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

RCPath President's newsletter – November 2026



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Moving on…
I am filled with a sense of euphoria and satisfaction as I now reach the end of my term as President of the College. I am hugely proud of what the College has achieved over the past 3 years, driven by the hard work of both staff and our member volunteers.

It has, of course, been a particularly challenging time for healthcare, for pathology and for the College: post-pandemic backlogs, economic downturn, workforce shortages and the impact of global conflicts on supply chains and laboratory costs. These all continue to limit pathology modernisation and much needed workforce planning. We have also seen a new government come in, 3 Prime Ministers and 4 Secretaries of State for Health and Social Care in just 3 years. There has also been a succession of reviews and plans for the future of the NHS, including the abolition of NHS England, and all the instability this has brought. A strong College voice has been vital against this backdrop and will continue to be strongly heard.

There are many milestones to reflect upon that set the College up extremely well for the years ahead: a potent workforce strategy, a new productive relationship with industry partners, the formation of a pan-pathology Digital Strategy Board structure, a new consultants committee, a stronger Pathology Alliance, a better relationship with the devolved nations, a new Patient Safety Group, a much more financially productive trading arm and the establishment of a statutory medical examiner system. This College remains a strong and potent entity in its support of pathology going into the future.

As I have said many times, being an active fellow of this College by paying a subscription fee and volunteering time is never taken for granted. It is essential for the future of pathology and the professional wellbeing of all of us who provide those services. The critical mass of both income and member input is so crucial, and I urge you all to continue to stay involved – without it, pathology's future will be severely undermined.

A personal reflection

It has been one of the great privileges of my life to step into the role of President of this College for the past 3 years. I will look back on this time as the highlight of my professional career, and one which has been very enjoyable and productive. I have met a huge number of exceptional people, made a lot of friends and learned many new skills and gained much new knowledge. During this time, I have also welcomed 2 grandkids and had to say goodbye to my parents – life events, good and bad, cannot be stage managed.

My time has been supported by College staff, the senior management team, honorary officers, directors and the many volunteers that the College hugely depends upon. I am extremely thankful to them all and the continued success of the College very much lies at their door.

I will continue many roles for the College in the coming years and look forward to working closely with many of you.

Finally, I wish the new President, Professor Sarah Coupland, the new officers, directors, committee chairs and members, all the very best going forwards. I have huge confidence that the College is in good hands.

Republic of Ireland

I spent a very enjoyable few days in Dublin this month, meeting up, along with President-Elect Professor Coupland, with the officers of the Faculty of Pathology, of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland. It is clear that we share many common challenges and we have put in place plans to involve them with future Celtic Nations Summits. I was also delighted to attend a fantastic 2-day symposium hosted by the Association of Clinical Biochemists in Ireland (ACBI) with great presentations from members and trainees.



Dr Croal with ACBI President, Kelly Foley.

Montreal

Professor Coupland and I have just attended the International Liaison of Pathology Presidents (ILPP), hosted by the Canadian Association of Pathologists. We have spent a very productive time exchanging views and ideas around important elements of pathology practice such as workforce planning, digital and AI developments and made very important links that will help enable our college to progress digital examinations.

We have also been able to attend the American Society for Clinical Pathology/Canadian Association of Pathologists (ASCP-CAP) joint annual scientific meeting, while in Montreal. In particular, it was also most valuable meeting up with attendees of the Canadian Association of Forensic Medicine annual Conference, held at McGill University, many of whom are fellows of our College.



Dr Croal with ILPP colleagues

Cancer plan – Working in partnership

We collaborated with the Royal College of Radiologists and other medical royal colleges and associations to call for reform of cancer multidisciplinary team meetings. The review of cancer multidisciplinary team (MDT) working, published on 10 November, identified opportunities to improve NHS cancer care through more effective collaborative working. The cross-college team will now develop a practical toolkit to bring about a radical shift in cancer MDTs.

This report follows on from a programme of collaborative working with the RCR, including a roundtable in the summer which I attended on addressing barriers to diagnostic AI implementation and a roundtable in September attended by Professor Mike Osborn, Past-President, chaired by Clive Jones MP in parliament and entitled ‘Catching Cancer’.

Parliamentary engagement

Joined by President-Elect, Professor Sarah Coupland, I recently met Damian Hinds MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

We discussed the essential role of pathology in diagnosing and treating disease and the breadth of College specialties. We also covered workforce shortages across pathology, and how technologies such as artificial intelligence can help transform services and support delivery of the NHS's 3 shifts.

Professor BouHaidar, Chair of the Forensic Pathology SAC, met politicians from the UK government and the devolved nations about our recently published forensic pathology workforce report. These included Pauline McNeill MSP (Shadow Scottish Justice Minister), Naomi Long MLA (Northern Ireland Minister for Justice) and Sarah Jones MP (Home Office Policing Minister).

Discussions focused on key workforce challenges, including consultant vacancies, high workloads and barriers to effective death investigation systems. We will continue to raise the report's findings with policymakers across the UK.

College data on cancer genomics raised during Health Bill debate
The College supported Baroness Finlay of Llandaff with a proposed amendment to the Health Bill, to strengthen requirements on the Government to put in place timely and comprehensive molecular and genomic testing for cancer. During the debate, the Baroness cited College data and asks in this area, including relieving workforce pressures, fixing poor IT systems and ending diagnostic delays in delivering genomic test results to patients.

Which? vitamin D test investigation
I was interviewed as part of a Which? investigation into rapid DIY vitamin D tests that are sold on the high street.

The investigation was widely covered in the media including the Independent and the BBC. It found that, when a person with a normal level of vitamin D took 5 different self-test kits, they came out with 3 different results. It went on to call for consumers to carefully consider the accuracy and suitability of these tests.

National Pathology Week 2026
We were delighted that our collaboration with the Pathology Alliance to deliver National Pathology Week (NPW) has continued this year. While the 'week' of NPW 2026 ran from 2–8 November, we've extended the programme of NPW events right through until the end of November. I was involved in an event on direct-to-consumer tests delivered by the Association of Laboratory Medicine on 12 November and there are still some careers webinars coming up at the end of this month – all details on the NPW page.

International Pathology Day 2026
I was delighted to be able to chair the IPD conference, 'Pathology in an era of personalised medicine'.

It was a pleasure to welcome an exceptional line-up of contributors who delivered thought-provoking and engaging presentations, showcasing the vital contribution pathology makes to healthcare worldwide. I was particularly delighted to welcome our keynote speaker, Professor Ahmad Abou Tayoun, Chair of the WHO Advisory Group on Genomics, who joined President-Elect Professor Sarah Coupland for a fascinating discussion.

My thanks go to all our speakers, panellists, participants and sponsor, Epredia for helping to make the event such a success. As this was my final IPD conference as President, it was especially meaningful to celebrate the occasion with colleagues, partners and friends from across our global community.

Dr Bernie Croal
President, The Royal College of Pathologists
X: @RCPath

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A PDF version of this newsletter is available at

RCPath newsletters

Working for members

Welcome to our newest corporate members, AstraZeneca and Nerve Tumours UK
We were delighted to welcome AstraZeneca as a corporate member in October. AstraZeneca is a global pharmaceutical company with a major UK presence and is our tenth corporate member. Read more about them in their corporate member profile page.

We are also pleased to welcome Nerve Tumours UK as our newest corporate member from 1 November. Nerve Tumours UK is a charity providing support and advice to help the 26,500+ children and adults in the UK diagnosed with Neurofibromatosis (NF), along with their carers, family members and wider support network, which can include teachers, employers and all types of healthcare professionals. Read more on the corporate member profile page.

The College's corporate engagement work aims to support pathologists, and ultimately, improve patient care, and includes joint educational webinars, joint events and publications. You can read more about our corporate members here.

Free webinar on Castleman's disease diagnosis – 3 December
We're delighted to be offering a free educational webinar, 'Shared perspectives on collaboration in Castleman's disease diagnosis - clinical and pathology' on 3 December. This is a unique opportunity to gain insights on the pathological features of the various types of Castleman's disease, challenges in diagnosis with focus on iMCD, and emphasis on the need for a multidisciplinary approach to the patients. Consultant hematopathologist, Dr Liron Barnea Slonim and consultant haematologist Professor Karthik Ramasamy will share their expertise on this disease and will then take your questions. The webinar will be chaired by Dr Anna Green, consultant histopathologist at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust. The webinar will run from 12.30 – 1.30pm GMT and is worth 1 CPD credit. Find out more and book your place here.
Please note: *Recordati provided funding to support this webinar. Recordati have not been involved in the planning of this webinar or had any influence on its content.*

National Pathology Week webinars continue until 30 November
Thank you to all our members who got involved in National Pathology Week 2026. The RCPath and some of the other Pathology Alliance organisations are running pathology-related webinars for undergraduates and foundation doctors throughout November, as an extension of our NPW 'Welcome to the Lab' theme. The free online events include a pathology quiz and various careers webinars. Please highlight our public events page with these groups and encourage them to sign up for the remaining webinars.

Professor Sarah Coupland speaking at the Festival of Genomics and Biodata – book your free place.

The UK's largest Life Sciences event - The Festival of Genomics and Biodata - is taking place at ExCeL in London on 27th January – 28th January 2027. President Elect Professor Sarah Coupland, will be speaking on bridging the gap' between aspirations and reality in digital pathology and AI implementation in the NHS.

The event offers a huge range of speaker sessions and networking opportunities. It will explore the latest research and clinical breakthroughs, cutting-edge technology. Free for 90% of attendees, the festival is designed to help you return to work with dozens of new ideas and contacts, but also to keep you engaged, excited and proud of the difference your efforts make for patients. With 16 theatres of content, 360+ speakers and a vibrant exhibition floor, you can book your free place here.

Professor Sarah Coupland speaking at HSJ Modernising Diagnostics Forum 2027 - Registration now open

Taking place on 11 March 2027 at the Leonardo Royal Hotel London Tower Bridge, the HSJ Modernising Diagnostics Forum will bring together senior NHS leaders to explore how diagnostic services can improve patient outcomes, productivity and waiting times.

With a focus on imaging, endoscopy, pathology, and physiological sciences, the one-day Forum will feature expert insights, real-world case studies, and interactive discussions exploring practical solutions to the challenges facing diagnostic services. Professor Sarah Coupland will be speaking during the following panel discussion at the event**:** Digital and AI in Routine Practice: Proving the Value and Managing the Risk (15:50 – 16:30). Find out more.

International Collaboration on Cancer Reporting (ICCR) – Digestive Tract datasets

The ICCR invites you to review the following draft 2nd edition Cancer Reporting (ICCR) Digestive Tract datasets:

- Colorectal cancer surgical resection specimen
- Colorectal excisional biopsy (polypectomy) specimen
- Carcinoma of the pancreas

Access the documents and consultation at the ICCR Datasets Under Consultation page and submit your comments by Wednesday 9 December 2026.

Advances in Transfusion Medicine Symposium 2026 - Organised by RCPath and SHOT

There are exciting developments in transfusion medicine and science with high quality research supporting evidence-based practice. This symposium brings together experts from various clinical disciplines and also leaders in transfusion science to provide an update on key developments.

Two half-day virtual sessions via Zoom with interactive Q&A.

- Wednesday 25 November 2026 9:30–13:00
- Thursday 26 November 2026 9:30–13:00

The Pathology Portal
The Pathology Portal has once again seen a large number of new users and accesses following the exam period and new trainee welcome days. The work of trainees on the Pathology Portal is incredibly important in helping to develop resources, with more than 8,000 resources and launches over half a million, the reach of the Pathology Portal continues to grow.

If you've already used the Pathology Portal, we would be grateful if you could take a moment to share your feedback here.

If you have any questions or interested in seeing how the Pathology Portal can be utilised to deliver teaching, please get in touch with the team at pathologyportal@rcpath.org and the team will be happy to provide a demonstration. For more information, or to sign up, visit the College website.

College courses and events

Autopsy webinar series: Update on the Medical Examiner Service - 2 years on
Wednesday, 9 December 2026
CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)
This event will take place at 1:00pm and last approximately 1 hour.

Medical examiner training
The College is the lead medical royal college for medical examiners and provides training for any doctor wishing to work as a medical examiner. Participants will need to complete mandatory 26 e-learning modules and attend an entire face-to-face training day to receive a certificate of completion. The day includes short presentations, small group discussions of case scenarios and the opportunity to share experience. Medical Examiner Training is open only to medically qualified individuals who work in England and Wales.
New medical examiners who successfully complete the training and the e-learning modules will be invited to join the College as members.

Medical Examiner Training - Virtual
Wednesday, 20 January 2027
CPD credits: 6

Medical Examiner Training - Virtual
Thursday, 6 May 2027
CPD credits: 6

Medical examiner officer training
The College also leads on the training of medical examiner officers (MEOs).

MEOs work closely with medical examiners and undertake tasks such as coordinating the completion of death certificates and referrals to the coroner, and speaking to clinicians and bereaved families.

MEOs may come from a wide range of backgrounds. For example, nurses, healthcare scientists or bereavement officers although this list is not exhaustive. More information, including a model job description, is on the College website.

The face-to-face training day is the second part of MEO training. Everyone attending the course must have completed the 26 mandatory core e-learning modules before the date of the course to get the most out of the training day. The e-learning modules can be accessed here. (Registration with e-Learning for Healthcare is required.)

Medical Examiners Officer (Virtual training)
Tuesday, 22 June 2027
CPD credits: 6

New publications

G189 Dataset for the histopathological reporting of carcinomas of the oropharynx and nasopharynx, by Professor Keith Hunter, Dr Ann Sandison, Dr Max Robinson, Professor Gareth Thomas and Dr Grigorios Thermos.

News from external organisations

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is recruiting for a medically qualified Chair of the Advisory Board on the Registration of Homeopathic Products (ABRHP).
The ABRHP Chair is required to maintain an impartial perspective on the use of homeopathy at all times and understand the importance of regulating homeopathic medicines to protect public health.

We would be very grateful if you could circulate this opportunity to any relevant members/Fellows through your networks, newsletters or other appropriate channels. Full details of the role and how to apply can be found here: Advisory Board on the Registration of Homeopathic Products - GOV.UK The closing date for applications is Monday 30 November 2026.

Scholarships (fully funded places) on the Global Clinical Genomics Fellowship 2027
GENEPICA, a non-profit dedicated to expanding access to genomics globally, is offering fully funded places on the Global Clinical Genomics Fellowship. Running for 17-21 weeks from 16 March 2027, it includes live lectures, live Q&A and discussions, clinical case studies, workshops, and role-play.

Fifteen sessions have been approved by the Federation of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of the UK for 30 CPD credits.

Applications close on 30 November 2026 and take around 20-30 minutes to complete. Funded places are limited, and if self-funded places open later, scholarship applicants will be the first to hear. Apply at global clinical genomics fellowships.

Other events of interest

24-26 November 2026
Federation of Infection Societies (FIS) Intenrational 2026

25-26 November 2026
British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy (BSAC) Antibiotic Resistance and Mechanisms (ARM) Workshop for Researchers 2026

26 November 2026
Beyond the Microscope: Skills that Strengthen Practice

27-28 November 2026
9th Annual Meeting of the Association of Breast Pathology

30 November – 03 December 2026
The British Society for Immunology (BSI) Congress 2026

03 December 2026
HIS IPC leaders' course – Outbreaks and the IPC Leader: managing the fallout

04-05 December 2026
Joint BDIAP-BAGP Symposium on Gynaecological Pathology

07-09 December 2026
International Congress of Antimicrobial Chemotherapy (ICC)

09 December 2026
Dry surface biofilms: implication for Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) (Insight Webinar)

09-10 December 2026
13th Digital Pathology & AI Congress: Europe

09-10 December 2026
British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy (BSAC) Winter Conference: Infection 2026

10 December 2026
Online Teaching and Learning Workshop

19-20 January 2027
Post American Society of Haematology (ASH) Significant Highlights

25-27 February 2027
12th Advances Against Aspergillosis and Mucormycosis Conference 2027

08 March 2027
Pathology Study Day

11-12 March 2027
British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy (BSAC) Global Outpatient parenteral antimicrobial therapy (OPAT) Summit 2027

19-20 March 2027
Fungal Update

20-23 April 2027
London GI pathology update

Our full programme of CPD events can be found on the members' website.

RCPath CPD accredited online resources can be found at the following link