



Royal College
of Midwives

Role definition for RCM

stewards



Role Definition for RCM Stewards

RCM stewards recruit, represent and support members in the workplace. They are advocates of the RCM and act in the best interests of the RCM and the members they represent including 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. Stewards are expected to attend training courses and work with their National/Regional Officer in the development of their knowledge and skills. RCM stewards 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 support members through local changes in the NHS

Task	Knowledge	Skill	Expectation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep up to date with changes in the NHS • Represent the RCM and its members at a local level • Prepare written submissions where appropriate • Keep members informed of significant changes and of the outcome of RCM interventions • Keep the National/ Regional Officer informed of changes • Maintain confidentiality and privacy of members at all times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of key government policies relating to the NHS in general and maternity in particular • Knowledge of local issues in the NHS in general and midwifery in particular • Knowledge of RCM policies and position statements • Knowledge of Data Protection Act. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to identify and analyse changes so as to understand their importance for RCM members • Ability to develop and maintain good relationships with midwifery managers, other senior managers within the NHS Trust/ Health Board, HR departments and other trade unions • Ability to communicate verbally and in writing • Ability to maintain records. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeps up to date with changes in the NHS • Proactive in seeking opportunities to speak to managers about changes and timely responses to consultation documents • Works collaboratively with other trade unions • Writes in a style that is brief and to the point.

2.

To represent the RCM and RCM members to the outside world

Task	Knowledge	Skill	Expectation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the lead in local RCM campaigns • Lobby MPs and other decision-makers and influencers on behalf of the RCM. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to date knowledge of campaign issues • Knowledge of how to obtain campaign support materials • Up to date knowledge of local political representatives • Up to date knowledge of NHS structures and decision-making/ influencing personnel • Knowledge of local media outlets and social media • Basic knowledge of external procedures, e.g. Employment Tribunals and NMC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to communicate effectively • Effective campaigning skills • Effective advocacy skills • Good media and social media skills • Ability to understand and explain procedures • Ability to support RCM members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds networks of appropriate external bodies and individuals • Builds good relationships with external parties • Builds rapport with members and • Amend to National/ Regional Officer.

3. To take a proactive role in organising the workplace and in the recruitment and retention of members

Task	Knowledge	Skill	Expectation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in induction day for new staff joining NHS Trust/ Health Board • Make contact with midwifery students and midwives returning to practice at the start of their training or placement and advise them of the RCM role and benefits of membership • Identify and recruit non-members • Work with other RCM workplace representatives (reps), Regional/National Officers, Learning Organisers and Organisers in proactively engaging with members • Encourage participation in the RCM by all members and promote equality in the RCM. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of universities with midwifery students • An awareness of times when student midwives commence and complete training and numbers involved • A knowledge of RCM organisation and of membership benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaises with universities • Good communication skills • Enthusiastic, professional and supportive • Engages with members and organises workplace events and activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes the opportunity to meet new students and returners • Enthusiastic Professional and supportive of members • Takes opportunity to discuss benefits of joining RCM with non-members • Take advantage of opportunities afforded by the RCM, such as learning and organising events.

4. To represent members in internal meetings with employers*

Task	Knowledge	Skill	Expectation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview member and identify key issues of case • Advise member on appropriate course of action • Prepare written submissions where appropriate • Present the case on behalf of the member • Contact Regional/ National Officer for advice and support when necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of internal policies and procedures • Knowledge and awareness of National, UK and European employment law including equality legislation • Knowledge of ACAS and other guidelines underpinning internal procedures and good practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to communicate effectively, putting members at ease and structuring an interview • Ability to interpret information gathered in light of good practice and internal procedures • Ability to explain procedures and potential outcomes of case to member • Ability to support member and break bad news • Ability to write clear and succinct reports and documents in an appropriate style • Confident but not aggressive manner and ability to stay calm under pressure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds rapport with member • Able to explain procedures to member • Able to provide sensitive and sensible response to possible outcomes of case • Involves member in preparation of case • Exhibits writing style that is brief and to the point Is well prepared and confident.

5. To undertake negotiations on behalf of the RCM members*

Task	Knowledge	Skill	Expectation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that RCM members are represented on the staff side • Work in partnership with other NHS trade unions and other stakeholders as appropriate • Advise or share information with the Regional/National Officers of any changes affecting the maternity services and/or RCM members • Access RCM resources for advice on employment relations or professional matters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding/knowledge of Trust/Health Board policies/procedures • Knowledge and awareness of National, UK and European employment law • Knowledge of RCM policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiating and influencing skills • Ability to develop effective relationships with members and others • Ability to develop working relationships with managers • Ability to present the RCM/members point of view. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops a good understanding and relationship with members • Works with the Regional/National Officers/Country Director to ensure that the RCM is always represented appropriately • Keeps members informed of progress and outcome of negotiations • Maintains regular contacts with managers and involves the Regional/National Officer.

* An RCM Steward that is an 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 Regional/ National Officer.

6. To act as spokesperson for RCM members

Task	Knowledge	Skill	Expectation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build and establish relationships with members in the workplace or through the branch• Identify issues within the workplace that could prevent members delivering high quality maternity care• Provide advice or support to members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding and relevant knowledge of the local/RCM policies• Knowledge of local/national maternity issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to network• Ability to understand the constraints and issues facing RCM members• Ability to promote RCM policy and the views of the members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creates rapport with members and other stakeholders• Conveys the members/RCM viewpoints.

7. To maintain steward professional development

Task	Knowledge	Skill	Expectation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To attend the stewards Introductory training course provided by the RCM • To attend ongoing training/development offered by the RCM • To attend regional study/training days provided by the Regional /National Officers/ Country Director • Record on-going development on i-Learn Development Log. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of some basic employment relations and human resources matters • Some understanding of local and national policies affecting the maternity workforce • Understanding of the time off facilities for stewards to undertake their roles effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to manage time to balance the work of being a steward and carrying out clinical practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be prepared to undertake training required for the development of the steward role • To be motivated and committed to own development.

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

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

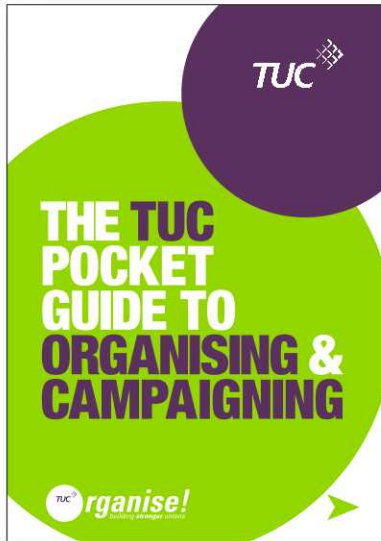


TUC Apps

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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