

Commentary news round-up: February 2026

Since the last edition of *Commentary* in December the RCP has been working to represent our members and support the work of physicians. Read our summary of the news from the last 2 months and the upcoming opportunities.

King Charles III 2026 New Year Honours list

A huge congratulations to all those named in the New Year Honours List, for their continued dedication and work contributions to improving health and care across various specialties.

Most Excellent Order of the British Empire

Dames Commander of the Order of the British Empire (GBE)

Dr Suzannah Claire Lishman CBE, Hon FRCP
Lately president, the Association of Clinical Pathologists and senior advisor on medical examiners, Royal College of Pathologists.

For services to the medical examiner system and to patient safety.

Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE)

Dr Edward James Baker FRCP
Chair, Health Services, Safety Investigations Body.
For services to healthcare.

Professor Jill Jannette Freda Belch OBE, FRSE, FRCP
Professor of vascular medicine and consultant physician, Ninewells Hospital and Medical School, NHS Tayside.
For services to medicine and public health.

Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE)

Professor Alan Keith Fletcher FRCP
Lately national medical examiner for England and Wales, NHS England.
For services to the NHS.

Dr Anna Lisa Mary Jenkins FRCP
For services to life sciences.

Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE)

Professor Michael Kevin Almond QVRM, VR, DL, FRCP
Professor in veterans and families studies, Anglia Ruskin University and chair, Essex Reserve Forces and Cadets Association.
For services to service personnel and veterans.

Professor Alan Keith Boyd FRCP, FMedSci
President and chief executive officer, Boyd Consultants.
For services to gene therapy and medical education.

Professor Neil Reginald Poulter FRCP
Professor of preventative cardiovascular medicine, Imperial College London.
For services to hypertension prevention.

Overseas and international list

Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George (KCMG)

Professor David Christopher William Mabey CBE, FRCP
Professor of communicable diseases, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.
For services to global health.

Professor Anthony Damien Redmond OBE, FRCP
Founder of UK-Med and professor emeritus of international emergency medicine, University of Manchester.
For services to humanitarian medical assistance.

Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George (CMG)

Professor Nicholas Philip John Day FRCP
Director Mahidol-Oxford Research Programme and professor of tropical medicine, Oxford University.
For services to global health.

Dr Dwomoa Adu FRCP
Honorary consultant nephrologist and senior research fellow, University of Ghana Medical School.
For services to treating kidney disease in the UK and overseas.

RCP governance matters

Read the latest updates on RCP governance matters and find your opportunities to get involved.

Central elections 2026

- At January Council all nominations received were agreed and now proceed as candidates in forthcoming elections.
- Professor Mumtaz Patel, the incumbent president, was the only fellow nominated in the annual election of the president. An uncontested election will therefore take place on College Day – further details below.
- The lists of candidates standing across elections will be published on the election area of the website on 16 February 2026 (provisional date). Direct communication with the membership will accompany this so you can see who is standing and find out about each candidate (personal statement, photo, DOIs).
- The publication of the candidate lists marks the start of the allowable 6 weeks of canvassing, in line with guidance. You can access the election arrangements, guidance and timetable on the election section of the website.
- Elections will be held concurrently and online – with voting opening on 2 March 2026. Eligible fellows and collegiate members will be emailed by Civica Elections Services (CES) and the RCP at this time to mark the start of voting. Voting will close at midday on 30 March 2026. Regular reminders will be sent from CES and the RCP during the voting period – **please use your vote.**
- You can visit [the RCP election page](#) to find out the full timetable.

Summary of January 2026 Council meeting published

RCP Council met in open session on 28 January 2026 to discuss social media and digital harms and hear updates about the RCP's campaigns work on training reform, workforce pressures and corridor care.

[Full Council meeting minutes](#) (open section) are published in the [member-only section of the RCP website](#) once they are approved at the following meeting – the [full minutes of the November Council](#) (open section) have now been uploaded. The closed section of the meeting will be reserved for fellowship and business-sensitive information. For more information, please contact Council@rcp.ac.uk.

Central elections 2026

- As previously notified, the SGM will be held on Monday 30 March 2026 as required by section

6 of the Medical Act 1860. A dinner will follow in the evening for pre-booked fellows. Fellows will shortly be invited to attend in person/online once arrangements are finalised - details will also be available [on the website](#).

- The programme will include the Fitzpatrick and Samuel Gee lectures with direct communication to the membership to follow on options for attendance. The lectures will be available on demand after the event.

Annual General Meeting (AGM) of fellows 2026

Please note that the AGM is scheduled for Tuesday 22 September 2026. It will be a hybrid meeting held 5–7pm and followed by a dinner (for pre-booked fellows).

RCP opportunities – you're chance to get involved

Our officer, committee and other clinical volunteer roles are an ideal opportunity to support the RCP, guide our decision-making and ensure the voice of the membership is included across all activity. [Visit the RCP website](#) to see the latest opportunities.

Recent RCP work

Read more about our work, from publications, award winners and responses to healthcare reports, on our [News and opinion page](#) – and see some of the recent highlights below.

Summary of January 2026 Council meeting published

Dr Ollie Minton has been appointed as the clinical editor for *Commentary*, the RCP's membership magazine. You can read [his opening column](#) for this edition.

Ollie is a consultant in palliative medicine and an honorary professor, based in University Hospitals Sussex and Brighton and Sussex Medical School.

He has been a fellow of the RCP since 2012, guest edited a special issue of *Commentary* on end-of-life care in 2018 and, more recently, been a member of the Communications Reference Group.

On his appointment, Ollie said: 'I have been an active member of the college for some time and a doctor for even longer, so am delighted to contribute to its voice and that of medicine with the *Commentary* role as clinical editor. I very much subscribe to the aims of research, policy, advocacy and communications being interlinked.'

'I hope to provide an insightful clinical voice and encourage wider collaboration, as I have done throughout my career. The college has rightfully been going for over 500 years and continues to develop and

adapt, and I am proud to contribute to the current and future iterations.'

Ollie formally started the role in January 2026, and will chair future meetings of the *Commentary* advisory group, membership of which comprises a diverse range of fellows, members and RCP staff.

The RCP view on digital and AI published

The new *RCP view on digital and AI* exposes a disconnect between doctors' demand for AI and institutional capability and raises serious questions about the NHS's readiness to adopt AI tools safely. It recommends that the government and NHS must optimise digital systems, ensure digital interoperability, and provide robust regulatory frameworks to protect patient safety, while ensuring doctors and patients can safely benefit from the potential of AI.

RCP welcomes announcement of Bill to prioritise UK medical graduates for training places

The RCP has responded to the announcement of a bill which will see UK medical graduates prioritised for training places.

Professor Mumtaz Patel, RCP president, said: 'We welcome government action to tackle specialty training bottlenecks – an issue the RCP has been raising consistently through our next generation campaign for the past year. Now we need to see the detail of these proposals. For too long, talented doctors have been left stuck in a system that does not give them fair or timely opportunities to progress.'

'International medical graduates already working in the NHS are our colleagues and friends, providing vital care to patients every day, and they must be properly supported to develop their careers.'

'But this cannot be addressed in isolation. The medical training system needs a fundamental reset – with more postgraduate training places, genuinely flexible career pathways, and sustained investment in high-quality training and supervision – if we are serious about securing the future physician workforce and delivering excellent patient care.'

You can [read more](#) about the report.

Updated Green physician toolkit

The RCP has published an updated *Green physician toolkit* amid rising climate and health risks. You can explore the updated toolkit on the [RCP website](#).

In January, Dr Mark Harber RCP special adviser on healthcare sustainability and climate change, presented to the Pan-European Commission on Climate and Health on how clinicians can accelerate climate action. In his contribution, Dr Harber highlighted the RCP's leadership in supporting NHS net zero goals – including developing

practical resources like our Green physician toolkit.

The RCP also published [our final 2025 sustainability report card](#) in December, showing our progress to improve its environmental sustainability as an organisation.

RCP Medicine podcast reaches 100 episodes

The RCP has reached a major milestone with the publication of the 100th episode of its *RCP Medicine* podcast. Since its launch, *RCP Medicine* has been downloaded almost 900,000 times, building a substantial and growing audience across the UK and internationally. The podcast has become a trusted source of insight on the clinical, educational and policy issues shaping modern medicine, featuring voices from across the medical profession and wider health system.

The 100th episode, 'Shaping the future of medical training: insights from the Next Generation Oversight Group', focuses on the pressures facing resident doctors and the need for meaningful reform in postgraduate medical education.

Episode 100 is available on [the RCP Player](#) and all major podcast platforms. You can take [a behind-the-scenes look](#) at the *RCP Medicine* podcast in a 2025 *Commentary* article.

New issues of Clinical Medicine and Future Healthcare Journal

The [December issue of Future Healthcare Journal](#) focuses on symptom-based disorders.

This themed issue places a strong focus on conditions characterised by ongoing, distressing symptoms, often experienced without a clear or single diagnosis. These include fibromyalgia, persistent physical symptoms, functional neurological disorders and post-COVID syndromes.

Dr Andrew Duncombe, editor-in-chief, notes that many of these conditions are united not just by clinical uncertainty, but by prolonged delay: 'Waiting for a diagnosis, waiting for explanations, waiting for recognition, waiting for support and treatment and waiting in hope for recovery.'

The [January issue of Clinical Medicine](#) features a CME section on diabetes, commissioned by Dr Tahseen Chowdhury. Completing this CME activity allows RCP members to earn two external CPD credits. This issue also features articles on patient safety, meningitis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and more.

Award winners

Did you know we distribute around £350,000 in RCP funding and awards to our members and fellows every year?

Thanks to historic donations, we are able to recognise and invest in the expertise, innovation and leadership of our members, celebrate their impact and achievements, and support our global community to make real change and shape the future of medicine.

Our latest award winners are Dr David Lindsay (Linacre Lecture 2025 with 'Schrödinger's CAT remembered') and Dr Farah Latif (Whitney-Wood scholarship with a project on renal research). Find out more about [RCP funding and awards](#).

Upcoming events and opportunities

There is plenty more to look forward to in 2026, including a variety of events for resident doctors and new consultants. Here are a selection of educational programmes, webinars and other opportunities to look out for in the next few months.

Medicine 2026

Join us at the RCP annual conference, Medicine 2026, a 2-day event dedicated to exploring the three transformative shifts outlined in the 10 Year Health Plan for England: fit for the future.

- From hospital to community – the neighbourhood health service
- From analogue to digital – the digital revolution in care delivery
- From sickness to prevention – healthier, longer lives for everyone.

Wednesday 13 – Thursday 14 May 2026 at the RCP at Regent's Park and online system. **What to expect:**

- **Keynotes and discussions:** dive into the future of AI and neighbourhood health and hear from Professor Ben Goldacre MBE, renowned for his work on evidence-based medicine and data-driven healthcare.
- **Specialty and policy updates:** stay informed on the latest developments shaping clinical practice, and health policy. Expert speakers from across the UK and around the world will deliver vital clinical updates across various specialties. Including acute medicine, cardiology and neurology.

Medicine 2026 is open to all career stages and specialties and will be CPD-accredited.

Do you have a story of local innovation to share with us?

We're looking for RCP member stories for our [Spotlight on local innovation series](#), where we showcase how physicians across the UK are improving patient care and delivering high-quality medical training. If you've been involved in a local change that's worked – big or small – we'd love to hear from you: comms@rcp.ac.uk.

Excellence in Patient Care Awards 2026

These prestigious awards celebrate the outstanding contributions of RCP members and fellows worldwide, who are driving improvements in patient care through education, clinical practice, research and policy. Find out more about how to [submit your entry online](#). Entries must be submitted by 16 February 2026 – [read more in Commentary](#) about how to put together an application

RCP medical student elective bursaries

Up to 12 grants of £500 each are available each year to undergraduate medical students at UK universities who will be undertaking a medical elective overseas. [Applications are currently open](#) to RCP members. Email your application to fundingandawards@rcp.ac.uk. The deadline for applications is Saturday 28 February 2026.

Free publication in a globally ranked journal

Clinical Medicine is among the top 15% of general medical publications worldwide. By publishing open access with *ClinMed*, you can:

- expand your reach
- amplify your visibility
- connect with collaborators across the globe
- contribute to high-quality educational resources supporting clinical practice.

As an [RCP member](#) you can publish in the journal for free. That's a saving of up to £1,850 per article (depending on exchange rate).

Join our many members who have published original research for free, including RCP fellow Professor Trisha Greenhalgh, who told us how the fee waiver has benefited her: 'ClinMed processed our paper promptly and we were delighted to discover that we were exempt from the publication fee because we were members and fellows of the RCP. This was a significant benefit at a time when our grant had run dry. The paper has been highly accessed and widely cited.'

Medicine 2026 abstract competition

The Medicine 2026 abstract competition is now open for submissions!

The abstract competition is one of the highlights of our conference, offering delegates the opportunity to showcase their research to healthcare professionals from around the world.

By participating in the Medicine 2026 abstract competition, you'll get the chance to:

- have your work evaluated by a respected panel of leading clinicians
- have your research showcased on the Medicine 2026 platform
- be published in one of the RCP publishing streams.

There are prizes of up to £1,000, so don't miss out.

[Submit your abstract online](#). Submissions close Sunday 1 March 2026 at 23.59pm (GMT).

Deceased fellows

Munk's Roll is the RCP's collection of biographies of deceased fellows, published online as [Inspiring Physicians](#). To write an obituary or notify the RCP of the death of a fellow, email munksroll@rcp.ac.uk.

Over the period of 7 December 2025 – 8 February 2026 the RCP was informed of the deaths of the following fellows:

- Brian Wharton
- Gilbert Richard Thompson
- Mahabaleswara Maiya
- Babatunde Osotimehin
- Paul Neill
- Richard John Dobbs
- Eileen Margaret Phillips
- William Nicholas Trethowan
- Michael Morgan
- Kenneth Davison
- Andreas Christopher Stylianides
- John Bolton Ridyard
- Annamma Kochummen Dorai Raj
- Janet Dacie
- Ali Ashraf

This feature was produced for the February 2025 edition of [Commentary magazine](#). You can read a [web-based version](#), which includes images.