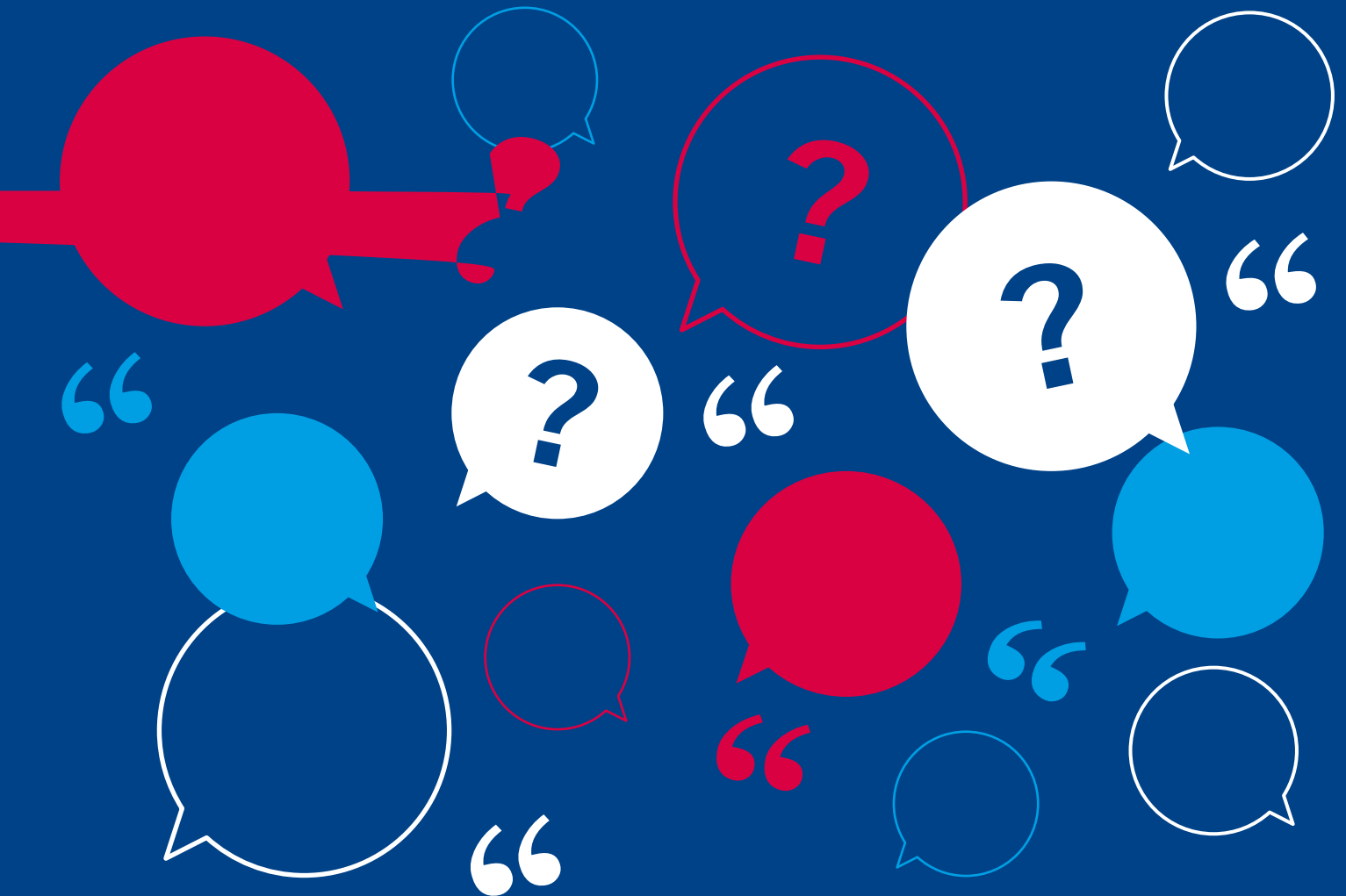




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Annual General Meeting 2024: Questions and responses

CORPORATE



Contents

This document includes questions asked at the Royal College of Nursing’s Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Wednesday 17 July 2024.

As well as responses provided at the meeting, together with supplementary information where helpful, it also includes responses to questions which were received before, during, and after the AGM and which were not answered at the meeting itself. We have grouped together questions on similar topics.

If you feel we have missed anything, please let us know by emailing:
governance.support@rcn.org.uk

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Activist Academy

“ An article in the current issue of Nursing Standard on Activism claims that ‘supporting nurses to express their political beliefs through organised activism is the new RCN Activist Academy’s raison d’etre’. Is this an accurate statement and if so, is there any conflict with the RCN tradition of being non-party political?

This is not an accurate statement. The RCN Activism Academy will assist members become more politically aware by educating our members and empowering them to use their voice collectively. That is not contrary to our non-party political stance.



AGM

“ To allow greater engagement and to allow more members to be involved in the AGM, similar to Congress, should it not move around the country?

It would be appropriate for transparency if we could be told how many members are present at the AGM in total. This would need to be specified for the start of the meeting and after the break we presumably still must be quorate.

Would this AGM be recorded to play for later?

This is the first time in several years that the AGM has been held in London. Last year it was held in Manchester and in the many years prior to that, with the exception of the AGMs held in the pandemic (which were online), it has been held at Congress, outside of London. For example, in 2018 the AGM was held in Belfast, in 2019 the AGM was in Liverpool and in 2022 it was in Glasgow.

This is something we can do from now onwards, although it is important to note that numbers fluctuate during the meeting as p26.7 (er)6-3.t4ic3.76(r)10.o4 (s)-

Awards

RCN Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales have their own Nursing Awards. Will the RCNi Awards, which have not run this year, be reinstated in future years?

In previous years RCNi have run UK awards which are

Finance and investments

The RCN is growing - both in terms of its finances and its investment portfolio.

Is there any plan in the future where the members can benefit by receiving dividends as growth continues?

We do not distribute dividends to members, and we have never done so. Looking forward, our reserves will be utilised to fund significant investments in our buildings and our infrastructure, as well ring-fencing funds for any future industrial action.

Governance

“ How can we make better use of virtual spaces and AI (artificial intelligence) to have meetings/hold Congress and save the money from venue/travels to put it into developmental courses for members and lower membership fees?

When planning meetings, one of the considerations that the Governance Team consider is the use of virtual meeting spaces. Many of our committee meetings are held entirely online or have online attendance options. While there are undoubtedly costs in holding in-person meetings, we must weigh these against the benefits of holding key governance meetings in which all members are physically in the room. For example, learning and development workshops at committee/Council meetings are more effective when done in-person. With regards to Congress, a separate review is about to commence as part of the governance and culture reviews (KPMG and Carr reviews).

Independent sector

“ I am a registered nurse working as an agency nurse in the private sector. I really appreciate the RCN but I feel the private sector is usually left out when it comes to things like salaries and general involvement. Is there a division between NHS and the private sector?

We actively campaign for employment terms and conditions across independent health and social care. The *Council's Report to Members on RCN Congress 2023* included some key information on “Item 15: Pay, terms and conditions parity” and the action taken since this item was on the Congress 2023 agenda. Visit: rcn.org.uk/Professional-Development/publications/councils-report-to-members-on-congress-2023 This work continues as part of our role as a trade union representing our members across the various employment sectors for fair pay and improved terms and conditions.

We have a dedicated team of independent health and social care (IHSC) lead nurses working across the UK. Their work includes ensuring agency members are supported. We have specific resources designed for agency workers as well as wider work for all members working across the independent health and social care sector.

Visit: rcn.org.uk/Get-Help/RCN-advice/agency-workers for more information.

Please also see our *Annual Review of the Year 2023*, which includes more information about how we support the independent health and social care sector:

rcn.org.uk/Professional-Development/publications/rcn-annual-review-of-the-year-2023-uk-pub-011-052

Legal

“ Why are we not getting support when we require it as nurses? When we have legal case, we are always either asked to resign from our substantial post or we are left to deal with it by ourselves.

RCN Legal Services represents thousands of members each year in relation to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) fitness to practice proceedings or in employment tribunal claims. In relation to Employment Tribunal claims we apply a merits threshold in order to provide support and we can only support members with claims that have a more than reasonable prospects of success that we deem to be 51% and above. The reason we apply this threshold is that it would be disproportionate to utilise membership funds in respect of claims that are likely to fail.

Member resolution

“ This is my first year in UK and the first year as a member of the RCN. I was surprised to hear at the AGM that we have situations where RCN stand against her own members or vice versa. My understanding of union is that it is there to protect, support, guide their own members. My question is what are the circumstances in which RCN can stand against its own members and how are these situations handled? I want to know if there is any document / section that details the process.

We do not stand against its members, but we do have a Member Resolution policy which is available on our website. This policy sets out the process the RCN follows if a member's behaviour is complained about.

Member Support Services

In the financial report there is a lot of information around future investment, financial stability, infrastructure and technology development - this being the basis of the membership fees increase. But what about the IENs members who are under stringent immigration rules with no recourse to public funds, many of whom are in financial difficulties? Why are these members not being supported in order to reduce their suffering, preserve their mental health, and prevent them from harm?

We have an IEN (internationally educated nurse) toolkit for staff that will enable them to better support our members with the issues they face in the workplace. We also have a dedicated IEN section on our website where members can find a variety of RCN resources including employment advice, immigration advice and member support services such as career advice, welfare advice and counselling.

Any IEN member requiring specific support can also contact RCND and members will be referred to their region and or country for individual representation ifn481.1 g etact R1.8 (1e)17.5 n

Membership category review

“ What has happened to the Membership Category Review?

Following some successful quick wins on membership categories, such as changing the career break membership, this work has transferred to the Governance Committee. The Committee has considered the complexity of the work in a deep dive session and asked for further work to be completed in line with the priorities that Council agreed to when this work moved to the Governance Committee. The next area for their consideration is student nursing associate membership.

Nursing

“ What action/steps is the RCN taking to support nurses who are transitioning into self-employed or entrepreneurial roles within the health care sector?

As a trade union, we promote employment rights for workers. In terms of professional nursing resources, we work to ensure that our publications meet the needs of members across all workplace settings. We encourage members to actively participate in RCN activities and join forums. Where particular gaps are identified by members, we have processes in place through forums and their respective committees for members to raise areas they feel more resources are needed.

There is information regarding self-employment on our website:
rcn.org.uk/Get-Help/RCN-advice/self-employment

