



The Royal College of **Pathologists**
Pathology: the science behind the cure

Annual report

2024–2025

The background of the slide features a microscopic view of various cells, some with prominent nuclei, rendered in shades of blue. Overlaid on this is a graphic of three concentric circles. Four small blue dots are positioned on these circles: one on the innermost circle, one on the middle circle, and two on the outermost circle. A large, solid dark blue circle is centered on the right side of the slide, containing the text.

Section 1

Introduction

Changing lives in
challenging times

Introduction

By pulling together through turbulent times, our collective expertise has helped to pave a way forward.

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The impact we have had for patients as a worldwide community of pathologists has been more important than ever this year amid a challenging landscape of world events, national politics and healthcare pressures.

We are a trusted voice in healthcare and we've pushed with renewed resolve this year to make sure pathology's importance to patient outcomes is visible and valued.

We have:

- **shaped decisions**, feeding into the government's 10-Year Health Plan, National Cancer Plan for England and 5-Year National Action Plan for Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), and the NHS England Medical Training Review
- **strengthened our data** to support our recommendations, listening more deeply to members so we can push with greater authority for investment in pathology and in filling critical workforce gaps

- **nurtured the connections of our network** to make sure we harness global expertise into the future, continuing to celebrate dedication, skill and achievement
- **forged new collaborative relationships** with industry, with fellow colleges, charities and beyond, to keep strengthening our voice, and to help steer conversations on the integration of new technology
- **focused on delivering initial aims of our 2024–2029 strategy**, which has kept us on track to deliver value for our members.



Welcome from the President

We have seen considerable change and turbulence across politics, healthcare and world events over the last year. The Labour government is now fully embedded and has spent the year initiating and publishing a variety of reviews and plans around healthcare – many of which have direct implications for pathology services.



The high-level nature of the 10-Year Health Plan means that much of the detail around pathology and the pathology workforce within the NHS is not clear. We are also concerned about the lack of fiscal reserve to support change. Despite these challenges, we have remained actively engaged with the plans, both in England and across the devolved nations, to ensure that pathology is visible and its vital contribution acknowledged.

Our new workforce strategy provides a key focus. Significant shortages across the pathology workforce are affecting the delivery of safe pathology services for patients. The strategy will improve the quality of our data, allowing more effective lobbying for additional investment and training capacity across the UK.

We continue to expand and develop our partnerships with industry. Corporate partners have joined us to share knowledge and expertise.



Many have developed educational and scientific content for our members and engaged in activities that highlight the importance of pathology. We will continue to grow

this collaboration in the years ahead so together we can be a stronger voice for the good of pathology and the patients it serves.

Finally, we depend on our members not just to be members, but to volunteer and actively contribute to College work. We urge all members to consider volunteering – your involvement provides and helps retain the expertise, experience and knowledge needed to develop curricula and deliver examinations, guidelines, the Portfolio Pathway and many other essential services. And, collectively, you make the College voice stronger.

This College is its members, and its members are the College...

Dr Bernie Croal
President



Message from the Registrar

Since the summer of 2024, we have renewed our focus on delivering core activities that support pathology, our members and patients, at local, national and international levels. As Registrar, I have been actively involved in many of these activities.

Over the last 12 months, we have seen a change in government that has brought with it a significant change in the approach to running the NHS, most notably the abolishment of NHS England. In response to the government's consultation on their 10-Year Plan for NHS England, we submitted a strong, detailed reply. We addressed each of the 5 questions, emphasising the key role of all specialties in pathology in upholding standards in testing and patient care.

We also underlined the need for investment in the pathology workforce, its estates and IT, and its long-term sustainability through education, research and innovation. To ensure the importance of pathology diagnostics and its workforce is recognised by parliamentarians, we continue to work closely with other member institutions of the Pathology Alliance, who also contributed to this national conversation.

In early July 2025, the government published the outcome of this broad consultation – the NHS 10-Year Plan ('Fit for the Future: 10-Year Health Plan for England'). Over the upcoming months, we will work closely with the government to modernise and improve healthcare services with its 3 key shifts (moving care from hospitals to communities, embracing digital technologies and prioritising prevention over treatment). Within these shifts, we will strongly advocate for the inclusion of high-quality diagnostic tests and rigorous monitoring to ensure quality and accuracy, and ultimately achieve the aim of earlier disease detection and improved patient outcomes.

While the new government has been working on its 10-year strategy, I have been working with the College's President, other honorary officers and staff to shape our own long-term vision for pathology. It is essential that we have a clear roadmap for the sustainability and future of pathology within the UK and beyond, especially given the domestic and international political and financial instability experienced over the last year.

In my role as Registrar, I have collaborated with College staff to organise educational workshops and webinars, ensuring they reach all members, with many of these being attended and sponsored by our corporate partners. There is growing interest from industry in the College's expertise in providing oversight and stewardship as new technologies are embedded into diagnostic pathways and laboratory workflows.

One of the highlights of my role is leading the New Fellows' Ceremonies twice a year where I warmly welcome and congratulate our new fellows and honorary fellows. I also oversee the RCPATH Achievement Awards, presented at the annual dinner each June. These highly competitive awards recognise the hard work, dedication, skill and innovation of our members and teams across pathology.

I wish you all a successful year ahead.

Professor Sarah Coupland
Registrar

Message from the Chair of Trustee Board

It is a privilege to introduce this year's annual report and reflect on the significant progress we've made over the past 12 months.



From strategy to momentum: realising our vision together

This has been a year of renewed connection, strategic evolution and growing impact. As the healthcare landscape continues to shift, I am proud of how we have worked together – with members, volunteers, partners and policymakers – to keep pathology at the forefront of medical excellence and public health.

Last year, we launched a bold new 5-year strategy, shaped by a deceptively simple question: 'What would happen if the College didn't exist?' This prompted us to rearticulate our core purpose – to lead, influence, support and advocate for the pathology profession, its people and patients.

One year in, I'm pleased to report that our 2024–2029 strategy has moved from vision to action. Guided by 5 core aims – pathology

excellence, education and training, trusted advocacy, member belonging and sustainability – we are making measurable progress.

Stronger together: deepening engagement across our communities

At the heart of this progress is our community. Over the past year, we have strengthened our member and volunteer engagement through initiatives shaped by member insights, including the Member Survey. New specialist hubs – such as the medical examiner/medical examiner officer and haematopathology communities – are connecting members through peer support and shared learning. Our refreshed membership campaign is helping us to better define our offer and more clearly communicate the value of being part of the College.

We also continue to grow our relationships with industry and international partners. Our

Corporate Membership Scheme is helping us to deliver educational content, supporting events and opening new avenues for strategic collaboration. At the same time, we are reviewing how we manage and support our volunteer workforce, recognising the essential roles they play in governance, education and examinations.

Building a future-focused organisation

This year we took important steps towards modernising and future-proofing the College, our ways of working and the services we provide. The recent Workforce Census, supported by new roles in workforce policy and project management, is already generating valuable insights to inform national supply and demand planning for pathology. We are also embedding data more deeply into our policy work – enabling faster, clearer and more evidence-based responses to emerging challenges.

At the core of this transformation is our College-wide CRM (customer relationship management system) and CMS (content management system) programme. More than a technical upgrade, this programme will enhance how we engage with members, volunteers, partners and funders. Shaped by staff and members, and overseen by cross-cutting digital and governance groups, the CRM/CMS roadmap is a critical enabler of our broader strategic ambitions.

Influencing policy and driving public health impact

Our profile as a trusted voice in health policy continues to grow – especially on antimicrobial resistance (AMR).



We've contributed to the government's 5-Year National Action Plan for AMR, been cited by the National Audit Office, and participated in policy forums alongside NHS departments,

the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). These efforts underscore the indispensable role of pathology in public health surveillance, diagnostics and stewardship.

Beyond AMR, we submitted evidence to the NHS 10-Year Plan and National Cancer Plan for England and have engaged directly with parliamentarians and policymakers to ensure pathology's contribution is visible and valued.

Expanding education and learning opportunities

Education remains central to our mission. The Pathology Portal continues to grow in both scope and reach, supported by the development of new specialty webinars, assessment tools and tailored learning resources for all career stages. We are piloting a new digital examination platform. Support for new consultants has also advanced, with the College's introduction of new leadership roles, a dedicated committee and tailored programmes.

A College ready for the future

Our modernisation continues – not only digitally, but also financially and operationally. We are reviewing our financial model to support sustainability

and develop new income streams that align with our mission.

These efforts will strengthen our ability to act as a confident, evidence-led advocate and partner to the profession.

In closing, I want to thank our members, volunteers and staff. Your insight and commitment power everything we do. As we continue to deliver on our 5-year vision, I invite even more of you to get involved.

As I said last year: we are only as strong as our people. That remains the foundation of our future.

Vince Voon
Chair of Trustee Board



A close-up photograph of a microscope's objective lenses, with a teal circular overlay on the right side containing text. The background is a blurred image of a microscope with various lenses and a slide. The teal overlay is a large circle with a smaller circle inside it, and several small teal dots are scattered around the edges of the circles.

Section 2

Our progress in numbers

Members & training

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10,833
members

1,163
registered trainees and undergraduates

157
new specialty registrars registered with the College

133
Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) recommendations to the GMC

32
Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration (CESR)/Portfolio Pathway evaluations recommended to the GMC

25
medical training initiative applications completed

8
international medical graduates sponsored for GMC registration

6
corporate members joined or rejoined the College



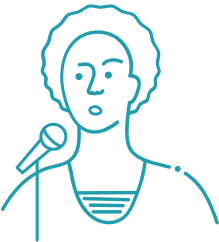
Events

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56
educational events managed, including a mixture of online and in-person events

9,021
attendees at all our events

291
new fellows welcomed across the College's admission ceremonies in September 2024 and February 2025

5
corporate events were planned and delivered



CPD

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4,753
CPD returns processed

317
events and 12 courses approved for CPD

5,484
members used our CPD portfolio

248,460
hours of CPD logged



Consultations, guidelines & audits

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19
clinical guidelines published

8
best practice recommendations published

9
clinical audits published

33
audits submitted to the audit certification scheme

2,206
people attended guideline implementation webinars

12
external consultations and 67 NICE consultation addressed



LEPT

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351

multi-source feedback assessments created

13,780

workplace-based assessments created

23

reports on academic reports created

737

educational supervisors structured reports created

809

specialty annual review of competence progression outcome forms created



Consultant job descriptions

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310

job descriptions reviewed and approved

195

College assessors attended advisory appointment committees in England, Wales and Northern Ireland



Pathology Portal

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6,000

active users

2,200+

new users have joined in the last year

190,000

launches in the past 12 months

6,700

resources are hosted



Exams

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63

exams run for 2,471 FRCPPath, Diploma, Certificate and Biomedical Scientist examination candidates





Section 3

Our achievements

A strong community.
A champion of expertise.
A leading voice for change.

Connecting

We are working to build a stronger College community that every member is proud to be part of.

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In late 2024, we asked members to respond to a survey, to share what matters most to them, to help shape our work and to help us make informed, data-driven decisions.

The survey findings led us to develop our [6 key commitments](#). These align with members' priorities and outline transparently how we intend to answer feedback. They focus on: communicating value; communities; content; workforce; query management and continuing professional development.

More opportunities to network and find support

We launched our pilot online community platform – the Medical Examiner/Medical Examiner Officer Hub (ME/MEO Hub) – in December 2024 as a space where members can share knowledge and best practice, foster connection and collaboration, and access exclusive online events. More than 400 of our medical examiner and medical examiner officer members are now part of this online community. Next, we launched the Haematopathology Hub in May 2025, with 144 members joining in its first month.

Regional symposia this year were also well attended. Hosted by the regional councils of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, these in-person and online recorded events provided networking opportunities and a valuable platform for knowledge exchange, as well as feedback to the College.

Clearly communicating the tangible and intangible benefits of College membership

We developed and launched the [Your College. Your Membership brochure](#) in March 2025. The brochure lays out the vision and mission of the College, the key services we deliver and the wide array of member benefits available. All new fellows receive a copy at our New Fellows' Ceremonies.

Continuing and deepening support for members at every stage of their career

We want to ensure that membership is accessible and affordable across all member classes and geographic locations. So, in response to member feedback, we introduced changes to the fees paid by new fellows by examination to support their progression to fellowship. We are forming the New Consultants' Committee, which will allow us to

understand support needs at that career stage, and provide a space to raise specific issues and interests.

A College that strives to represent all sectors of society

We and our members want everyone in our community to feel respected, listened to and able to give their best regardless of their protected characteristics and other visible or less visible forms of diversity. However, without accurate data, we cannot fully represent our members and champion equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) as effectively as possible. Therefore, we launched our EDI review in autumn 2024, to collect benchmarking data on the diversity of our membership.

Protecting patient safety

In consultation with our members and key stakeholders from across the profession, including experts from different specialties, regional leaders and patient safety advocates, we published our 2024–2029 [Patient Safety and Quality Strategy](#). It ensures every aspect of the College's work contributes to delivering safer, higher-quality pathology services, and addresses real-world challenges faced by our members and the wider pathology workforce every day, so they can maintain the highest standards of care.

Reinforcing our profession's profile amid growing healthcare complexity

We launched the Patient Safety Steering Group (PSSG) to help implement the Patient Safety and Quality Strategy and strengthen safety systems to reduce diagnostic errors, support better outcomes and maintain public trust. We

also signed a data sharing agreement with NHS England, granting us access to anonymised patient safety incident reports. This data will support the development of our national incident reporting dashboard and inform future patient safety initiatives.

Always investing in education

To help us keep improving our Learning Environment for Pathology Trainees (LEPT) system, we surveyed trainees and trainers who use the system and responded with a series of virtual refresher sessions designed to support all system users ahead of the annual review of competence progression (ARCP) period.

Commitment to sustainability in pathology practice

This year we appointed a Sustainability Lead for Pathology Practice to advance sustainability initiatives both within the College and across the wider pathology community.



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College staff and members of the Patient Safety Steering Group.

Influencing

We believe the challenges facing pathology now are significant. Advocacy for pathology is more important than ever.

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We fed member perspectives into government plans, including the [NHS 10-Year Health Plan](#), Phase 2 of the government's [spending review](#), the [National Cancer Plan](#) and the UK National Action Plan for AMR. In our response to the National Cancer Plan we recommended focusing on prevention, early diagnosis and reducing cancer waiting times through investments in pathology, digital technology and workforce expansion.

We submitted evidence and feedback for government consultations, inquiries and parliamentary debates, including responding to an inquiry held by the Scottish Parliament's Health, Sport and Social Care Committee on remote and rural healthcare, and the [Ministerial Advisory Group report](#) on performance and productivity in the NHS in Wales.

We ran campaigns and published policy papers and joint reports, including our long-term campaign for the introduction of a medical examiner service, which moved to statutory footing in [September 2024](#), and the briefing [Embracing AI to support the NHS in delivering early diagnoses](#).

We have made sure our members' voices are heard

Professor Sarah Coupland, College Registrar, contributed to the discussion on 'How can precision prevention reduce the demand on the NHS?', strengthening our

ties with this committee and its Chair, George Freeman MP.

Dr Charu Chopra, Chair of our Scotland Regional Council, attended a Scottish Parliamentary reception on behalf of the College, which was hosted by the IBMS and the Scottish Government. [Our Bulletin article](#) on drone delivery of pathology services in Cornwall was highlighted in parliamentary questions as an example of how drone technology can improve healthcare services.

College President, Dr Bernie Croal, met the deputy Chief Medical Officer, Chief Scientific Officer and other pathology leads for a welcome discussion on the new 'Blueprint' for pathology in Northern Ireland. In collaboration with our Northern Ireland Regional Council, we launched [our priorities](#) for Northern Ireland – calling for investment in the pathology workforce, IT and infrastructure, and a commitment to staff wellbeing and learning from the pandemic.

Dr Croal also met Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service Scotland representatives, and the Scottish Chief Medical Officer's team alongside the Chair of the Death Investigation Committee, in relation to a petition on a high-profile post-mortem case. We aim to provide expert input in the ongoing programme to codesign and future-proof



the delivery of death investigation and post-mortem services across Scotland.

At the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Prostate Cancer, our specialty advisor, Professor Dan Berney, participated in discussions about the benefits and risks of increased screening. He was able to raise important points around overdiagnosis and overtreatment and the effect on the pathology workforce. We have continued to work closely with Prostate Cancer Research and Prostate Cancer UK on the future of how the disease is diagnosed and treated.

We gave presentations and speeches

Dr Bernie Croal was invited to speak on priorities for cancer prevention and next steps for national screening, diagnostics and early detection, outlining the steps needed to support and enhance pathology in the national cancer plan, and the need for wider NHS reform to improve patient outcomes.

College fellow Stephanie Barton spoke at an event about priorities for rare disease diagnosis, care and treatment in England where policymakers and other stakeholders assessed practical steps following the publication of the Department of Health's England Rare Diseases Action Plan 2025.

Dr Sian Morgan, Chair of the College's Genomics and Reproductive Science SAC, spoke at a Westminster Health Forum conference on 'Next steps for genomics in the UK', where she emphasised the importance of adopting and embedding genomic medicine in the NHS.

We brought parliamentarians and civil servants closer to pathology

Mike Nesbitt MLA, Minister of Health in Northern Ireland, visited the Kelvin Laboratories, Royal Victoria Hospital, at Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, to



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Mike Nesbitt MLA, Minister of Health in Northern Ireland, visiting the Kelvin Laboratories.

see the work of pathology and laboratory staff across a range of specialties.

College members Professor Roberto La Ragione and Kate English welcomed Defra representatives to the University of Surrey Veterinary School, where they joined a roundtable discussion on issues facing the veterinary pathology workforce.

Kirsty Blackman MP, SNP, Aberdeen North, visited the laboratories at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, NHS Grampian, where Dr Bernie Croal, College President, and Dr Noha El Sakka, College Vice President for Communications, discussed how we can work with parliamentary colleagues to put laboratory medicine in the right place in the government's priority list.

The [Wales Coastal Walk](#), led by Dr Anu Gunavardhan, highlighted the work pathologists do and raised awareness of rare diseases. Welsh College members were joined by Cllr Gwenda Roberts, Mayor of Penarth, Jenny Rathbone MS, SWAN clinic, Ethnic Minority Women in Welsh Health Care and Nerve Tumours UK.

We helped shape the headlines

The Pathologist and Pathology in Practice magazines covered our submission to the UK government's 10-Year Health Plan, which highlights the key challenges facing pathology, including workforce shortages, outdated infrastructure and inadequate IT systems.



Dr Charu Chopra, Chair of our Scotland Regional Council, [responded](#) to an editorial in the BMJ on the 10-Year

Health Plan, highlighting the importance of pathology and laboratory medicine as key components of patient pathways and how pathology will be vital in delivering modernised, patient-centred care.

College President Dr Bernie Croal gave an interview to The Pathologist magazine about what is needed to support safe and effective point-of-care testing for patients.

In response to development of an AI tool to advance coeliac disease diagnosis, as reported in the [Guardian](#), Dr Croal highlighted the need for ongoing investment to ensure AI delivers full benefits to patients by speeding up diagnosis and shortening waiting lists.

In the HSJ, along with the British Society for Echocardiography, we called for the rapid heart failure test – NT-proBNP – to be made available in all community diagnostic centres (CDCs), cutting unnecessary waits for patients, reducing inappropriate referrals and easing pressure on diagnostic services.

Our approach to antimicrobial resistance

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) poses a significant threat to public health. We are contributing to the fight against it by:

- sharing good practice through educational resources such as our [Global Antimicrobial Webinar series](#), which delivered 6 webinars and was shortlisted in the [UKHSA Antibiotic Guardian Shared Learning Awards](#) in the Multi-Country Collaboration category
- raising awareness through events such as International Pathology Day 2024, which focused on 'The rise of global antimicrobial resistance' and

where we were joined by Dame Sally Davies, the UK's Special Envoy on Antimicrobial Resistance

- submitting evidence and responses, including on the government's response to AMR. Our evidence was cited in the [Public Accounts Committee's inquiry report](#) who recommended investment in more medical microbiologists and virologists, highlighting gaps in the workforce that are jeopardising efforts to optimise prescribing and control infection.
- publishing position statements, for example [our response](#) to the government's 5-year action plan to tackle AMR and [our recommendations](#) on tackling AMR in animals. The National Audit Office referenced our briefings in its [report](#) investigating the government's efforts to tackle AMR, highlighting the incompatibility between pathology systems and electronic prescribing records, the lack of a standardised national digital pathology system and a lack of surveillance in animals.
- amplifying our voice and reach by joining with other organisations, such as cosigning a [consensus statement](#) led by the British In Vitro Diagnostic Association (BIVDA), underlining the need for action to enable the adoption of existing rapid diagnostic technology that can support antibiotic prescribing
- engaging in public policy forums, for example, Dr Noha El Sakka spoke at the Westminster Health Forum conference on the 'Next steps for tackling antimicrobial resistance', presenting the College's position on AMR, the need for an increase in the medical microbiology workforce, improved diagnostics, robust IT and strong surveillance.



Leading

As always, education and training are core to the College offer – supporting members to fulfil their goals and aspirations.

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Our members value our role in maintaining training standards and providing educational resources and opportunities for continued professional development. We continue to strive for excellence in these areas, offering tailored learning opportunities throughout our members’ multifaceted careers.

By expanding our online events, we have widened our engagement with members both nationally and internationally. Our specialty-focused webinars offer regular expert updates and insights. Where appropriate, these sessions are recorded and hosted on our website and the Pathology Portal, serving as a valuable on demand resource for members and trainees.

We have supported undergraduates, foundation doctors, trainees and members this year by:

- offering undergraduates and foundation doctors the chance to explore pathology in more depth through our essay competitions. This year we saw 111 submissions, a 50% increase on previous years.
- providing undergraduate medical students with an engaging and hands-on introduction to a career in pathology through the delivery of our annual Pathology Summer School. This year, 65 students took part and the 100% positive feedback



- underscores the importance of early engagement with students in their educational journey.
- awarding 4 medical elective grants to undergraduate medical and veterinary students under our scheme with partner societies. The grants support students undertaking electives in pathology specialties.
- delivering our joint RCPaB/BDIAP foundation taster event to 80 attendees, to strengthen links between foundation doctors and pathology, raise awareness of pathology specialties as career options and provide practical advice on the application and interview process
- awarding 13 foundation fellowships, which give selected applicants the opportunity to freely attend events, educational meetings and symposia, to support their rotation through a pathology specialty
- delivering 4 specialty-specific career webinars, viewed by over 1,100 participants, covering immunology (both medical and scientific training routes), genomics, and perinatal and paediatric pathology
- awarding 3 research start-up grants, providing over £11,000 in financial support for postgraduate and undergraduate students at the beginning of their research projects

- taking part in the GMC’s pilot quality assurance (QA) review of the 2021 chemical pathology curriculum, helping to guide the QA of medical postgraduate curricula and in so doing, identifying 14 actions for the College to undertake, including requesting a change of name for the curriculum. Further curricula reviews for cellular pathology and infection are currently underway.
- delivering our annual education update on the theme of ‘reasonable adjustments’, which explored how training and examinations can be adapted to best support those undertaking them, among other related areas. The meeting was attended by over 430 delegates and received a positive response rate of 97%.
- continuing to grow the Pathology Portal, which celebrated its 3-year anniversary in August. The Portal has become a fantastic free resource for the global pathology community hosting high-quality content, fostering community engagement, supporting continuous learning and improving professional practice. It was presented at the 2025 British Society for Haematology meeting, the Fertility Conference and the International Federation of Fertility Societies world congress, expanding the Portal’s reach.
- delivering 28 specialty webinars, which have so far been attended or viewed by over 6,500 people from 76 countries





“Honestly one of the best experiences I’ve had during medical school.”

“I loved every second of the Summer School and I am so thankful to everyone involved! I have been converted into an aspiring haematologist.”

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Pathology Summer School attendees

- delivering 3 joint educational webinars in collaboration with some of our corporate members, which were attended by more than 900 people. The recordings have had over 600 views so far.
- delivering a dedicated webinar on the Histopathology Portfolio Pathway to an audience of 200 attendees. Aimed at histopathology doctors considering a Portfolio Pathway application to the GMC – as well as those supporting them, such as trainers – the session provided comprehensive guidance on the process. Representatives from the GMC presented on the application process, while College speakers delivered talks on assessing applications, training and specific guidance related to the Portfolio Pathway route.
- publishing [3 guidance documents](#) that support increased flexibility in recognising capabilities for doctors in GMC-approved programmes, allowing for a more individualised approach for each doctor training in pathology specialties
- running the annual medical examiner conference for over 260 attendees, providing essential updates on the newly introduced statutory medical examiner system
- supporting continuing professional development (CPD) by processing 4,753 CPD returns and approving 329 events and courses for CPD accreditation.

An international network of excellence

We delivered and supported a wide range of activities globally this year, shaped by our International team, partners, members and a fantastic group of volunteers.

These activities included:

- the EU-funded ARISE project where, in collaboration with affiliate organisations, we made key contributions such as the development of national sickle cell disease prevention policies in Nigeria, Lebanon and Kenya. We worked with partners to provide secondments in the UK to researchers from Nigeria, Zambia and Angola, providing online and in-person training (e.g. train-the-trainer workshops in Nigeria), and helping to set up newborn screening programmes in Angola and Nigeria.
- the externally funded [Global Health Workforce Programme](#), which aimed to improve retention of chemical pathologists and training opportunities in Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria. Working in close collaboration with our partners (the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria, the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons, the Aga Khan University in Kenya and the Association for Laboratory Medicine) the project delivered:
 - 4 CPD-approved webinars
 - 9 virtual case report sessions
 - a 12-week point-of-care testing course delivered in Kenya
 - a CPD-approved virtual training day on recent advances
 - scoping visits to Ghana and Kenya
 - a new chemical pathology curriculum in Kenya.

- a [6-part webinar series on AMR](#), which was attended by over 600 attendees from 30 countries and shortlisted for a UKHSA Antibiotic Guardian Shared Learning award
- a [4-part webinar series on gross examination and frozen sections](#), which was attended by 1,124 attendees from 29 different countries, allowing participants to share knowledge
- a [2-part webinar series exploring key skills to enhance an academic career](#), providing pathologists from around the world with skills to build their academic career outside the laboratory
- continued partnership with 9 organisations through our Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) that continue to provide a foundation for much of our international activity throughout the year, including:
 - meetings with representatives from the Sudanese Diaspora group to provide support to our members and fellow pathologists in Sudan during the ongoing crisis. As a result of these meetings, we focused on various initiatives, for example, working with partners across the Middle East to identify training opportunities and placements for Sudanese pathologists.
 - development of a dedicated refugee support document containing useful resources and signposting
 - collaboration on a virtual conference with the Shupyk National Healthcare University of Ukraine and the Feofaniya Clinical Hospital where College fellows gave presentations on behalf of the College.



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Giles Hanratty, Kelley Price and Professor Angharad Davies attending the UKHSA Antibiotic Guardian Shared Learning Awards.

The background is a microscopic image of numerous purple-stained cells, likely erythrocytes, with some larger cells having prominent nuclei. Overlaid on this is a large, dark grey circular spotlight effect on the right side. Four thin, concentric circles are centered on the same point as the spotlight, with small dark grey dots marking their intersections on the left and bottom. The text 'Section 4' is in a light grey sans-serif font, and 'Spotlight on' is in a larger, bold white sans-serif font, both centered within the spotlight circle.

Section 4
Spotlight on

Our volunteers

We couldn't do it without you!

The invaluable support and expertise of our volunteers has driven so much of what we've achieved this year. Thank you for dedicating your time to the College, and to championing pathology.

Your support – authoring guidelines, attending appointment advisory committees, reviewing job descriptions, presenting at webinars and more – ensures a continuous focus on what's important to our members and their patients. Our examiners ensure we maintain high standards of training. Our committee members contribute to guidance documents and evidence submissions and represent their specialty, area of interest or region, helping to shape policies, standards and the future direction of the profession.

- contributors have played a crucial role in developing and maintaining the high-quality resources available on the platform.
- feedback on 12 consultations and responses, and 67 NICE consultations
 - reviews of 310 job descriptions
 - 63 exams
 - 44 webinars and events
 - review and recommendation to the GMC of 32 CESR/Portfolio Pathway applications.

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Over 1,000 volunteers are part of our committees.

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- Over the year volunteers have helped us to deliver:
- 27 clinical guidelines, guidance documents and best practice recommendation papers
 - new strategies, including the Patient Safety and Quality strategy, where Specialty Advisory Committee (SAC) chairs and experts across pathology provided valuable feedback on the key challenges and opportunities for improving patient safety
 - a 57% increase in Pathology Portal users. Over 100 editors and content



Collaboration that pushes new boundaries

Over the past year, we have collaborated and developed partnerships with industry, policymakers, stakeholders and kindred organisations.



- 1 Working in partnership with Roche, 3DHistech and Illumina, we delivered a series of webinars exploring how stronger collaboration between industry and academia can accelerate frontline use of new diagnostic technologies.

These sessions gave practical advice on setting up efficient digital pathology workflows and transitioning to digital reporting, and shared recent advances in liquid biopsy, exploring how it is accelerating access to precision medicine and reshaping cancer pathways.

- 2 Professor Adrian Bateman, Chair of the RCPATH Cellular Pathology Specialty Advisory Committee, attended a roundtable organised by the Royal College of Radiologists, with the Department for Health and Social Care, NHS England and other medical colleges to reinforce our evidence to the National Cancer Plan. Discussion focused on 2 specific elements of the plan: access and early diagnosis, and treatment and clinical pathways (looking specifically at service design and clinical decision-making). This was a good opportunity to feed in the issues affecting pathology services to the plan while it is in production.

- 3 In August 2024, we hosted our first Celtic Summit with representatives from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing pathology services in each nation. We then published a [report](#) outlining current pathology provision across the 3 devolved nations and the various ways the College interacts with and supports these services.

- 4 At our 'Cellular pathology and genomics: Partnering for precision medicine' conference, devised by Dr Sian Morgan (chair of our Genomics and Reproductive Science Specialty Advisory Committee), we brought together leading stakeholders across pathology, genomics, NHS England and industry to explore strategies for improving outcomes for cancer patients and accelerating access to new treatments.

The conference explored how to promote closer working between cellular pathology, genomics and industry in the delivery of patient-centred care. A follow-up event is scheduled for the end of 2025, with the goal of generating a consensus statement on the most effective approaches to address challenges faced by patients awaiting the results of genomic testing.

Workforce

Our members called for us to focus on raising awareness of workforce shortages this year, and advocate for pathologists facing real challenges in the workplace.

In response, we:

- launched our [new 2025–2028 workforce strategy](#) following extensive engagement with members and stakeholders. This sets out the actions we will take to influence changes, in particular in workforce intelligence, and is already driving new initiatives and strengthening our workforce data. We will use your experiences and our voice to understand and lobby for the changes the pathology workforce needs.
- relaunched our workforce census in February 2025, to better reflect the diverse professional backgrounds and experiences of our members. We had a response rate of 31% and published [key findings](#). This data is enabling us to identify shortfalls, and address recruitment, retention and morale issues across the pathology workforce in the absence of nationally coordinated data on pathologists and pathology services.
- published 2 of 4 planned [census spotlights](#) that captured workforce priorities and challenges based on the data we collected. These highlight a potential retirement cliff edge with

47% of pathologists aged 50 and over and intending to retire in their early 60s, as well as the unsustainable pressure on the workforce, with over 60% of UK-wide consultants working beyond the number of hours stated in their contract in a typical week.

- used census data and evidence from the College Specialty Training Committees and the Trainees’ Advisory Committee in [our response](#) to the NHS England Medical Training Review. We called for the creation of at least 150 additional training posts across the 17 pathology specialties, proportionally distributed across the regions according to population need. We outlined the challenges and opportunities needed to ensure postgraduate medical training remains fit and sustainable for the future.
- launched the ophthalmic pathology fellowship after unexpected consultant retirements meant specialist eye services were in crisis. College Registrar Professor Sarah Coupland worked with our Workforce team to secure NHS England funding for the fellowship.
- published guidance outlining strategies to support medical microbiologists and virologists in managing clinical consultant workloads
- attended the [APPG on Baby Loss](#) meeting on inequalities in baby loss that took place at the start of Black Baby Loss Awareness Week in May, where our data on the lack of perinatal and paediatric pathologists and its effect was highlighted.





Section 5

Our governance

Trustee Board and College Council (as at 30 June 2025)

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Trustee Board

Vince Voon,
Chair and Lay Trustee

Dr Bernie Croal,
President

Professor Sarah Coupland,
Registrar

Dr John Ashcroft,
Treasurer

Professor Marta Cohen,
Vice President for Learning

Dr Noha El Sakka,
Vice President for Communications

Dr Laszlo Igali,
Vice President for Professional Practice

Professor Peter Johnson,
Vice President for Workforce and
Corporate Engagement

Dr Gareth McKeeman,
Chair, Northern Ireland Regional Council

Dr Charu Chopra,
Chair, Scotland Regional Council

Dr Anu Gunavardhan,
Chair, Wales Regional Council

Lesli Flinn,
Lay Trustee

Jennifer Phillips,
Lay Trustee

Dr Shubha Allard,
Co-opted Trustee

Professor Marco Novelli,
Co-opted Trustee



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Council Members

Dr Bernie Croal,
Chair and President

Professor Sarah Coupland,
Registrar

Dr John Ashcroft,
Treasurer

Professor Marta Cohen,
Vice President for Learning

Dr Noha El Sakka,
Vice President for Communications

Dr Laszlo Igali,
Vice President for Professional Practice

Professor Peter Johnson,
Vice President for Workforce and
Corporate Engagement

Dr Gareth McKeeman,
Chair, Northern Ireland Regional Council

Dr Charu Chopra,
Chair, Scotland Regional Council

Dr Anu Gunavardhan,
Chair, Wales Regional Council

Dr Arthi Anand,
National Elected Member and Chair,
Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics
Specialty Advisory Committee (SAC)

Dr Sayed Bukhari,
National Elected Member

Dr Susanne Burdak-Rothkamm,
National Elected Member

Dr Guy Hannah,
National Elected Member

Dr Alex Haragan,
Elected Member (England North)

Vince Voon,
Chair of Trustee Board and Lay Trustee

Professor Tahir Pillay,
Chair, International Committee

Co-opted Council Members

Dr Rachael Liebmann,
Medical Director, Sonic Healthcare

Dr Shubha Allard,
NHS Blood and Transplant

Professor Marco Novelli,
Medical Director, HCA Laboratories

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Observers to Council By Invitation

Dr Lisa Ayers,
Chair, Healthcare Science Committee

Dr Adrian Bateman,
Chair, Cellular Pathology SAC

Dr Ralph BouHaidar,
Chair, Forensic Pathology SAC

Professor Sebastian Brandner,
Chair, Neuropathology SAC

Professor Nicki Cohen,
Clinical Director of Examinations

Professor Angharad Davies,
Clinical Director of Publishing and
Engagement

Dr Mike Eden,
Clinical Director of Safety and Quality

Dr Clair Evans,
Chair, Prenatal, Perinatal and Paediatric
Pathology SAC

Lesli Flinn,
Lay Trustee

Dr Ian Godber,
President, Association for Laboratory
Medicine

Professor Keith Hunter,
Chair, Research Committee

Lt Col Dr Emma Hutley,
Military Observer

Dr Jan Klapwijk,
Chair, Toxicology SAC

Dr Shireen Kassam,
Sustainability Lead

Dr Pamela Kelly,
Chair, Veterinary Pathology SAC

Professor Mary Keogan,
Dean, Faculty of Pathology, Royal College
of Physicians of Ireland

Professor Jo Martin,
National Specialty Advisor for Pathology, NHS
England/Improvement

Dr Tony Maddox,
Chair, Cytopathology Sub-Committee

Dr Bipin Mathew,
Chair, Dermatopathology Sub-Committee

Dr Sian Morgan,
Chair, Genomics and Reproductive Science SAC

Professor Ronan McMullan,
Clinical Director of Training and Assessment

Dr Karen Mitchell,
Chair, Pathology Informatics Committee

Dr Shruthi Narayan,
Chair, Transfusion Medicine SAC

Jennifer Phillips,
Lay Trustee

Dr Sarah Pitt,
President Elect, Institute of Biomedical Science

Dr Natasha Ratnaraja,
Chair, Joint Medical Microbiology and Medical
Virology SAC

Dr Sophie Roberts,
Chair, Trainees' Advisory Committee

Dr Golda Shelley-Fraser,
Chair, Medical Examiners Committee

Professor Darren Treanor,
Digital Pathology Lead

Dr Patrick Yong,
Chair, Immunology SAC

Dr Esther Youd,
Clinical Director for Digital Pathology Education,
and Chair, Death Investigation Committee



The Royal College of Pathologists
Pathology: the science behind the cure



Thank you!

Thank you to our members, volunteers and staff for all they have achieved over the year. We're excited for next year and building on our achievements and successes.

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