

NATIONAL STROKE NURSING FORUM CONSTITUTION

1. General

This has been written with reference to the constitution of the National Stroke Nursing Forum October 2003.

Any member can obtain a copy of this constitution on request.

Any member who disregards the conditions described in this constitution shall be in breach of Forum rules and regulations and shall be subject to action by the committee.

This constitution shall supercede any rules of the forum that were in force prior to acceptance of the constitution by a majority of the membership.

2. Title

The group shall be called the National Stroke Nursing Forum.

For the purposes of the constitution, unless stated otherwise, 'the forum' means the National Stroke Nursing Forum.

3. Functions

To provide a forum for discussion between all nurses with an interest in stroke
To enable the sharing of practice ideas and provide opportunities for benchmarking
To facilitate the dissemination of evidence based guidelines
To promote research that advances the discipline of stroke nursing
To enable the development of a career pathway for nurses in the field of stroke
To act as a platform to express the collective views and experiences of members

4. Membership

Membership of the forum is open to anyone involved in education, research, management or provision of stroke nursing, including registered and unregistered nurses. Members are required to update the directory details regularly to renew their membership.

Membership of the forum does not confer any rights or privileges upon members other than to receive a Newsletter when published, and email notifications. The forum cannot be represented in any way other than by elected steering committee members and then only with the permission of the committee, except in the case of the office bearers who by virtue of their function shall be deemed to be representatives of the forum in pursuance of their duties of office.

5. Steering Committee

The business and activity of the forum shall be co-ordinated via a steering committee (hereafter referred to as the committee). Members of the committee must be paid-up members of the forum, and elected on the basis of merit. All members of the steering committee are volunteers.

The committee shall comprise of 22 members including the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Website/Social Media Co-ordinator who shall be elected by committee members.

There will be 2 regional representatives from each of the following regions:

North West
North East
Midlands
South West
South East
South & Isle of Wight
East
Wales
Scotland
Northern Ireland

The position of Chair and will not have the additional position of regional representative.

The committee may bestow the status of honorary membership upon a person for especially meritorious services to stroke nursing and the NSNF. Past chairs will have the status of honorary membership for 12 months after leaving the office of Chair. Honorary members may attend the NSNF Steering Committee in an advisory capacity, but have no vote.

6. Method of appointment of committee members

In any year where the term of office of committee members is either due to expire, or becomes vacant, the Secretary shall seek nominations from forum members of any individual who meets the criteria for membership. Nominees must be able to provide a manifesto and the names of at least two referees.

Members will have the opportunity to self nominate or nominate another individual provided this is done with that individual's knowledge and consent. The Secretary shall give notice to all members of this opportunity no later than 2 months before appointments are due to take place.

7. Terms of office of steering committee members

The term of office of committee members shall normally be 3 years (commencing from the date of the Annual General Meeting in the relevant year), however, appointment of

committee members shall be staggered in order to ensure continuity in succession. Committee members shall be eligible for re-appointment to serve for one further consecutive term but thereafter, unless approved by the committee, shall be required to demit office for at least one term.

8. Election of officers

At the first regular meeting after the Annual General Meeting of the relevant year, the committee shall elect from its members a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer to serve an agreed term of office, which is usually 3 years.

9. Casual vacancies

Where a member of the committee has been absent from 3 consecutive meetings of the committee, of which appropriate notice has been given, the committee may, unless satisfied that the absence was due to a reasonable cause and unlikely to persist, declare that his or her seat has been vacated, and a casual vacancy declared. Members of the committee may, at any time, resign their seat by giving notice in writing to the Secretary.

A casual vacancy shall be filled at the discretion of the committee by appointment of a new member. New members shall hold office for the remainder of the term of office of the member in whose place they are appointed. Regardless of the time remaining for this term of office, it shall be counted as one term of office for the recruited member.

10. Voting

Each member of the committee shall possess one vote. Where there is equality of votes, the Chair, as well as having a deliberate vote, will also have the power to use a casting vote.

Where a decision is put to the vote, the Secretary must ensure that a full record, including dissenting views and the results of the vote, be recorded in the minutes.

11. Responsibilities of committee members

Committee members will make decisions as a collective group and hold joint responsibility for decisions and actions taken by the management committee, even in their absence. They are responsible for ensuring that all decisions are taken in the best interests of the organisation and that their role is carried out effectively.

Members shall attend committee meetings and contribute in an honest, open and respectful manner. Committee members shall undertake work by mutual agreement with the committee.

Any member, including office bearers, who is deemed to be responsible for any act or omission that may be to the detriment of the forum or its members may have their membership terminated, including all rights, privileges and status, at the absolute discretion of the committee.

12. Meetings

The committee shall meet at least twice yearly, and in addition hold an Annual General Meeting (where possible, to be held at the annual UK Stroke Forum Conference).

13. Notice of meeting

A calendar of meetings shall be prepared annually. The Secretary shall send an agenda and minutes of the previous meeting to every member of the committee at least twenty eight days before the day of the meeting. Failure by one or more members of the committee to receive papers will not invalidate the proceedings. The Secretary shall ensure that meeting dates are posted for all members of the forum to view on the Website and in the Newsletter.

14. Quorum

10 committee members, to include at least two office bearers of the committee, shall be deemed a quorum.

Committee members who are unable to attend a particular meeting but have views that they wish to be conveyed about any item on the agenda may do so by submitting their views in writing to the Secretary.

15. Minutes

Minutes of all meetings will be prepared by the Secretary and circulated to members of the committee in attendance within 14 days, minutes of meetings will be assumed to be correct unless the Secretary is notified otherwise within a further 21 days. Minutes will be available for general circulation by the Secretary within 5 weeks. Committee members can circulate minutes for information to members they represent if requested. Highlights of the minutes shall be posted on the Website and in the Newsletter.

16. Requesting meetings

Two committee members may, by writing to the Chair and Secretary, request an extraordinary meeting of the committee, and should specify the business to be discussed at such a meeting. The Chair's decision on whether to accede to the request will be final, and must be reported to the next ordinary meeting of the committee.

17. Appointment of deputies

The Secretary may accept the nomination of a deputy from a committee member when the committee member cannot be in attendance. The deputy should be a current member of the forum.

The Vice Chair can deputise for the Chair on all occasions when the Chair is absent or unable to perform their duties for whatever reason.

18. Action teams

Ad hoc action teams of members may be appointed to consider specific issues, with a representative chairperson to action and report back. Action teams will have delegated to them such powers as agreed by the committee.

19. Alteration to the constitution

The constitution shall be altered only by a majority of votes passed at a special meeting of the committee called for that purpose, or at the Annual General Meeting of which at least 21 days notice shall be given, setting out the proposed alteration or amendment. Such alterations or amendments so approved shall be intimated to each member of the forum. Committee members unable to attend the special meeting or forum members unable to attend the annual general meeting, where there is a proposed alteration or amendment to the constitution, shall be given the facility of an email vote.

20. Confidentiality

The committee shall rule where necessary, to advise on the confidentiality of documents, including minutes of meetings.

21. Finances

The Treasurer will produce a financial statement for the annual general meeting, and an auditor who is not a member of the forum will check this financial statement prior to the meeting.

In the event of the forum winding up and there being surplus assets, these will be donated to other registered stroke-related charities.

Individual forum members will be charged an annual fee of £12. A group membership for 10 nurses working in the same stroke unit or community team will be charged at an annual fee of £85. The fee will be sent to the Treasurer who, upon clearance of the payment, will notify the forum administrator. The forum administrator shall forward forum details to the member within 28 days of notification by the Treasurer.

There may be, in addition, charges for attending some events or conferences.

The committee must approve all spending from the forum account. In exceptional circumstances, spending from the forum account can be jointly approved by the Treasurer and Chair but in such circumstances the committee must be informed of the spending at the next meeting. In these circumstances, amounts greater than £500 can only be released with the approval of two other committee members

Funds may be added to from other sources for specific projects and events. Additional funding, and support received in any year from companies, shall be set out in the forum's financial statement. A copy of this statement shall be provided to any forum member on request.

22. Conflicts of interest

Committee members are appointed to act objectively, and shall declare any possible conflicts of interests.

23. Partnerships and affiliations

The forum acknowledges the value that partnerships offer and supports the principle of partnership working. Partnerships with the Department of Health, the Stroke Association, the Royal College of Nursing, the Scottish Stroke Nurses Forum, the Welsh Stroke Nurses Forum and the Northern Ireland Stroke Nurse Special Interest Group shall be deemed informal affiliations.

The forum recognises and values the contribution of the Department of Health, the Stroke Association, the Scottish Stroke Nurses Forum, the Royal College of Nursing and Boehringer Ingelheim in the formation of the forum.

24. Informal guests

The forum supports the attendance of invited guests and observers at committee meetings, and welcomes the attendance of representation from the Department of Health, the Royal College of Nursing and the Stroke Association at committee meetings.

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