

# STANDING FOR THE RCM BOARD



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## Introduction

In 2017 members of the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) will elect new RCM board members. Members of the board must be members of the RCM who are practising midwives. We have developed this publication to encourage you to consider standing for election to the board.

Serving as a board member is an important position in the RCM. The board is responsible for the governance of the RCM and there are legal and regulatory requirements to the role, as it is part of the arrangements we must have as a company and trade union. However, it is more than just a legal requirement. The board is responsible for developing our vision for the future and making sure that our staff are working to achieve that vision. The board will direct and support our Chief Executive in setting objectives and goals to work towards our vision for the future and meet our values.

This publication is designed to give you some more information about standing for election to the board. We want to see as many applications to the board as possible. In particular we want our board to be inclusive and would like to see nominations from black and minority ethnic (BME) midwives, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) midwives, and younger midwives. Organisations whose members come from a range of different backgrounds are successful organisations because they provide a more inclusive environment for our members. We value all our members' skills, experience and contribution.

There are competencies (skills, knowledge and relevant experience) that we would ideally like our board members to have to make sure that the board can carry out its duties to a high standard. This publication gives you some more information about what those competencies are. Most midwives will have developed those skills while working as a midwife, giving high-quality care to women and their families, so it is highly likely that you already have the competencies needed to be a board member. And we give lots of support to new board members to help them develop their skills further. The most important quality a board member needs is to share our values and to want the RCM to be a strong organisation that meets those values.

Please consider standing for election to the board. It is your opportunity to become more involved with governing the RCM and make a difference.

This publication is divided into three sections.

- The role and responsibilities of RCM board members
- The ideal competencies of RCM board members
- Common questions and how to stand for the RCM board

**We have prepared this guide for members of the Royal College of Midwives (RCM). For information on becoming a member, please visit [www.rcm.org.uk](http://www.rcm.org.uk).**

**If you have any questions about becoming an RCM board member please contact Pattie Taylor [Pattie.Taylor@rcm.org.uk](mailto:Pattie.Taylor@rcm.org.uk).**

**This publication is part of our equality publications series. If you have any questions about this publication or any other publications in the equality series, please contact Amy Leversidge [Amy.Leversidge@rcm.org.uk](mailto:Amy.Leversidge@rcm.org.uk).**

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## The role and responsibilities of RCM board members

Serving as a board member is an important position in the RCM. The board is responsible for governing the RCM and there are legal and regulatory requirements to the role, as it is part of the arrangements we must have as a company and trade union.

However, it is more than just a legal requirement. The board is responsible for developing our vision for the future and making sure that our staff are working to achieve that vision. The board will direct and support our Chief Executive in setting objectives and goals to work towards our vision for the future and meet our values.

In total, there are a maximum of 12 members on the board and, working together, their main responsibilities are:

- to develop our vision and strategy and agree objectives to fulfil that purpose;
- to be responsible for our performance and our organisational culture;
- to make sure that we meet legal and regulatory requirements;
- to act as guardians of our assets; and
- to make sure that our governance is to the highest possible standard.

There is more information about the role and responsibilities of the board on our website at: <https://www.rcm.org.uk/board-election-2017>.

There is a commitment involved in becoming a board member, mainly attending meetings and reading papers to prepare for those meetings. However, you may be able to negotiate some time off from work to allow you to carry out your duties. You can read more about this in the frequently asked section of this leaflet.

While being a board member is a commitment, it is also an opportunity for you to use your skills, knowledge and experience about midwifery, get more involved with the RCM, and develop professionally.

For example, board members can take on extra duties such as attending the RCM annual conference, and perhaps chairing a session or workshop at the conference. This may be particularly appealing if there is a specific area of midwifery or the RCM that you are passionate about.

## The ideal competencies of RCM board members

As discussed in the previous section, as a board member you will be responsible for working with your fellow board members to develop our vision and set the objectives we need to achieve to meet that vision. You will also be responsible for holding us to account to make sure that we are a well-managed organisation and are working towards the board's vision.

There are competencies that we would ideally like to see in our board members to make sure they are able to carry out those responsibilities to a high standard. Most midwives will have developed those competencies while working as a midwife, giving high-quality care to women and their families, so it is highly likely that you already have the competencies needed to be a board member. The ideal competencies of board members are as follows.

- Ability to develop a plan and objectives to make our vision a reality
- Ability to think clearly and make sound judgements
- Ability to work as part of a team
- Ability to keep to regulations and hold others to account
- Being committed to our values
- Good communication skills
- Sound financial judgement

There is more information about the ideal competencies on our website at:  
<https://www.rcm.org.uk/board-election-2017>.

We operate an assessment process which is a voluntary additional step for members standing for the board. This voluntary step is similar to a job interview. It gives you the opportunity to be interviewed so that the panel can assess whether you have the competencies needed for the role. The assessment panel will then include a statement about whether they feel you have the competencies for the role in the voting pack, alongside your election address (which you write to explain why you think you would make a good board member). The assessment process is not a compulsory step, but you may find it helps you understand the role. You can read more about how to stand for election in the frequently asked questions section of this leaflet.



You will have developed many of the competencies needed for the board in your duties as a midwife, for example communication skills, making sound judgements and working as part of a team. You may also have developed those qualities through other duties for example as an RCM workplace representative. Or, you may have developed your skills and experience through activities in your personal life, for example, if you are a local councillor or school governor.

Basically, the most important quality you must have is to share our values and want to make sure that we are a strong organisation that meets those values.

## Frequently asked questions

### How do I stand for election?

First, you need to fill in a 'self nomination form' and send it to us by 6 February 2017. Sign your form and email it to [Rumena.Begum@rcm.org.uk](mailto:Rumena.Begum@rcm.org.uk). As long as you are eligible to stand for the board you will become a candidate for election.

You can choose to go straight to the election, in which case you need to send your election address to [Pattie.Taylor@rcm.org.uk](mailto:Pattie.Taylor@rcm.org.uk) by 28 March 2017. Your election address should be a short (no more than 300 words) description about you and why you think you would be an excellent board member. Your election address will be sent to every RCM member with their voting paper and is your opportunity to convince them to vote for you – so remember, don't sell yourself short!

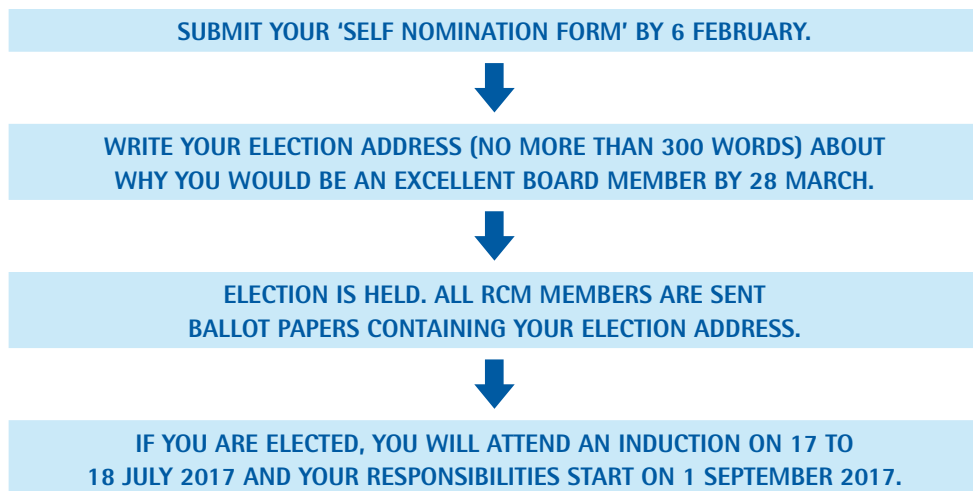
Or, you can go through an assessment process – this is not compulsory but you may find it helps you understand the role. The assessment process involves sending us your CV. Email it to [Rumena.Begum@rcm.org.uk](mailto:Rumena.Begum@rcm.org.uk) by 20 February 2017. You will then be interviewed and the panel will assess whether you have the competencies needed for the role. The assessment process will take place at the end of March 2017. The assessment panel will then include a statement in the voting pack, alongside your election address, about whether they feel you have the competencies for the role. You must send us your election address (as above) by 28 March 2017.

The election is scheduled to take place in April 2017. If you are elected to the board, you will have an induction day on 17 July 2017 and will be able to observe the board meeting on 18 July 2017. You will become a full member of the board on 1 September 2017 and attend your first meeting on 28 September 2017.



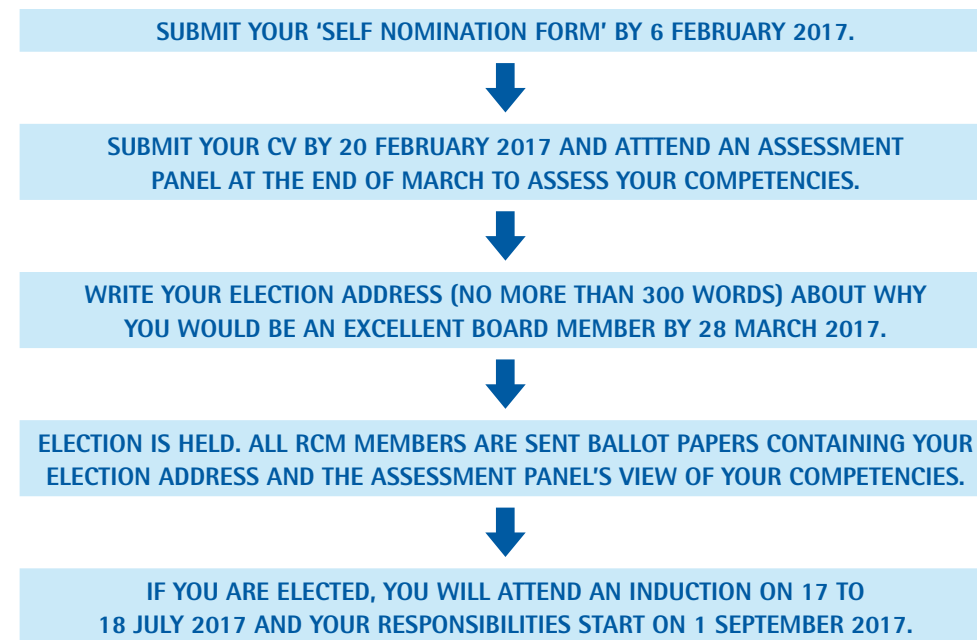
This flow diagram might help you understand the two different processes you can follow.

Process one – Straight to election



Or

Process two – Assessment panel



Remember, there is no 'right' process. There are two options and you can choose whichever process is right for you. You may find the assessment process beneficial, but it is not compulsory. As long as you are eligible to stand for the board, your name will be on the ballot paper, whichever process you use.



### How do I know if I am eligible to stand for election?

You must be a full midwife member of the RCM on 1 September 2017 and have been a member for at least three years. There are some other requirements set out in the rules of the RCM but these are things such as not being declared bankrupt or not having a court order against you. (You can find the rules on our website at: <https://www.rcm.org.uk/board-election-2017>.)

We are committed to equal opportunities and aim to make sure that all our members are treated fairly and equally. We welcome nominations from all sections of the community, in particular black and minority ethnic (BME) midwives, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) midwives and younger midwives.

### How do RCM members vote for me?

It is expected that the election will be held in April 2017. The election is carried out by an independent scrutineer called 'Electoral Reform Services'. They will send a voting pack to every member who is entitled to vote. The voting pack will include all the candidates' election addresses, the assessment panel's view of the candidates' competencies (if they have taken the assessment route), and the voting paper.

Members vote using a single transferrable vote system which means they vote for the candidates by ranking them in order. So they write '1' next to their favourite candidate, then '2' next to their second favourite candidate and so on.

### How long will I be a board member for?

If you haven't stood for the board before, you will be appointed for four years. At the end of the four years you may stand for election again for a further period of two years, making a total of six years. If you stand for the full six years, you must have a gap of at least three years before you can stand for election to the board again.

### Is there support and training available?

Absolutely! Joining the board is a big commitment, but a tremendously rewarding one as it is your opportunity to make a difference and be part of the RCM. There will be new things that you might come across so you will have access to lots of support and training.

The board has dedicated support from Pattie Tailor who helps with administration, and the existing board members will be on hand to answer any questions.

### Will I get time off work for my board duties?

You may be able to come to an arrangement with your employer for time off to carry out your duties and activities as a member of the board. The ACAS Code of Practice on Time Off for Trade Union Duties and Activities explains that an employee might be allowed reasonable time off during working hours to take part in a trade-union activity. If you have any questions about this you can contact our Head of Organising and Engagement, Denise Linay [Denise.Linay@rcm.org.uk](mailto:Denise.Linay@rcm.org.uk).

### How often does the board meet?

Each year, there are six board meetings. If you are elected, your first official meeting as a full board member will be on 28 September 2017 (you will also be invited to observe the board meeting on 18 July 2017). You can find the dates of the 2018 board meetings here <https://www.rcm.org.uk/board-election-2017>. There are also six committee meetings each year and four days a year are used for strategy and development work. You will be expected to prepare for the meetings beforehand, for example by reading papers so that you can contribute to the discussion and help reach a decision.



### Do I get paid to be a board member?

No, board members are volunteers so do not get paid. However, you can claim travel expenses for attending meetings. You can read more about the expenses policy on our website at: <https://www.rcm.org.uk/board-election-2017>.

### I'm not sure that I'm ready to be a board member yet. Are there other ways of getting involved with the RCM?

Yes! There are many ways you can get involved with the RCM. Perhaps one of the most well-known ways you can get involved is by becoming a RCM workplace representative. You can find out more in the 'So You Want to be a Workplace Rep' booklet or by talking to your regional officer.

### What do existing board members say?

Sue Way, Chair of the RCM board says:

"Sitting on the RCM board allows me to give my commitment to ensure the needs of mothers, midwives and our profession are given the priorities they deserve. I have been a midwife for nearly thirty years with a passion for midwifery education and practice. Throughout my career I have been involved in the delivery and development of midwifery education, research and professional regulation and it is very rewarding to bring these skills and knowledge to the RCM board. I would encourage any member who is passionate about midwifery to consider standing for the RCM board, it is incredibly satisfying to be involved in the RCM knowing that you are making a difference".

### Where can I find more information?

You can find more information on our website at: <https://www.rcm.org.uk/board-election-2017>.

If you have any questions about the process, rules or forms, you can email Pattie Tailor at: [Pattie.Tailor@rcm.org.uk](mailto:Pattie.Tailor@rcm.org.uk).





