



Royal College
of Physicians

RCP strategy 2022–24

Educating, improving and influencing
for better health and care





Introduction



The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) is at a critical point in its history following the pandemic and the resulting societal changes. The pandemic has both demonstrated the pivotal role of physicians in healthcare systems across the globe and revealed the

enormous challenges that these systems and all clinicians face. The RCP was due to release its next strategy when the pandemic took hold in 2020 and while the broad principles underpinning it have remained constant, the context has changed and provided us with the opportunity to review our focus.

The RCP is a complex organisation, being both a professional membership body and a registered charity. We therefore produced this strategy following consultation with our members and stakeholders and it is mindful of our responsibilities in both of these roles. Our vision and mission are unchanged in spirit from the 2015–20 strategy, but we have focused the ‘strategic themes’ to identify three main strategic priorities and made this a 3-year plan. The priorities are: **educating** physicians and supporting them to fulfil their potential; **improving** health and care and leading the prevention of ill health across communities; and **influencing** the way that healthcare is designed and delivered. These priorities will only be achieved through close engagement with the RCP membership, patient and carer involvement, a focus on diversity and inclusion, good governance and working in a sustainable way.

As for many charities, the past 2 years have been extremely challenging for the RCP finances. Although these are now on a stable footing, all activities that were included as part of the last strategy have been reviewed and some stopped. The ongoing

financial environment necessitates a cautious approach to developing new activities, but a focus on our priorities will ensure that we maximise the use of our resources. Climate change is a major threat to us all and this will be addressed in our ongoing plans for organisational sustainability.

There is much to celebrate from the past few years. Our staff have responded innovatively and with agility and our new home in Liverpool, The Spine, has been completed on time and on budget, giving us a unique opportunity to achieve our priorities outside London. Our membership numbers are increasing at the fastest rate ever, currently standing at over 40,000, giving us a wealth of wisdom and experience to draw on. We have been at the forefront of the pandemic response, and the profiles of both physicians and the RCP have never been higher. Sadly, though, the demands on the NHS and other healthcare systems mean that physicians are needed as never before and the RCP must respond to this. This strategy lays out our plans for how we will achieve this.



Dr Andrew Goddard

President, Royal College of Physicians

Dr Ian Bullock

Chief executive, Royal College of Physicians

About us

Since its foundation in 1518, the RCP's focus has been to improve patient care and reduce illness. We drive improvement in the diagnosis of disease, the care of individual patients and the health of the whole population, both in the UK and across the globe.

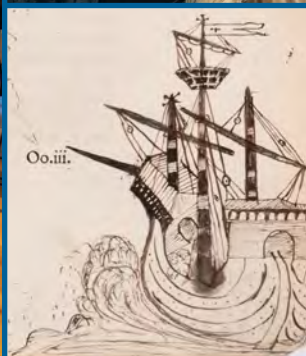


We do this through educating and supporting our members and by setting clinical and educational standards and measuring against them. In doing so, the RCP influences policymakers and other stakeholders in the design and delivery of quality healthcare.

Our 40,000+ fellows and members include medical students, trainees, consultants, SAS (staff, associate specialist and specialty) doctors, physician associates and advanced clinical practitioners as well as retired physicians. They are drawn from over 100 countries around the world, working in hospitals and communities across more than 30 different medical specialties. They care for millions of medical patients and their work ranges from caring for patients who are acutely unwell in

hospital, to supporting patients to manage long-term health problems at home, and encouraging people to stay fit and healthy.

The RCP is a clinically led organisation and we work in partnership with our own Patient and Carer Network and other patient groups to achieve our aims. We work with various health organisations and other royal colleges to enhance the quality of medical care and promote research and innovation. We have a wider duty to raise awareness of preventable illnesses such as those caused by smoking, alcohol, obesity and air pollution and to highlight the health impacts of climate change. We promote evidence-based policies that tackle risk factors for disease to encourage good public health.





Our vision

“ As the leading body for physicians in the UK and internationally, the RCP envisages a world in which everyone has the best possible health and healthcare.

Our values

Our values are **taking care**, **learning** and **being collaborative**.

Taking care means we behave respectfully towards people, whatever their role, position, gender or background. It means we act as representatives of the RCP, and take decisions in the interests of the organisation as a whole.

Learning means we continuously improve through active learning and honest reflection, so that we grow personally and as an organisation, while striving for excellence. We support learning and development opportunities.

Being collaborative means we work together towards the RCP's vision in a shared and professional way, understanding that individuals bring different strengths and approaches to our work.





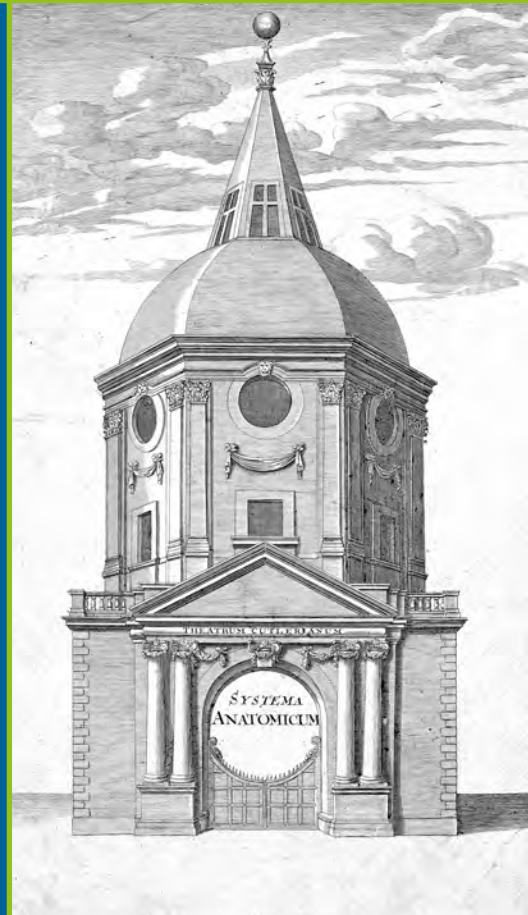
Our mission

The RCP understands its purpose in realising that vision to be:

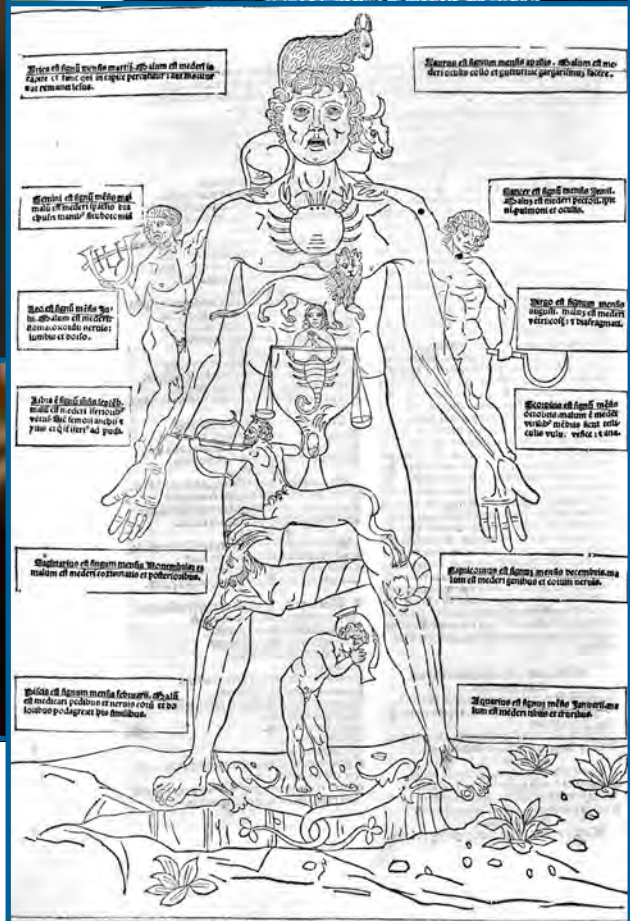
educating physicians and supporting them to fulfil their potential

improving health and care and leading the prevention of ill health across communities

influencing the way that healthcare is designed and delivered.



Our priorities



Educating

physicians and supporting them to fulfil their potential

We strive for excellence in the training and continuing professional development of physicians and physician associates throughout their multifaceted careers. We develop them as career-long learners and improvers, leaders, educators and researchers. We formulate and present the knowledge of our members for wider public benefit.

We will:

- > provide a suite of robust and fit-for-purpose examinations
- > develop and support the implementation of curricula, training pathways and credentials which meet standards set by regulators and/or other quality frameworks
- > develop innovative education specific to evolving professional roles, providing it across a variety of platforms
- > support appropriate expectations of continuing professional development, providing a clear framework and supportive infrastructure
- > support clinicians to develop skills in leadership, education, research, improvement methodology and implementation science
- > publish and encourage medical best practice through our journals and wider publishing programme, promoting ethical standards of publication.



We develop physicians and physician associates as career-long learners and improvers, leaders, educators and researchers.



Improving health and care and leading the prevention of ill health across communities

We improve the quality, outcomes, safety and experience of patient care by developing and setting standards. We support the clinical community to embed those standards by enabling and sharing local, regional, national and international quality and service improvement initiatives. We continually seek to identify and respond to the improvement challenges that our members face in practice.

We will:

- > build networks and communities of our educational alumni and improvement experts to support the physician community to lead and deliver improvements in practice
- > build an online portal to support networking and to share best practice and innovation
- > collaborate and partner with national improvement activity and deliver improvement programmes such as national audit and accreditation and invited service reviews
- > contribute to developments in digital healthcare to inform how healthcare is delivered and how patient health is monitored
- > develop expert clinical guidance with partner organisations and with our medical specialty colleagues
- > develop patient safety skills and practice in medical teams, and maximise patient safety through our partnerships.

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Influencing the way that healthcare is designed and delivered

We provide leadership to shape government, health and care policy and practice. We constantly improve our understanding of the drivers of good health, the physician community and the NHS. We are the voice of medicine and set standards for medical care, working alongside the wider medical community, patients and our partners to develop, promote and publish solutions.

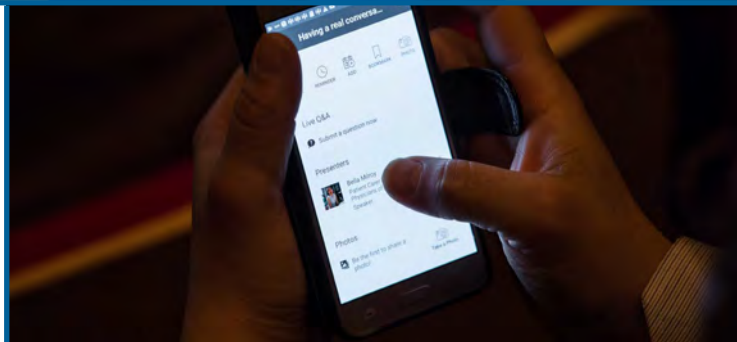
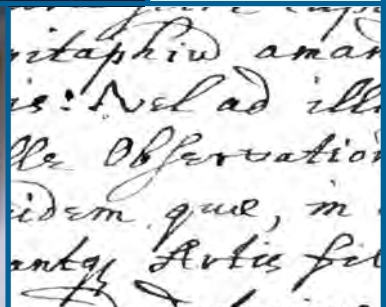
We will:

- maintain a constant awareness and understanding of developments in health and care policy and practice. We will do this by gathering intelligence from our members, working with our partners across the health and care sector, and through our involvement in political systems
- develop RCP policy and influencing strategies to inform our fellows and members through our publications and other communications
- provide insight into the medical workforce and healthcare systems with accurate data and informed analysis
- promote equality of access to good health and care for all
- encourage a more consistently research-active NHS for the best health and care outcomes
- use strategic communications, engagement and our heritage to place the physician workforce and patients at the forefront of public debate about health.



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Enablers to our priorities



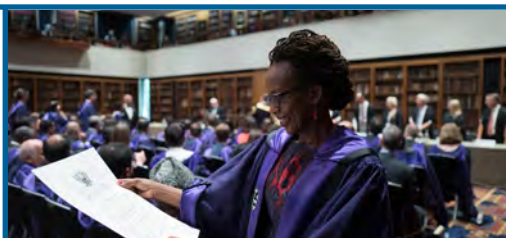
1 Membership engagement

We exist to educate our fellows and members, and we are educated by their knowledge and experience of designing and delivering healthcare. Our goal is to increase engagement with our membership groups both internationally and in the UK. Our relationship changes with members at different stages of their careers, as shown below:

When	The RCP's role
School and through university	Inspire future members
Postgraduate Pre-MRCP(UK) SAS and PA careers	Value and educate
Post-MRCP(UK) PA career development Specialist doctors	Develop and mentor
Consultant	Support transition
Fellowship	Build long-term careers

We will:

- > seek to inspire young people from school age to aspire to become physicians
- > review how we reach out to potential members in the physician community to support them from early to later-stage careers
- > develop our regional network, with regional advisers and representatives helping us understand what the physician community wants and needs, and promoting the value of RCP membership
- > demonstrate the value of RCP membership to physician associate colleagues and support them through the transition process as the GMC takes responsibility for their regulation.



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2

Working with patients

Over the past decade, the RCP has worked with its Patient and Carer Network to ensure that the perspectives of those with lived experience are reflected in our activities. This feedback loop between clinicians and patients is critical to achieving our aims and must be reinforced.

We will:

- continue to improve the diversity of the Patient and Carer Network to represent the wide patient population that we serve
- forge links with other patient groups to ensure that the professional voice complements that of the patient
- champion shared decision-making, patient-focused communication and patient-reported outcomes.



3

Diversity and inclusion

Our motivation for increasing the diversity of fellows, members and stakeholders involved with the RCP, as well as our staff, is not only that it is the right thing to do but also because we understand that such diversity strengthens our work. The independent Summerskill report into diversity and inclusion at the RCP that we commissioned has laid the foundations for that improvement work.

We will:

- > continue to implement the recommendations of the Summerskill report
- > grow the RCP international community and promote links with physician colleges and communities across the globe
- > involve more people as volunteers and representatives, to better represent the diversity of the physician community and the society we serve.



Increasing the diversity of fellows, members and stakeholders involved with the RCP, as well as our staff, is not only the right thing to do but also strengthens our work.

4

Governance and stakeholder engagement

As a charity and large employer, we rely on robust governance processes and high-functioning relationships between our internal structures and with our key stakeholders. The relationship between our elected Council and our Board of Trustees is especially important. We refreshed our Bye-laws in 2020, but further improvements can be made in our running practices.

We will:

- > be fully transparent and accountable in line with best practice in the Charity Governance Code
- > maintain tight oversight of our financial affairs, especially with regards to our pension scheme commitments and our expenditure
- > redesign our organisational structure and processes to better promote staff engagement and wellbeing, internal efficiency and effectiveness through ever-closer collaboration
- > benchmark our operations against best-in-class organisations and seek to close gaps in performance
- > invest in a new RCP website to better engage stakeholders in our work.



Further improvements can be made in our running practices.

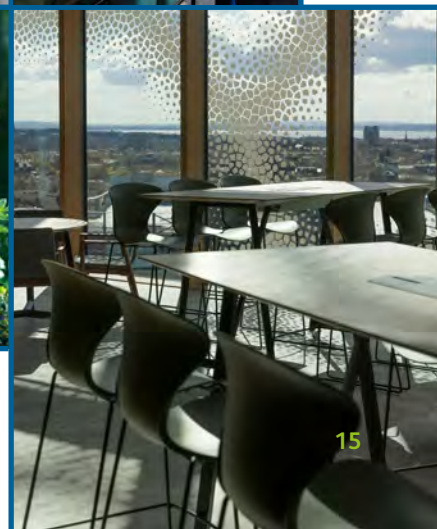
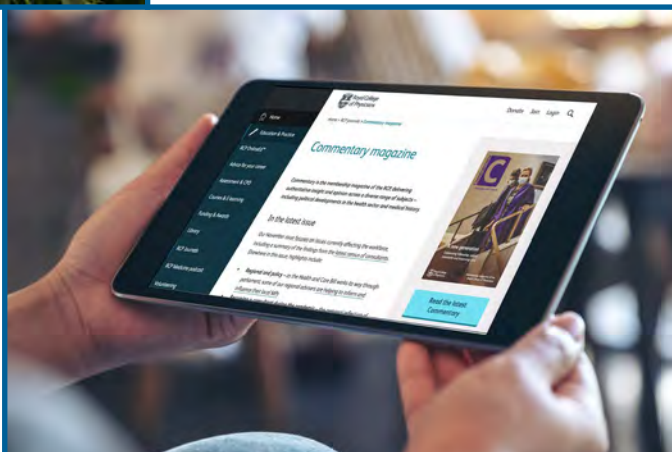
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Sustainability

The RCP is committed to minimising the environmental impacts of its operations and within its supply chain and is continually seeking innovative ways to improve its sustainability, including digital and online solutions.

We will:

- assess the benefits of meeting face to face and, if not significant, have digital as our default
- only pursue commercial activities or investments that make use of our capabilities and fit with our ethical and quality standards or climate change policy
- lead the physician family in meeting environment sustainability goals and support the NHS in doing so
- develop and implement a plan to achieve carbon neutrality.



Measuring our success

Our vision, mission, values and priorities have been agreed by our Council and Board of Trustees, and represent an enduring long-term framework for the RCP. For the period 2022–24, we will identify and review our activities to ensure they are relevant and use our limited resources wisely.

We are committed to measuring our activities against achieving our charitable purpose and delivering value to our membership, and reporting these to our Council, Board of Trustees, membership and where relevant the wider public.



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I have been registered as a medical student at
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