

Shaped by you: how RCP members helped to define our 2026–30 strategy

You told us what needs to change, and we listened. From national surveys to face-to-face events and the next generation campaign, members across the UK and globally have shaped a new RCP strategy focused on what matters most to your working lives, your careers and your patients.

At a time of profound change for the profession, the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) has developed a new strategy that is firmly rooted in what members and fellows told us that they need most.

Over the past year, we have undertaken one of the most extensive programmes of member engagement in the college's recent history. This was not a single consultation, but a sustained effort over several months to listen, test ideas and bring together insight from across the UK and our global membership. More than 2,500 members and fellows took part in our membership survey alone, alongside wider engagement through committees, networks and events, providing a rich and robust evidence base to shape the future of the RCP.

A central part of this work was a full membership survey, sent to physicians across all career stages and specialties. This was complemented by targeted engagement with RCP Council, committees, networks and advisory groups, alongside a programme of staff engagement. We also commissioned external research to gather independent insight into how the RCP is perceived by stakeholders across the health system, including NHS leaders, government, regulators and other royal colleges. Taken together, this created a comprehensive picture of member priorities, experiences and expectations.

Alongside surveys, we created space for more in-depth conversations with members through focus groups, committee discussions and Council-led engagement. These sessions enabled us to explore the detail behind the survey findings and to test emerging ideas for the strategy. Insights from regional Updates in medicine and college visits to NHS hospitals, as well as discussions with RCP Council and our Board of Trustees, helped to ensure that the strategy reflects the realities of clinical practice, and our Meet your president sessions provided plenty of opportunities for open conversation with our wider membership.

Reflecting on these discussions, RCP president Professor Mumtaz Patel explains, 'What struck me most through

this process was just how honest members were with us. There is a deep pride in the RCP, but also a clear challenge: to be more visible, more relevant and more vocal on the issues that matter to physicians. That honesty has helped us to shape a strategy that is not only ambitious, but rooted in what our members really need in their day-to-day working lives.'

Our engagement programme extended beyond formal consultation. Through the RCP's next generation campaign, members – particularly resident doctors – have shared their experiences of medical training through surveys, blogs, webinars, events and media engagement. This enabled members to contribute ideas for reform in ways that worked for them, whether through structured research or informal discussion, and ensured that engagement reached groups who may not traditionally participate in formal consultations.

Jono Brüün took up post as the RCP's chief executive in January 2026. Coming into role, he was keen to learn more about what members expected from their college. 'The scale and depth of engagement last year was incredibly powerful,' he says. 'We've brought together insight from thousands of members, alongside conversations across the health system, and there is a clear thread running through it all: the need to reconnect the RCP to our members and their day-to-day lives.'

Several consistent themes quickly emerged. Members told us they want an RCP that:

- > puts members and fellows at the centre of everything it does
- > builds a stronger sense of community and connection across the profession
- > continues to provide high-quality education and maintain standards
- > speaks with a clear, credible and influential voice on behalf of physicians
- > operates transparently and sustainably as an organisation.

The survey findings behind these themes were clear and consistent. Professional development remains the cornerstone of membership, with more than half of respondents citing access to learning, CPD and resources as their main reason for both joining and staying. Requests for stronger advocacy, greater visibility and

more meaningful engagement reinforce the importance of the college speaking with authority on behalf of the profession. Members were equally clear about where the college should focus next – prioritising practical professional development tools alongside a stronger, more influential voice for physicians on the issues that matter to them.

‘We heard consistently that members value the RCP at its best when it supports their professional development and speaks up on their behalf,’ says Mumtaz. ‘This strategy reflects that. We’ve placed a renewed focus on high-quality education, alongside a stronger, more confident voice for the profession. Most importantly, it commits us to continuing that conversation with members.’

At the same time, members were candid about where the RCP must improve. Views on value for money were divided, particularly among doctors in the middle of their careers. This reflects a broader pattern seen throughout the engagement – strong support from some groups alongside dissatisfaction from others – highlighting the importance of a strategy that responds to different experiences across career stages and specialties. Jono said: ‘What comes through strongly is that members’ experiences of the RCP are not the same. Some feel well supported and engaged, while others are telling

us that we need to do more. That is exactly where this strategy is focused: improving the day-to-day experience of membership, strengthening our offer and making sure every member sees the value of being part of the college.’

The new strategy also sets out how we will work differently, by modernising the way we work and placing a greater emphasis on transparency. This includes a clear commitment to continue creating opportunities for members to provide feedback and shape the direction of the RCP, not just during strategy development, but throughout its delivery. Listening to members is not a one-off exercise – it is a permanent shift in how the RCP works.

‘The launch of this strategy marks the beginning of the next phase, not the end of the conversation,’ Mumtaz concludes. ‘After all, the RCP is at its strongest when it reflects the collective insight, expertise and ideas of our members and fellows.’

[Read and download the new strategy.](#)

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