

**PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT  
&  
DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE**

**Version 2.2**

Document control summary

<b>Title</b>	Partnership Agreement and Dispute Resolution Procedure
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<b>Approved by</b>	David Cooper, Director of Organisational Capability & Change

## VERSION CONTROL SUMMARY

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1.0	March 1979	-	
2.0	November 2011	Peter Cocco	
2.2	April 2017	Liz Laughton	Reviewed and relocated the Partnership appendix including those for the twice-yearly pensions meeting

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<b>Introduction</b>
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**Policy Statement**

The Royal College of Nursing (the RCN) recognises that only by using the knowledge and



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- 3.3 The RCN also recognises the right of staff not to belong to a union. Accordingly, the RCN would not be prepared to enter into any agreement which removed or eroded that freedom of choice for individual members of staff by colleagues, or others, designed to cause them either to belong to, or not to belong to, a union.
- 3.4 The RCN recognises that the unions have a responsibility to represent the interests of their members employed by the RCN and to work towards improved conditions of employment.

**4.1.2 Core employment policies and procedures.** Including:

Disciplinary Policy & Procedure  
Supporting Performance Policy  
Respect at Work Policy  
Grievance Policy & Procedure  
Managing Change Policy  
Supporting Attendance Policy & Procedure  
Any other item by joint agreement.

**4.1.3 Health and Safety Issues.** Where there is a clear statutory requirement on the part of the RCN as an employer, the health and safety responsibilities which are subject to the statutory requirement will be non-negotiable. In such cases, the focus of discussion would concern the way in which the statutory requirement should be fulfilled.

4.1.4 Disclosure of information for collective bargaining purposes as required by employment law and good employment practice.

**4.2 Consultation**

Consultation is the process of communication that enables the views and/or concerns of management and staff union representatives to be exchanged, discussed and incorporated into relevant decision-



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## **7.0 Facilities and training**

### **7.1 Facilities**

- 7.1.1 Office space and accommodation:** Reasonable accommodation for activities including meetings will be provided, subject to the needs of the service.
- 7.1.2 Telephones, post and e-mail:** Accredited representatives are granted e-mail facilities for carrying out their union duties.
- 7.1.3 Photocopying:** The union representatives may have reasonable use of their union duties.
- 7.1.4 Intranet:** The unions will be provided with space for self-advertisement and discussion on the RCN intranet.
- 7.1.5 Notice boards:** The unions will be provided with access to a notice board at each of the RCN office locations. No notices may be exhibited elsewhere on RCN premises without the previous consent of management.

### **7.2 Training**

## **9.0 Consultation and Collective Bargaining Arrangements**

### **9.1 Partnership Forum**

The Partnership Forum is the group responsible for consultation and collective bargaining in the decision and policy making processes in the management of the RCN to the extent that such processes impact upon the terms, conditions, service and working lives of staff. It is the main channel by which issues of common interest between management and the unions are discussed.

Its terms of reference are outlined in appendix 2.

### **9.2 Local Partnership Forums**

The development of partnership forums are supported for discussion of employment issues of local interest.

Terms of reference for Local Partnership Forums are to be developed and maintained between local senior management and the unions with the support and involvement of the Director of Organisational Capability and Change or their designated representative. Both management and the union will ensure that where there is potential that employment issues arise for discussion that may impact beyond the locality, these issues will be raised and discussed at the RCN-wide Partnership Forum (see section 9.1).

### **9.3 Partnership Forum Sub-groups**

10.3 In the event that there is a disagreement that cannot be amicably resolved with management, the unions may raise a formal dispute in accordance with the RCN Dispute Resolution Procedure as per Appendix 1.

**11.0 Termination of Agreement**

This agreement shall not be terminated until six months notice of such intention has been given by either party to the other. The agreement may be amended by mutual agreement through the Partnership Forum. If the agreement is terminated, every effort will be made to agree a mutually acceptable replacement.

**12.0 Impact Assessment Statement**

This agreement has been impact assessed and has been determined to have no unjustifiable negative impact on a specific equality group or groups.

<b>Dispute Resolution Procedure</b>
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**1.0 Introduction**

The Royal College of Nursing (the RCN) wishes to create and sustain a culture where management act fairly and openly in their decision-making, where free and open communication between management and the unions is valued by all, and where questions and problems arising during the course of our working agreement can be resolved within the Partnership Forum with shared learning the outcome.

The Partnership Agreement encourages proactive and meaningful discussions to take place at Partnership Forum; prompt and effective resolutions to disagreement through problem-solving rather than confrontation as close to its source as possible; and if possible, resolutions which are acceptable to all concerned. The use of the RCN Dispute Resolution Procedure must be, and

dispute, will continue until Stage 2 of the Dispute Resolution Procedure is exhausted.

### **3.2 Industrial action**

The Dispute Resolution Procedure precludes industrial action until all stages



1.9.



Director of Organisational Capability and Change and  
Director of Finance and Business Enablement.

