

Together we're
shaping the future
of medicine



The RCP has always been the home of physicians – a place that connects, supports and represents the values we share

Foreword

The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) has always been the home of physicians. A place that connects us, supports us and represents the values we share. This new strategy sets our direction for the years ahead. It describes what we will focus on, how we will work together and how we will measure the difference we make. Most importantly, it reflects what our members, both in the UK and internationally, have told us that they need from their college.

Physicians today are practising in an increasingly unpredictable and fast-moving world. Across the UK and globally, our members care for patients with more complex needs, lead more diverse teams and navigate systems under immense strain.

We are proud of the impact that physicians have locally, nationally and internationally. This strategy is built on our belief that medicine remains a deeply meaningful and rewarding profession, and that the RCP has a vital part to play in helping physicians thrive.

Over the past year we have listened carefully to our members, as well as stakeholders and staff. Our membership told us they want an RCP that puts its members and fellows at the centre, leads with confidence and humility, strengthens community, provides high-quality education and standards, and becomes more transparent and financially secure.

This strategy sets out how we will meet that ambition and deliver the renewal that members and fellows have asked for. It focuses on what matters most: support for the profession, a stronger and more connected community, and a clear, credible voice shaping the future of healthcare. It recognises the internal work required to achieve this, including modernising the organisation, strengthening governance and building long-term financial resilience.


Our commitment to members and fellows is this: we will champion your expertise, support you and build a trusted community across specialties, regions and our global membership, where you feel a sense of belonging. We will stand beside you at every stage of your career and make sure that your experience shapes medicine.

The four priorities in this strategy chart our path for the 5 years to 31 December 2030, and are underpinned by operational plans that will shape delivery. We are grateful for the insight, honesty and hope which our members and fellows have shared with us to give us clarity and new purpose.

Professor Mumtaz Patel
President

Jonathan Brüün
Chief executive officer

Dr Diana Walford
Chair, Board of Trustees

A photograph of three people sitting around a small round table in a bright, modern office setting. On the left, a man with glasses and a white shirt is smiling and looking towards the woman in the middle. The woman has long brown hair and is wearing a dark blue patterned top, also smiling. On the right, a woman with short dark hair and glasses is wearing a blue and white striped shirt and is holding a grey mug. All three are wearing green lanyards with 'RCP' and 'Chief Registrar' visible. The background features large windows and a green plant.

We are proud of the impact that physicians have locally, nationally and internationally



Our work is guided by a simple belief: that supporting physicians at every stage of their career strengthens patient care and improves health for all

About the Royal College of Physicians

The Royal College of Physicians is one of the most respected medical institutions in the world. For more than 500 years, we have combined tradition with a spirit of innovation, evolving to meet the needs of physicians and the communities they serve. Today, we are both a professional membership body and a registered charity, bringing together a global community of physicians who look to the RCP as their professional home.

Our work is guided by a simple belief: that supporting physicians at every stage of their career strengthens patient care and improves health for all. Improving patient care is central to everything we do. We are committed to strengthening our community, supporting the next generation of physicians, advancing medical knowledge and driving improvements in health and care, across the UK and worldwide.



Strategic framework 2026–30

This framework brings together our purpose, vision, mission, values and strategic priorities. It represents our shared ambition: to support physicians, strengthen our community and deliver meaningful impact. We are committed to ensuring that equity, diversity and inclusion inform everything we do. Our operational plans will set out the detail required to deliver this ambition.

Our purpose

Setting the highest standards in medicine and shaping better health for all.



Our values

INTEGRITY:

acting with honesty and transparency in everything we do

EQUITY:

valuing diversity and treating everyone with respect and fairness

EXCELLENCE:

setting and upholding the highest standards

INNOVATION:

embracing new ideas and technologies to advance health, care and education

COLLABORATION:

working together across disciplines, borders and communities

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STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1:

Supporting our membership and leading our community

Our ambition is to strengthen the RCP as the professional home for physicians where members and fellows, wherever they practise, feel supported, represented and connected throughout their careers. With around 30% of our members based outside the UK, we will ensure that we reflect the needs of our global community.

1. Growing an inclusive, representative community

We will nurture a strong sense of belonging across specialties, regions and countries, building more networks and spaces that offer all physicians support, shared learning and opportunities to grow as leaders. We will ensure that the voice of the next generation, including resident and early-career doctors in traditional and non-traditional training pathways, helps to guide and shape our future.

2. Deepening engagement and trust

We will earn the trust of our members through honest dialogue and frequent opportunities to shape our activities, culture and direction.

3. Delivering practical support to improve everyday practice

We will provide clear, helpful resources, including toolkits, guidance, career support and practical advice to support physicians' day-to-day clinical work.

4. Representing and bringing the profession together

We will bring together specialist societies, other royal colleges and faculties, global partners and networks to provide targeted support for the next generation and ensure that collective expertise informs our priorities and strengthens the profession's identity.



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STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2:

Ensuring excellence in education and setting the highest standards

We will support the profession globally by delivering high-quality education and upholding trusted assessments and standards.

1. A coherent, career-long education offer

We will provide high-quality education and training for every career stage – from resident doctors to senior leaders – informed by evolving care models, workforce needs and advances in digital and AI. We will deliver flexible, regional and global education so that physicians can access learning opportunities wherever they work.

2. World-leading assessment and professional standards

We will maintain and modernise assessments, ensuring that they remain fair, robust and globally respected. This includes our work as a key partner in the Federation of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of the UK to deliver MRCP(UK) exams.

3. Improvement in standards through accreditation and audit

We will promote high-quality clinical standards through accreditation and audit, providing assurance to patients and the public, and supporting services to demonstrate excellence and drive continuous improvement in patient care.

4. Supporting workforce needs and diverse career routes

We will offer targeted development at key career transition points, promoting flexibility and including tailored support for the growing number of physicians in specialist, associate specialist and specialty (SAS) and locally employed doctor (LED) roles, international medical graduates, our wider global membership and those pursuing non-traditional or portfolio careers.



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STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3:

Using our voice to advocate and shape the future of medicine

We will use our authoritative, clinically grounded voice to influence policy, shape public debate and champion the priorities of physicians and their patients.

1. Credible, timely and evidence-driven advocacy

We will advocate clearly on issues that matter most to our members and fellows, rooted in real-world physician insights and relevant to today's healthcare landscape.

2. Influence on the issues that matter most to physicians

We will raise the visibility of physicians' expertise through high-profile communications, proactive clinical leadership and strong partnerships.

3. Leadership that strengthens policy, systems and awareness

We will contribute constructively to shaping policy, ensuring that the physician voice is central to policymaking on a range of issues chosen in consultation with our members and fellows, from the medical workforce and clinical transformation in the NHS to research, public health and prevention.

4. Championing equity and addressing health inequalities

Our advocacy will align with our commitment to fairness and inclusion, working to improve outcomes for underserved communities and addressing long-standing health inequalities.

A photograph of three people in conversation. On the left, a woman with curly brown hair tied up, wearing a pink sweater, is seen in profile. In the center, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue floral dress, is smiling and looking towards the man on the right. On the right, a man with short dark hair, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt, is smiling and looking towards the woman in the center. They are standing in front of a wall with a woven texture. A vertical window or opening in the wall behind them shows green foliage.

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STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4:

Building organisational resilience and achieving responsible growth

We will strengthen the RCP as an organisation – modern, financially secure and equipped to support the profession long into the future. This fundamental priority underpins our ability to deliver the other three; organisational resilience is key to sustaining support for members, education and advocacy over the long term.

1. Disciplined decision-making for long-term resilience

We will focus RCP resources where they add the greatest value for members, fellows and their patients, making decisions openly and using resources sustainably.

2. Modernisation and innovation that improves member experience

We will invest in technology to improve organisational efficiency and resilience and to enhance member experience.

3. Coordinated structures, estates and activity

We will ensure that our organisational design, estates and commercial activity reflect our strategic ambitions both in the UK and globally, supporting efficiency and long-term stability.

4. Robust governance and a collaborative, values-led culture

Strong governance, clear accountability and assurance processes, coupled with a collaborative and inclusive culture, will underpin the delivery of this strategy.



We will champion physician expertise and build a trusted community across specialties, regions and our global membership

Prioritising our activities

This strategy is about focusing on what matters most to our members and fellows, and how we can best deliver value for them. To do this, we will adopt a clear and transparent approach to prioritisation.

Focus on strategic impact – We will prioritise work that directly advances our strategic priorities and strengthens member value, professional standards and patient care.

Streamline our portfolio – We will review current activities to determine what should continue, be redesigned or stop, releasing capacity and financial headroom for emerging priorities.

Align resources with what matters most – We will direct people, finances and estates toward the areas where the RCP can make the greatest difference, making evidence-based and sustainable investment decisions.

Maximise impact and quality – We will reduce duplication, simplify processes and focus on delivering high-value activities exceptionally well.

Make decisions openly – We will communicate clearly about how we set priorities and explain decisions to discontinue activities, to foster trust and shared understanding across the college.

Review continuously – We will use member feedback to prioritise work programmes, being conscious of organisational and financial sustainability.

By taking this approach, we will invest our resources where they have the greatest impact and ensure that the RCP remains agile, financially responsible and aligned with what matters most to our members and fellows.

A close-up portrait of a woman with short, curly blonde hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a dark blue top. The background is a brick wall with a purple and blue color gradient. The text 'We want the RCP to remain a trusted, supportive and inspiring professional home' is overlaid in white at the bottom left.

**We want the RCP to remain
a trusted, supportive and
inspiring professional home**



This strategy focuses on what matters most: support for the profession, a stronger and more connected community, and a clear, credible voice shaping the future of medicine

Measuring our success

We will evaluate progress against indicators that reflect meaningful outcomes for physicians, their patients and society.

Our high-level indicators will include:

- > Member engagement and satisfaction
- > Education and professional development outcomes
- > Advocacy influence and visibility
- > Digital engagement and accessibility
- > Diversity, inclusion and belonging measures
- > Financial sustainability.

A new way

The RCP enters this period with clarity and a renewed purpose – to build a strong community in the UK and globally, deliver excellent education and standards, advocate with a stronger voice, and create a resilient organisation that is equipped to lead the profession in the years ahead.

The work physicians do is demanding and essential. We want the RCP to remain a trusted, supportive and inspiring professional home. Our priorities are focused on ensuring that the expertise of physicians continues to shape national debate, improve patient care and strengthen the future of medicine.

Success will depend not only on what we deliver, but how we deliver it: by acting transparently, listening to members, investing wisely, and working collaboratively with specialist societies and wider stakeholders. We are committed to making thoughtful choices, modernising where needed and ensuring that our actions are coherent and impactful.

We invite members, fellows, staff and stakeholders to help shape the delivery of this strategy. Together we can build a stronger community, influence health systems with authority and uphold the highest standards in medicine, continuing to improve health and care for generations to come.

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This strategy was developed following wide engagement with members and fellows, stakeholders and staff. It was approved by the Board of Trustees and RCP Council.

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