

# The RCPsych College Engagement Network (CEN) in England

## CEN representative: role profile

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### The College Engagement Network (CEN)

The purpose of the CEN is to develop a small and strategic network of representatives from mental health trusts and College regional divisions, who focus on supporting local implementation of national policy outlined in the NHS Long Term Plan.

The network aims to:

1. Gather and use local understanding and experience from mental health trusts and College regional divisions to inform national policy work
2. Develop a network of representatives who work proactively as local advocates for College policy priorities
3. Facilitate partnership working between the College officers and policy unit, College divisions, mental health trusts and medical directors, local psychiatrists, stakeholders and decision makers

The CEN will provide support to mental health trusts in implementing the NHS Long Term Plan. At the same time, the network will help RCPsych increase its understanding of trusts' views or concerns on mental health policy to help inform its national level stakeholder work.

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### Definition of the role

#### Skills, experience, and interests

The role would suit Consultants or SAS doctors who are Members, Specialist Associates, or Affiliates of the College and who take an active interest in national and local policy development and implementation. They would be looking to develop influencing and advocacy skills, as well as stakeholder liaison and networking abilities.

We're looking for representatives who are comfortable working across traditional subspecialty boundaries and are looking to develop a strong understanding of

systems' work (including at ICS level). The role would also suit those who have, or are looking to gain, leadership and management experience.

### **Time commitment and job planning requirements**

CEN representatives will act in a voluntary capacity representing their trust or College division to advocate for improvements in mental health services locally that are in line with RCPsych policy priorities.

We would expect engagement to constitute an average of 1.5 hours per week, and this could count toward continuous professional development, subject to peer group approval. The work is expected to involve ongoing development of policy understanding of specific issues, and over time should give representatives a good understanding of how national policy programmes are being implemented across England.

It is expected that time spent working on this network will be part of the representative's Supporting Professional Activities time or incorporated into the responsibilities of their local leadership or managerial role if they have this. Mental health trusts should support and protect time for representatives to be meaningfully engaged in the work of the network to enable it to function fully.

### **Content**

Working with the network will involve building and using representatives' understanding of complex systems and policy implementation work, and will follow national policy development. It is intended that involvement in the network will enable representatives to be involved in local, regional and national level conversations and discussion around implementation of the NHS Long Term Plan.

### **Practical support**

We suggest medical directors or divisional chairs regularly liaise with their CEN representative to enable them to best represent their trust or division and to share national intelligence and learning with local stakeholders, including service user groups.

The College will support representatives to attend regular virtual meetings and, once the pandemic is over, occasional in-person or hybrid meetings. Liaison will be provided by the College central policy team, who ensure the network is fully supported and maintain the web page and network communication channels. The network will work closely with College faculties and the Leadership and Management Committee. The College Registrar has overall strategic oversight of the CEN as part of the College Communications and Policy Steering Group.

## Key responsibilities

CEN representatives will:

- act as the link between their regional division and the College, engaging in communications related to the CEN
- help to disseminate policy guidance and information developed by the College on relevant areas
- report CEN developments to their division, trust, and local stakeholders including information on good practice and other trusts' approach to relevant areas of policy implementation
- respond to requests from the College for feedback on issues relating to mental health policy.

To support the CEN's objectives, representatives should:

- be proactive in liaising with local decision-makers, service-user groups and other local partners, working with the College policy team where necessary
- be responsive to requests for feedback and input from the College
- disseminate advice and guidance from the College via their local networks
- attend regular meetings of the network
- develop understanding of policy areas relevant to the focus of the network, even if it is outside their own clinical specialty.

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## Person specification

CEN representatives will:

- have a strong interest and experience in mental health policy work
- have management, leadership and decision-making capabilities
- have a good understanding of the NHS Long Term Plan
- be consultant or SAS doctors who are Members, Specialist Associates, or Affiliates of the College
- be able to fulfil the requirements of the position
- be aware of and committed to the College values
- have discussed the role with their trust medical director and ensure their employer can allow the time needed to carry out the role.

The CEN representatives will be supported by the College policy team to canvass the views of relevant stakeholders; develop networks or link into existing networks in their area and to be able to advocate on their behalf to influence policy to enhance outcomes for the community and workforce they represent.

Network representatives will also be supported to liaise with local decision makers, people with lived experience and other local stakeholders.

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## **Method of appointment**

Medical directors from each mental health trust in England and each College regional division will be asked to appoint a Member, Specialist Associate, or Affiliate of the College to act as their representative.

In seeking nominations from each trust or division, we will expect them to select representatives through a fair, open, inclusive and transparent process which considers the diversity of their workforce and local population and welcomes interest from a diverse group of applicants to ensure that the overall network is representative.

As the officer with responsibility for policy at the RCPsych, the College Registrar will have final sign off of the appointment and reappointment of representatives.

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## **Eligibility and term of office**

Eligibility for the network requires the person to be an RCPsych Member, Specialist Associate, or Affiliate with current frontline experience in any psychiatric specialty. Ideally, they also should have some experience of leadership, stakeholder engagement and policy work and/or an aspiration to develop skills in this area.

This appointment will be an ongoing role with a review and reappointment (if required) annually. Annual review is intended as a safeguard to ensure engagement. We would hope that each representative will serve at least two to three years to enable them to develop in the role and to ensure stability for their networks.