



Clinical Excellence Network (CEN) Guidance

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Introduction

Purpose of the guidance

This guidance is designed to give Clinical Excellence Network (CEN) committee members and prospective CEN committee members a clear understanding of the expected structure and format of an RCSLT registered CEN and the function of their committee roles. It includes guidance and resources to support governance and operations.

Where this document includes the words '**must**' or '**must not**', CENs will need to adhere to the guidance to maintain registration with the RCSLT. For ease of reference, these words are highlighted in bold within the document. CENs may otherwise choose to adopt and adapt the guidance and resources for their purposes.

CEN members or prospective members may also find it useful to read the guidance to understand what they might expect from a CEN, and the work that the committee does to run the group.

CEN overview

Clinical Excellence Networks (CENs) are independent groups organised by Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs) and support workers e.g. Speech and Language Therapy Assistants (SLTAs) to support continuing professional development (CPD). This may involve:

- holding study days
- reviewing, contributing to, and disseminating the evidence base
- being involved in research
- providing networking opportunities, and
- contributing to influencing.

Each group has a unique format and character as defined by the needs of the CEN membership. Members are usually SLTs, speech and language support workers and SLT students, but some CENs may open their membership offer or select events to other professionals, e.g. nurses, OTs, SENCOs, etc. CENs are run by committees who are elected by the CEN membership. CENs are self-funded.

CENs focus on a clinical area or on an aspect of professional practice. CENs registered with the RCSLT can choose to focus on any topic, provided that practice is not subject to a 'do not do' recommendation by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

Focus on an area of practice does not constitute or imply endorsement by the CEN, its members, or by the RCSLT. Part of the remit of CENs is to examine and contribute to the evidence base for their clinical area, so any CPD events organised and resources shared by them should include evidence both for and against approaches to practice.

Registration with the RCSLT

Relationship with the RCSLT

The RCSLT provides support to registered CENs in recognition of the invaluable work that they do to create excellence and innovation in the speech and language therapy profession and to deliver best practice in support of service users. As independent groups, CENs are not required to register with the RCSLT, however they may choose to register to access support and resources. RCSLT provides suggested guidance to registered CENs but does not have oversight of their activities.

As part of our support for CENs, we share contact information and some CEN events details with our members through our website. The RCSLT is not responsible for decisions made by individual CENs or the content they produce including events.

Due to the independent nature and activities of CENs, the RCSLT accepts no legal liability in relation to CENs, registered or otherwise. For legal purposes, CENs would usually be considered unincorporated associations, similar to a community club.

Benefits of registration

If a CEN chooses to register with the RCSLT, they can access benefits such as inclusion in the [CEN directory on the RCSLT website](#), free access to communications platforms, free CEN event advertising on the RCSLT website (subject to conditions), use of the meeting rooms at RCSLT White Hart Yard (subject to conditions), and general support. Details of the current benefits available can be found on the [CEN page of the RCSLT website](#).

Maintaining registration

1. CENs **must** adhere to the required elements of RCSLT Guidance for CENs, including a firm commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and ethical practice.
2. CENs **must** re-register on an annual basis.
3. The group should be concerned with a particular clinical area, setting or client group in speech & language therapy, which should be clearly identified in the constitution.
4. The CEN should draw up a constitution and should have named officers: Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer *or* a third core committee member.
5. A CEN may be constituted on a UK wide or RCSLT Hub basis. The committee **must** reflect the professional and geographical diversity of the CEN membership. For UK wide CENs, meetings should rotate round all Hub areas.
6. If a CEN handles any monies, accounts **must** be maintained in an acceptable manner. There should be a clear statement of disbursement of funds if the CEN closes. The Treasurer of the CEN will maintain the accounts, all Officers of the CEN will be responsible for the management of funds.
7. The CEN **must** update RCSLT of any changes in office-holding personnel.
8. Proposed changes in the CEN name or constitution **must** be given to RCSLT.

Deregistration

The RCSLT may deregister a CEN at its discretion. As CENs are independent the RCLT does not have the power to enforce the closure of a CEN, but it may withdraw the provision of support, guidance and resources, and advise the CEN that it may no longer refer to itself as RCSLT registered.

Deregistration of a CEN will usually be an action of last resort. Where there are concerns, the RCSLT will first offer support to the CEN to find a resolution if possible. In the case of serious and significant concerns, the RCSLT reserves the right to deregister a CEN immediately.

Reasons that a CEN may be deregistered include but are not limited to: actions that contradict the values and aims of the RCSLT, including unethical behaviour; failure to complete the registration process on request; failure to produce committee reports on request; failure to adhere to governance procedures; focus on a clinical topic or intervention that becomes subject to a 'do not do' recommendation by NICE.

Reporting concerns

Concerns regarding the operation of a CEN should be discussed with the CEN committee in the first instance. If it is not appropriate or you do not feel comfortable raising concerns directly with the committee, please contact the RCSLT for support via info@rcslt.org.

Branding policy

The branding policy reinforces the independent nature of CENs. This benefits CENs by protecting them from the legislative and regulatory burdens of a larger organisation, and it benefits the RCSLT by protecting the organisation from legal liability and reputational risk.

Subject to completion of the annual registration process, CENs may refer to themselves as either 'registered with the RCSLT' or 'RCSLT registered'. CENs **must not** refer to themselves as an 'RCSLT CEN' or use the RCSLT logo in any context without express prior written agreement. 'RCSLT' **must not** be included in the email address of the CEN.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

The RCSLT is committed to promoting greater equality, diversity and inclusion and embedding anti-racism within the profession and in service provision. CENs that register with the RCSLT are expected to operate in accordance with these aims and values.

CENs **must** be proactive in ensuring that they are accessible, and that all members and potential members are valued and fully included. CENs should seek to empower members to ensure that these same values are part of their service provision.

Actions to support equality, diversity and inclusion are now embedded within this guidance, for example a statement of commitment to EDI included in the [constitution template](#).

recommendations and resources to support positive action in committee recruitment, and event-related resources. This will continue to evolve over time and updates including to resources will be made as learning continues.

There are also [resources on the RCSLT website to support good practice in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion](#). CEN committee members should ensure that they stay up to date with the RCSLT's offer and should reflect these updates through the activities of their CEN.

Ethics

Conduct

CEN committee members **must** adhere to [RCSLT values](#), and to the [HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics](#).

Committee members **must** be honest, transparent and trustworthy. In carrying out CEN business they **must** behave professionally and be accountable for their actions. Committee members **must** ensure that CENs operate in a way that is fair, respectful, and inclusive to all members and colleagues.

Gifts and hospitality

Circumstances may arise where the CEN committee or all CEN members are offered gifts (including discounts) or hospitality in the course of CEN business. With the agreement of the CEN membership, these can be accepted unless the offer is intended to influence decision-making or implies an improper obligation. CENs may choose to set a limit on the financial value of what will be accepted. Individual CEN policy should be set out in the CEN constitution. The details of gifts, discounts and hospitality of any value offered to either the CEN committee or to all CEN members **must** be declared in the Chair's report at the AGM, with a note to record whether the offer was accepted.

Data protection

It is very likely that all CENs will collect personal data from their members, and therefore committee members **must** ensure that they understand their obligations in relation to the Data Protection Act (2018), the UK's implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Everyone responsible for using personal data has to follow strict rules called 'data protection principles'. More information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/data-protection>

Examples of how CENs might commonly collect data include, but are not limited to: maintaining a membership list with names and email addresses; collecting information for event registration; member surveys that are not anonymous or that gather enough information that it may be possible to identify an individual; recording or taking photographs at events (including online) etc. CENs need to consider the category of data that they collect and the additional requirements for handling [special category data](#). For example: if you hold an event that includes catering you may

ask for information about dietary requirements, and by recording a member's food allergy or a request for kosher or halal food you will have collected data about health or religion. If you ask people to advise of any accessibility requirements for an event, you will be collecting health information. Both of these are examples of special category data collection.

Information Commissioner's Office

The Information Commissioner's Office is the UK's independent body set up to uphold information rights. They offer a wealth of data protection guidance and resources via their website, ico.org.uk. This includes [advice for small organisations](#), with a [beginner's guide to data protection](#) and a [self-assessment tool](#).

Privacy notices

If your CEN collects any personal data, even just using members' data to contact them, then the CEN **must** provide a privacy notice to make clear why you need their data, how you are using it, and to make them aware of their rights. The ICO provides information that confirms whether you need a [privacy notice](#), and explains why and what it should include. The ICO also offers a [privacy notice generator](#) that you can use to create a privacy notice for the CEN.

Establish, merge or close a CEN

Establishing a CEN

The RCSLT welcomes the addition of new CENs to its register. If you are considering establishing a new CEN and would like to register with the RCSLT, first please check whether there is already a CEN in operation that would overlap with the same clinical area, client group, and geographical area. If a CEN exists that is quite similar but does not meet your criteria exactly, please contact the CEN and discuss whether they might be prepared to extend their remit to accommodate some changes.

If there is no CEN addressing your area of interest, please contact the RCSLT to discuss whether and how they might support you. If the RCSLT agrees that the CEN meets the criteria for registration you will need to recruit a minimum of three RCSLT members to act as Officers of the Committee for the CEN, and you will be given instructions as to how to proceed with registration. Please do not attempt to register a CEN without approval from the RCSLT first.

Merging two or more CENs

There are occasions when two or more CENs focusing on the same clinical area may decide to merge, for example because they want to pool expertise from different geographical areas, or because there are unfilled committee vacancies. Mergers can be carried out subject to approval by the members of both CENs. The RCSLT should be contacted to advise which CEN(s) will no longer be registered. Use the usual CEN registration form to submit any new details such as a change of name or committee members.

Closing a CEN

It is sometimes necessary for a CEN to close, usually because there are not sufficient volunteers to staff the committee, or because of a lack of member engagement. If you are a committee considering closing a CEN, please [contact the RCSLT](#) to discuss the next steps, including transfer of members, record retention and what to do with funds.

Committee

Officers of the Committee

A CEN **must** have three core committee members, Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer - or in cases where the CEN does not hold a bank account or handle any finances a third core committee member e.g. Third Officer, Co-Chair or Deputy Chair. These members are the Officers of the Committee and bear overall responsibility for the activities of the CEN, and for reporting to the RCSLT if requested.

The Officers of the CEN **must** hold RCSLT membership. The RCSLT should be notified if there is an ongoing vacancy in an Officer post.

Ordinary Members of the Committee

In addition to the officers, a CEN may choose to elect additional committee members as Ordinary Members to support the work of the CEN in a variety of roles. Each group will be configured differently according to its aims and activities.

A number of CENs are open to international SLTs who are not members of the RCSLT, or to non-SLTs. These members may serve as committee members in Ordinary Member roles (they cannot serve as Officers of the Committee). In a mixed discipline committee, it is recommended that the weighting of committee members is at least 51% SLTs, to ensure a focus on speech, language and communication topics.

Extended information with examples and suggestions regarding the roles and responsibilities of the committee can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

Term

The term of office for a CEN committee member is the period between the annual general meetings (AGMs), equivalent to approximately one year. All committee positions **must** be open to election at each AGM.

Committee members are asked to serve a term of at least one year. There is no limit on the number of terms a member can serve on a CEN committee.

There are circumstances when it may not be possible for the committee member to complete their term, in which case vacancies may arise during the time between AGMs. In these circumstances the committee may call an extraordinary general meeting (EGM), which may or

may not coincide with a planned CEN event, to elect a replacement. The usual recruitment protocols **must** be followed.

Recruitment

Committee posts **must** be open to all members of the CEN. There **must** be no barriers on the grounds of any characteristic protected by equalities legislation, and CENs should proactively address any barriers whether real or perceived. Recruitment and election processes **must** be fair, transparent and accessible.

In general, applications for CEN committee posts have been and continue to be low in number, due to actual or perceived barriers and a lack of effective succession planning. As a result, recruitment has sometimes been based on committee members reaching out to their direct professional network and inviting people to join the committee, or asking members attending an AGM to volunteer as a last resort alternative to closing the CEN. This can create an unintended sense of 'needing to know the right people' for applications to be welcomed. Other barriers to applying include (but are not limited to): a lack of information about committee roles and responsibilities; unclear application and election processes; concerns about personal capacity to give time to committee tasks; a perception that applicants must be senior in the field; a lack of diversity modelled in committees.

The actions of the RCSLT Board of Trustees to create a more diverse and inclusive Board have been based on the [2021 report by Kiki Maurey](#), who reviewed the barriers to increased diversity and inclusion and submitted an action plan to address the issues. These actions have been reflected and adapted for inclusion in the guidance regarding recruitment to CEN committees, keeping the administrative burden for small volunteer-run groups to a minimum whilst taking care not to undermine the intention and impact of the actions.

Succession planning

Effective succession planning, designed to pass CEN leadership roles to other members, is key to the continued success of a CEN. There are several options to provide members with opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours to support them in applying for a committee position. This should include positive action where underrepresented groups are specifically targeted for particular opportunities.

The CEN committee may choose to: hold open committee meetings that members are invited to observe; be proactive in sharing committee meeting minutes with the CEN membership to create transparency; offer opportunities to members to shadow individual committee members to gain experience of roles; arrange group information sessions for members who may be interested in joining the committee; appoint unelected associate or shadow committee members who can attend and participate in meetings but without voting rights; and offer or signpost members to relevant training for potential candidates; etc.

Advertising roles

When advertising committee posts, it is good practice to provide enough information about the role and how the application process works to allow potential applicants to feel confident about expectations for the role. Further information giving examples of committee roles and

responsibilities is available in [Appendix 1](#) and may be shared with members to create greater transparency, or the committee might like to adapt the information to more closely reflect their own structure. Committee members may also find it useful to provide an estimate of the time commitment a role is likely to need. Sharing the CEN constitution will provide clarity regarding the vision, values and processes. Advertisements for roles **must** include a statement making clear that applications from underrepresented groups are welcomed. A template for [CEN committee vacancy adverts](#) is available. Positive action may be undertaken by directly inviting applications from known committed members from underrepresented groups, with an offer of mentoring and support for their application. (Committee members **must** ensure that they understand the difference between [positive action](#) and positive discrimination.) Usual practice is to advertise committee roles only to members of the CEN, but committees may wish to consider reaching out to networks to advertise to SLTs who are not yet CEN members but are part of an underrepresented group within the profession and have some link to the CEN's area of focus.

Nominations

Members of the CEN can nominate themselves as a candidate for election to a committee post. A second is not required for a valid nomination, but may be presented to indicate endorsement.

The CEN may decide whether nominations can be accepted on the day of an election, or whether notice must be given in advance and if so, what the deadline will be. The deadline **must** be clearly included when notice of an election is given.

Applications

Statements of application for committee vacancies should be encouraged based on leadership values and behaviours agreed by the CEN, reducing the weight placed on a 'checklist' of skills and clinical expertise. Accessibility application statements should be accepted in a variety of formats. For example, an applicant might prefer to submit a short video rather than a written statement, speak directly to the committee and membership, or invite a colleague within the CEN to read their statement on their behalf. CENs can be creative in their process to remove barriers to inclusion.

Election

All committee positions **must** be open to election at each AGM.

If an incumbent wishes to continue in role they cannot retain the post automatically but they may stand for re-election. There is no limit on the number of times that they can be re-elected.

In cases where only one person stands for election to a post, they **must** have their appointment ratified by the agreement of the membership at the AGM.

The only exception to this is in the case of a new CEN being established when the committee may initially be formed without election for a period of one year, by volunteers willing to take on the task of setting up the group. However, it is recommended that consideration should be given to adding at least one or two roles for additional committee members to which CEN members could be elected in the first year. All committee appointments **must** still be ratified by the membership at the first members' meeting.

Removal of a committee member from post

In exceptional circumstances, it may become necessary to remove a committee member from post, for example in cases of misconduct, or if a committee member stops engaging. As CENs are independent groups the decision rests with them, but registered CENs are advised to contact the RCSLT to discuss before taking action, and in any case **must** advise the RCSLT if a committee member is asked to step down by the CEN.

Ways of working - accessibility

The committee 'workplace' is likely to be largely virtual, with committee meetings held online. However, it is still important to consider the accessibility of the workplace, particularly regarding adjustments for colleagues who have protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 or other additional support needs. To embed equality, diversity and inclusion in CEN practices, it is necessary to remove barriers to participation.

Adjustments may include, but are not limited to, ensuring agendas and documents are circulated in advance of meetings for pre-reading, considering digital accessibility, communication accessibility, offering committee members online participation at in-person events, managing meetings effectively to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to be heard, accepting contributions to discussions in different formats, considering the timing (dates, days, time of day) and length of meetings, role-sharing arrangements, etc.

Quorum

Quorum is the minimum number of committee members that must be present at committee meetings to make the proceedings of that meeting valid.

The smallest number of committee members that **must** be present to constitute a quorum is one half.

Effect of committee membership on employment

It is important to consider the time demands of being a CEN committee member, and to discuss any potential impact on a paid role with your employer.

The likely areas of impact are:

- time to attend committee meetings.
- use of 'employment' time to do some CEN business e.g. making telephone calls, sending emails.
- requirement to attend CPD events (study days) when the content may not be an agreed priority for training requirements by their employer.

It is therefore suggested that CEN committee members:

- arrange committee meetings on CPD event days or at the end of working days.
- agree potential CPD event dates with their employer well in advance.

- highlight to their employer the benefits of being a CEN committee member and attending CPD events in that capacity, including opportunities to acquire 'soft skills' that support leadership development, practice public speaking, and access peer support.
- underline to their employer the requirement of the [HCPC Standards of conduct, performance and ethics](#) to work in partnership with colleagues to share skills, knowledge and experience.
- reference the four domains of the [RCSLT Professional Development Framework](#) to illustrate the potential breadth of development beyond clinical practice.

Wellbeing

Balancing the workload of a committee member for a busy CEN with the demands of professional and personal life may sometimes present challenges. If any committee member feels that their wellbeing is impacted by their CEN role they are welcome to contact the RCSLT to discuss options for support.

CEN membership

Who can join?

Membership **must** be open to all RCSLT members, irrespective of their membership category. CENs **must** be proactive in ensuring that they are accessible, and that all members and potential members are valued and fully included. This may require adaptations for some members, which is addressed in the section [CEN activities](#).

CEN members are usually SLTs, speech and language support workers and SLT students, but some CENs may open their membership offer or select events to other health, education or social care professionals, or to service users.

Communications with members

At present, the RCSLT offers registered CENs free access to a communications platform called Basecamp. CEN committees and members can use this platform to share information and resources related to CEN activities. Administration of the RCSLT Basecamp account is managed by the RCSLT so to add or remove a CEN or CEN members, or for any queries about using the platform, please contact info@rcslt.org.

CENs may also choose to communicate with and advertise their activities to their members, potential members, and the public via social media platforms. CEN committees **must** ensure that they are aware that the use of social media is now specifically included in the [HCPC Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics](#). Committee members **must** also familiarise themselves with the [HCPC Guidance on the Use of Social Media](#) and ensure that they adhere to it. CENs **must** also ensure that they follow the [branding policy](#) within this guidance.

If a CEN committee chooses to use email to communicate with members, they may wish to consider creating a central email address for the CEN to ensure continuity for communications when committee members change. However, CENs should take into consideration that members using NHS or Local Authority email addresses to sign up may find that emails from some email providers are blocked by their organisation's firewalls. If the contact email for a CEN is monitored infrequently or irregularly, an out of office message should be added to advise members. CENs using email to communicate with members **must** ensure that they adhere to [data protection](#) requirements to protect members' data.

Fees

Fee arrangements are outlined in the [Finance](#) section.

Constitution

Each CEN **must** have a constitution that sets out the principles and rules by which it is organised and run.

Having a constitution is beneficial for several reasons. It:

- demonstrates that the CEN is democratic and accountable
- gives clarity as to the mission of the CEN and the supporting goals and actions
- ensures that everyone in the CEN is working towards the same aim
- helps to maintain the focus of CEN activities on achieving goals
- makes expectations clear for committee and members
- provides clarity regarding governance and operational procedures, which can help to resolve problems
- supports the transfer of responsibilities between committee members, particularly if a large proportion of the committee changes at the same time
- may serve as a supporting document for an application for a CEN bank account.

The constitution doesn't need to be complex, but it should contain enough information to make it clear what the CEN is going to do and how it is going to do it. A suggested, [editable template for a constitution](#) is available.

The constitution **must** be drafted, proposed and ratified at the initial meeting of the group. Any amendments to the constitution **must** be proposed, seconded and voted on at the AGM.

Finances

This section of the guidance is primarily for CENs that charge an annual fee or for event tickets and therefore handle money. Committee members of CENs operating on a free basis **must** ensure that they read the sub-section 'Other Income'.

All CENs **must** be non-profit making.

Role of the Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for the day-to-day management and record keeping of the group finances, but the whole committee has responsibility for managing CEN funds and is accountable to the membership. The committee **must** ensure that they receive regular financial updates from the Treasurer.

Bank Account

CENs should hold their own CEN bank account. To ensure clear financial separation between personal and CEN funds, personal bank accounts should not be used to process any funds related to CEN business. This supports transparency and accountability and avoids potential legal and financial risks for both the CEN and the individual. It simplifies the process of tracking and auditing CEN monies.

If a bank requires documentation to prove CEN registration with the RCSLT please [contact the RCSLT](#) to discuss available support.

Balance of funds

CENs **must** be non-profit making and should endeavour not to accrue an excessive balance of funds in their accounts. What is considered a reasonable reserve will vary according to the usual running costs of the CEN but could include funds to cover the costs of a venue and speakers in case of poor event ticket sales, or event cancellation and refunds.

Financial Reporting

The committee is accountable to all CEN members for any money received or spent. All CEN members have a right to know how funds are being used and a financial report **must** be presented to the membership of the CEN at the AGM for discussion and approval by members. A template for a [Treasurer's financial report](#) is available.

The RCSLT does not require CENs to submit financial reports as standard but reserves the right to request financial reports at any time. Reports **must** be submitted on request.

Fees for members

CENs may choose from the following possible fee arrangements:

- annual membership fee inclusive of all costs
- annual membership fee plus charge per event

- charge per event
- free.

The type of fee arrangement will depend on the format of the CEN (in-person, hybrid or online) and its activities. If fees are charged, the CEN may decide whether a departmental membership fee is to be offered as well as an individual one, at what level and with what stipulations. In all cases where a fee is payable, students should be offered a concessionary rate or free attendance.

CEN committee members may be exempt from CEN fees as a benefit in recognition of their work in running the CEN.

CEN committees should invite individual members or potential members who find it difficult to meet the cost of CEN fees to contact them to discuss whether their fees might be reduced or suspended for a fixed period, as a supportive measure.

Other income

CENs may receive income other than membership or events fees, for example through the award of grants. All income **must** be reported in the CEN's financial accounts.

Committee members **must** consider the financial value of non-monetary gifts and hospitality and ensure that they are recorded and reported in line with the [Ethics policy](#).

Expenditure

Funds collected by membership fees and study day / CPD event income will pay for venues, refreshments and speakers. If speakers do not charge a fee a donation to an appropriate charity may be offered, or a token or voucher offered, in addition to travel costs. Compensation for the cost of van, car, motorcycle or bicycle travel should be in line with [Mileage Allowance Payments](#) as set by the government.

Administrative costs can be paid from CEN funds including refunding employers for use of resources e.g. printing, photocopying, etc. The CEN should determine whether extra administrative support is needed in addition to that provided by the CEN Committee and payment can be organised accordingly.

Any significant extraordinary expenditure **must** be approved by the CEN membership. The CEN may wish to set a limit to pre-authorise extraordinary expenditure by the committee up to an agreed level.

Committee members must remember that they are accountable to the CEN membership for all expenditure. Expenditure **must** be recorded in the CEN's financial accounts.

Annual General Meetings (AGMs)

AGMs are the opportunity for the committee to report to members about the work of the last year, to highlight achievements, make any changes to the CEN constitution, and to re-elect the committee.

Notice

The committee **must** issue notice of an AGM a minimum of 21 days in advance. It is good practice to give more notice if possible (ideally 6 weeks) to facilitate fair and accessible committee elections. The notice **must** include advice of any election of committee roles, the nomination/application process, and the voting procedure.

In the event of significant decisions needing to be made before the next AGM is due (e.g. an early election) an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) may be called at any time during the year, following the same notice procedure.

Agenda

A suggested [agenda template](#) is provided, and may be modified by the CEN committee as needed.

Minutes

Minutes of the AGM **must** be recorded by the Secretary and distributed to all members of the CEN (or made available in a central, accessible location, e.g. the CEN Basecamp account) after the meeting. A suggested [template for minutes](#) is provided and may be modified by the CEN committee as needed.

Reports

The Chair and, if applicable, the Treasurer **must** present reports at the AGM. The Chair should give an overview of the headline activities of the CEN for the previous year, highlight achievements, thank key people, and outline plans for the year ahead. The Secretary may choose to report if they have information to add, for example regarding the membership, or they may provide this to the Chair for inclusion in their report. The Treasurer **must** present a report detailing the financial activities of the CEN, including a year beginning and year end position.

After the reports are presented, the committee must provide an opportunity for member questions or comments, before holding a vote for the membership to accept the reports into record.

Suggested templates are available for [the Chair's Report](#), [the Secretary's Report](#), and [the Treasurer's Report](#).

CENs are not required to submit their annual reports to the RCSLT as standard but **must** submit them if requested to.

Member voting

The CEN should decide on its voting system for members and this **must** be clearly explained each time a vote is held, either for elections or to pass a resolution. Factors to consider include:

- Who can vote, and when? Will it be only those in attendance at the relevant meeting, will proxy votes be allowed, will there be electronic voting in advance to allow broader participation (consider how to prevent duplicate voting)?
- How will people vote? Will it be via raised hands, paper ballots, polling software, QR codes?
- Will elections be 'first past the post'? Will resolutions require a majority vote to pass?

Results **must** be recorded clearly in the meeting minutes, including the number of votes cast.

Quorum for membership meetings

Quorum is the minimum number of CEN members that **must** be present at a meeting to make the proceedings of that meeting valid.

AGMs and EGMs are often held as part of a broader CPD event to facilitate higher levels of attendance however, this may not always be possible. Committee members should encourage member engagement in membership meetings, but there may be occasions where the number of members attending or participating in voting is low. Attendance may also be affected by the style of membership that the CEN offers, for example a CEN with an annual membership fee will have a more fixed membership list than one that has a more relaxed membership style offering ticketed events.

The CEN may decide, therefore, what will constitute quorum for member meetings based on realistic expectations of the number of CEN members who usually attend. This may mean that quorum is set at a fixed percentage of members in attendance, a fixed number of members in attendance, or the CEN may decide that a meeting is quorate if the majority of committee is in attendance.

The CEN **must** record in its constitution what will constitute quorum at a membership meeting.

CEN activities

CENs serve as a channel to support CPD. The activities of the CEN should be guided by the values, mission and strategic goals defined in the CEN's constitution. Committee members may also wish to use the [RCSLT Professional Development Framework](#) as inspiration to direct their planning.

CEN committees should also give consideration to the networks that they could connect with to support them in delivering their activities: other CENs, the RCSLT, Hubs, HEIs, and other professional organisations (international SLT associations, other professions' associations).

Information on activities should be added to the communications platform used by the CEN so that all CEN members are able to access resources.

Accessibility

The committee **must** consider accessibility when planning any activities in any format. When date planning, the committee **must** check a multi-faith calendar and be conscious of the potential impact of religious observances and festivals, also the varying bank holidays and school term

times in the different nations of the UK. For in-person events, the venue **must** be accessible, also consider transport options (is there step-free access at local stations) and the availability of disabled parking nearby. Consider the type of venue and whether it might deter potential attendees: for example, would all members be comfortable in a venue that is also used as a place of worship? If an event is to be held in person, is it possible to offer an adaptation to allow members to attend virtually if it is for the purpose of a reasonable adjustment, even if the overall format of the meeting is not hybrid? For online and hybrid events the committee **must** also offer accessibility features, for example live captions, transcripts, adapted backgrounds, alternative participation options, etc.

CPD events ('study days')

Most CENs organise a minimum of two CPD events (or 'study days') annually. Historically these were whole-day, in-person events, but as many CENs have moved towards online or hybrid formats some now choose to run shorter but more frequent events. When deciding which format to use the committee should consult with their membership, bearing in mind that in general in-person events may provide better networking opportunities, whilst online events often increase accessibility. Alternating between formats is acceptable. If a CEN is multi-region or UK-wide, in-person events **must** rotate between different regions.

Speakers may be from within the CEN membership or from external. Events may be topic driven, or an update and discussion on pertinent topics e.g. use of outcome measures. Committee members **must** ensure that an evidence-based approach is maintained. When a topic does not have a sound evidence base, or is more controversial, care **must** be taken to ensure that discussion and resources are balanced to take account of all perspectives and to encourage CEN members to employ critical thinking when forming a view.

Other activities

In their basic form, CENs will organise study days for members. Over time, CENs may decide to extend their remit to meet the needs of their members and to achieve their mission and strategic goals as set out in their constitution. Successfully undertaking additional activities relies on the capacity of committee members, and high member engagement.

As a collective, or by forming smaller working groups, CENs may contribute to professional guidance, engage in influencing, participate in research to develop the evidence base, etc. These activities will almost always be undertaken in collaboration with other parties from the networks that the CEN has connected with. CENs often have links with other organisations through its members. Please contact RCSLT for advice on making connections for collaborations.

Appendix 1 - Committee roles and responsibilities, further detail

CEN committee roles and responsibilities

As CENs vary in structure and format, committee roles and tasks will also vary to reflect the aims and activities of the group. CENs may choose to organise these roles and responsibilities quite informally, and often certain tasks will be worked on collaboratively by the committee or rotating between members. However, it can be useful to allocate overall responsibility for key tasks to ensure that they are completed effectively and to create accountability. Defining roles clearly will also help the CEN membership to understand the work of the committee and will aid in succession planning and recruiting to roles when committee members step down or when other CEN members wish to stand for a post. Transparency regarding the work of the committee helps to demystify what being a committee member involves, which contributes to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Committee roles

An RCSLT registered CEN **must** have three Officers of the Committee in post (Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer or Third Officer) who are RCSLT members. These Officers have overall responsibility for the actions of the CEN committee and for reporting to the RCSLT as requested.

The CEN can elect additional Ordinary Members to the committee, according to the needs and activities of the group.

There are a number of possible additional roles to consider, with examples of role titles created by current CENs listed below. The list is not exhaustive and a CEN may choose to define its own additional roles. The tasks attached to the Ordinary Members of the Committee Roles can be determined by the CEN.

Officers of the Committee (required if RCSLT registered):

- Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer / Third Officer

Ordinary Members of the Committee (optional):

- General / Supporting / Additional Committee Member
- Speaker Researcher / Liaison
- Member's Meeting Secretary / Coordinator / Study Day Lead / Events Coordinator
- Website Coordinator
- Social Media Lead / Social Media Secretary / Communications Lead
- Newsletter Editor

- Networking / Relationships Lead
- [Specialism] Advisor
- Technology Advisor
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead
- Neurodiversity Advocate
- Peer Supervision Group Coordinator
- Journal Club Coordinator
- Working Group Coordinator
- Project Coordinator
- International Liaison Lead
- Research Lead
- Student Liaison
- Service User Liaison
- Service User Representative

Committee tasks

The range of tasks a CEN may undertake will depend on its purpose and its activities. Examples are listed below. The list is not exhaustive and a CEN may define its own list of committee tasks according to need.

Tasks (if RCSLT registered):

- Annual registration with RCSLT
- Organising study days / CPD events
- Maintaining membership list
- Communications with members
- Managing group finances
- Compliance with EDI, GDPR, and Ethics policies
- AGM
- Liaison with Hub(s)
- Engagement with RCSLT
- Communications with related CENs
- Research

Defining roles and responsibilities

The committee may wish to organise roles more formally, or if tasks are shared they may wish to allocate ultimate responsibility to one person for checking that tasks are complete. It may be useful to record in writing which role is responsible for which task. A template example of a [role-task matrix](#) for recording is available.

Appendix 2 - Templates

List of templates

[Role-task matrix template](#)

[CEN committee vacancy advert template](#)

[CEN constitution template](#)

[AGM agenda template](#)

[AGM minutes template](#)

[Chair's Report for the AGM template](#)

[Secretary's Report for the AGM template](#)

[Treasurer's Report for the AGM template](#)

Guidance for the use of templates

The templates provided are downloadable, editable templates that CENs can adapt for their own use.

Each template has content within [square brackets] that either gives an instruction or indicates where information should be added to personalise the template for the CEN's needs, providing examples to help with this task. We advise you delete these instructions before sharing your completed document. You may also delete the template header and title.

The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) is the professional body for speech and language therapists in the UK. As well as providing leadership and setting professional standards, the RCSLT facilitates and promotes research into the field of speech and language therapy, promotes better education and training of speech and language therapists, and provides its members and the public with information about speech and language therapy.

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