisers and anyone who wants to run effective campaigns and build stronger unions. Contains easy to follow advice on campaign planning, improving communication and getting people involved. All with the aim of making your union stronger and more effective in the workplace and beyond



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