

Newsletter from Professor Mike Osborn, President, The Royal College of Pathologists – November 2021

President's Message of the Month

£5.9bn Government funding to tackle the backlog

We welcomed the £5.9bn announced by Government as part of its spending review to tackle the backlog in England (a proportionate amount will also go to the health services in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland). This funding will be a significant boost for the NHS struggling to catch up with the delivery of services, made worse by the pandemic. We have and continue to work hard to try to ensure that pathology services are allocated a fair share of this extra funding and [our statement](#) reiterated that, without it, the backlog won't be cleared.

Interview in the Financial Times

I was pleased to have the opportunity in an [interview to the Financial Times](#) to highlight how years of underfunding of UK laboratory services is threatening to compound the NHS diagnosis backlog in both cancer and other diseases. In this interview I reiterate the points and issues I raise very regularly on every possible occasion with policymakers and other funding bodies to try and ensure you get the support, funding and resources you need to be able to do your job and provide for your patients as well as you and they would like.

Inaccurate PCR tests at a stand-alone Wolverhampton laboratory

You will have seen that the [UK Health Security Agency \(UKHSA\)](#) has ordered an [investigation](#) into incorrect PCR COVID-19 test results at a private laboratory in Wolverhampton.

Stand-alone virus testing laboratories were rapidly created and deployed to manage large scale testing for SARS-CoV-2 at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The College [has previously recommended](#) that independent laboratories ensure that clinical and accredited scientific leadership is an essential component of all diagnostic testing services. Any expansion of testing is ideally achieved in partnership with accredited pathology services and quality standards should apply across all diagnostic services, including stand-alone laboratories. You can read our [full statement here](#).

International Pathology Day – 10 November

I am looking forward to hosting and joining colleagues from around the world on International Pathology Day, my first as President. The day will explore digital

pathology and artificial intelligence from a global perspective. You can find out more and how to join [here](#).

On the agenda

- It was great to meet our new RCPATH Fellows at a College ceremony recently. Congratulations to everybody and welcome to the College! We were delighted to welcome new Honorary Fellows to the ceremony, Chief Medical Officer, Professor Chris Whitty, Professor Dame Lesley Regan, immediate past President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Professor Maggie Rea, President of the Faculty of Public Health and David Wells, Chief Executive, Institute of Biomedical Science. We also awarded the College medal to College fellow and former College Treasurer, Dr David Cassidy.
- Following the recent Government reshuffle, we have written to the new ministers to introduce them to the College and the vital role of pathology services. This includes a letter highlighting veterinary pathology issues to Lord Benyon, Minister for Rural Affairs and Biosecurity at Defra and a letter to the new Minister for Technology, Innovation and Life Sciences at the Department for Health and Social Care, Lord Kamall, who I will be meeting in the coming weeks.
- We have submitted a ranged of responses to consultations in the devolved nations including a response to *A Healthier Wales: Our Workforce Strategy for Health and Social Care* and a response the Scottish Health and Sport committee on what its work programme priorities should be for this session. We have also responded to the Northern Ireland Cancer Strategy with input from the Northern Ireland Regional Council. We will update you once we have a response to our submissions.
- We have just produced a [Commentary on consolidation of pathology services](#) in response to members' questions. Our perspective is that each project must be taken on a case-by-case basis – there is no single solution for all pathology disciplines or geographical locations. In this document we highlight the common risks in undertaking such consolidation and highlight lessons learned from previous such reorganisations.

In particular we highlight that meaningful staff consultation and buy-in is essential, as is clinical leadership of the process. The expertise of pathologists and clinical scientists is critical to the services provided by any laboratory.

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WORKING FOR MEMBERS

New subscription feature for the College website

In January 2022, we will be launching a new feature on our website that will affect members whose subscriptions are overdue. If your subscription becomes overdue by 120 days or more your access to specific member areas of the website will be restricted. The areas that will be affected include our online CPD portfolio, access to the LEPT system, access to restricted documents including committee minutes, the *Bulletin* and the member handbook, and discounted rates when booking events. Access will be reinstated once the subscription is paid in full.

Members whose subscriptions are overdue will receive reminders to renew when logging into the website as well as email reminders at 90 and 120 days' overdue. If you need assistance with renewing your subscription fees, please contact the [Membership team](#).

Dr Stephen Thomas wins the Percy Lane Oliver Memorial Award 2021

The College is delighted to announce that the [winner of the Percy Lane Oliver Memorial Award 2021](#) is Dr Stephen Thomas for his outstanding contribution to blood and transfusion science over the last 30 years working as a laboratory scientist, manager and senior leader in blood transfusion services. Steve was presented with his award at the British Blood Transfusion Society Conference held in September.

Steve has also undertaken committee work which has resulted in significant policy changes and been an active member of professional bodies. In his current role at NHSBT, he leads on a wide programme of development and implementation work across the blood supply chain and beyond.

Service spotlight: genomics at the central and south NHS genomic laboratory hub and West Midlands regional genetics laboratory

Our Service Spotlight blog series highlights pathology services that operate at an exceptional standard. In the [latest instalment](#), Dr Emily Shaw and Dr Yvonne Wallis talk about their achievements and experience in the genomic field with their teams at the Central and South Genomic Lab and at the West Midlands Regional Genetics Laboratory.

Other blogs in the series include:

- [Digital Pathology at the IDEXX Laboratory in Wetherby](#)
- [Veterinary Pathology at the zoological society of London \(ZSL\)](#)
- [Nottingham University Hospitals microbiology laboratory service](#)
- [The mortuary department at West Herts NHS Trust](#)

Improving access to workforce data

We have launched a new [workforce data resource](#) for members that provides easy access to standardised data on the current pathology workforce. We collect, collate and use this data for discussions with government and workforce agencies to influence and advocate on your behalf. Information from your latest [online workforce census](#), results of [specialty-specific surveys](#), results of interview panels and regional council figures provided the data.

If you have any queries about workforce data, please contact the Workforce team at workforce@rcpath.org.

Educational Update 2021 meeting

This annual meeting will be held remotely on Friday 26 November 2021 from 10:00am to 12:00pm. The keynote speaker is Professor Sheona MacLeod, Deputy Medical Director for Education Reform, HEE. Please book your place at: [Educational Update – Virtual Meeting \(rcpath.org\)](#).

College Diamond Jubilee – 2022

The College will celebrate its Diamond Jubilee in 2022. Plans are underway for a year-long programme of activities to highlight the role of pathology and the College with events for members, their families, friends and colleagues, policymakers and the wider public. The College's 60th birthday is on 21 June 2022 and an Open Day will take place in London, to which we have invited our patron, HM the Queen, and which will include a live-streamed lecture by Professor Jonathan Van Tam. There will be events in the devolved nations, regional events and online activities, so watch this space!

Diamond Jubilee event – calling all cyclists!

As part of the celebrations next year, the College is organising both a bespoke physical Lands' End to John O'Groats (LEJOG) cycle ride and virtual cycling challenges!

The physical event is being organised by Cycle Retreats together with CRUK.

- The dates are September 13–24 September.

We need to know numbers for the LEJOG ride in advance. If you are interested, please contact Professor Sarah Coupland, ASAP on s.e.coupland@liverpool.ac.uk.

[You can download the flyer here.](#)

Please note that virtual challenges are also being organised throughout next year, including a virtual LEJOG, a West Wales Walk, and others. Stay tuned and become involved!

The Bulletin

[The College Bulletin's](#) Diamond Jubilee issues will have a different format from our usual issues and we hope to feature all our specialties through an array of articles. If you have a suggestion for an article related to your specialty, please get in touch with us by emailing Publishing@rcpath.org.

GET INVOLVED AT THE COLLEGE

We are keen to encourage and enable more people of all identities and from all backgrounds to become involved in the College.

Undergraduate Pathology Education Lead

The College is looking for an Undergraduate Pathology Education Lead to work with the Vice-President for Learning and others to lead and coordinate the College's undergraduate education activities and support the College's provision for Foundation doctors. This is an exciting opportunity to build on the existing work of the College over the past few years. Further information and a role description is available on the College website: [Lead for Pathology Undergraduate Education](#). The closing date is 5pm on Friday 26 November.

INTERNATIONAL

College launches refugee initiative for refugee pathologists in the UK

The College has launched a scheme to support refugee pathologists in the UK. You can find out more on our dedicated webpage: [Information for refugee pathologists in the UK](#). It is hoped that the opportunity for interaction with other pathologists and access to the College's educational resources may assist refugee doctors to progress in potential pathology careers in the UK.

College Fellow awarded prestigious international award

College Fellow Professor Sir Alimuddin (Ali) Zumla has been awarded the prestigious EU-EDCTP Pascoal Mocumbi Prize. In announcing the Prize, the EDCTP (European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials partnership), cited Sir Ali's 'outstanding scientific research, health services capacity building, training and advocacy achievements in Africa, which has had a significant impact on the wellbeing of the African population.'

Sir Ali was recognised at a ceremony on 18 October officiated by the President of Mozambique, His Excellency Filipe Nyusi. [Read more about Sir Ali's award and work.](#)

International Pathology Day (IPD) 2021 – last chance to book!

The theme for this year's IPD is digital pathology and artificial intelligence (AI) – a world's-eye view. Join the College's virtual event on Wednesday 10 November, from 10:00 to 14:00 (GMT) in association with sponsor Sonic Healthcare UK and our partner the British Society for Haematology (BHS).

The event programme is packed with activities that will discuss and explore how digital pathology has made international collaborations between developed and middle-to-lower income countries easier and what some of the real-world issues to scaling-up digital and AI solutions in laboratories will be. The day will also examine how pathologists, scientists and medical professionals will need to learn new ways of working in different surroundings, as technology takes us further into a digital age. [Discover more about the event and register here.](#)

NEW PUBLICATIONS

The October 2021 issue of the [Bulletin](#) is now available and explores the innovative role of pathology in cancer screening, diagnosis, prevention and treatment.

PROMOTING PATHOLOGY

Free public engagement training for members – Spring 2022

These [free training sessions](#) are aimed at RCPATH members (of any grade). They are developed and delivered by a team of public engagement experts from the Science Museum Group. They offer the chance to develop new skills in communicating your work with diverse public audiences. There are two levels – standard and advanced. The next standard level training takes place on **12 May 2022** at the College in London – timings are approximately 9:30am to 5pm.

The dates for the next advanced training session are **27 April 2022** (5:30pm to 8pm at the Science Museum, London) and **28 April 2022** (9:30am to 5pm at the College's offices in Alie Street, London). You need to have previously attended the standard

level training to book for the advanced course. You'll find more information about the training and how to book [on our website](#).

Did you take part in National Pathology Week 2021? Please fill in our short survey

Whether you ran an activity or event for this year's National Pathology Week (NPW), or if you attended an event online or in your local area, please let us know about your experience in our [quick NPW 2021 survey](#). Your feedback will help us improve what we do for the next National Pathology Week. Remember that NPW 2022 takes place in June as part of our Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Make a note of the dates – 20 to 26 June 2022 and [watch this space](#) for news on what's happening.

COLLEGE CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

Diwali – Free Virtual Event **Thursday 11 November 2021**

As part of our programme of awareness events to make our diversity visible, we are happy to run a short one-hour webinar starting at 6:30pm to celebrate Diwali. Diwali, or Deepawali, is the festival of lights and a celebration of 'the awakening and awareness of the inner Light'. Diwali celebrates the victory of good over evil with higher knowledge dissipating ignorance and hope prevailing over despair.

Brahmacharini Shripriya Chaitanya, resident teacher of Chinmaya Mission in the UK will share the message of 'self-unfoldment' through Advaita Vedanta (non-dualistic school of Hindu philosophy) followed by a Q&A session. This philosophy emphasizes the presence of that which is pure, infinite and eternal, beyond the physical body and the mind and provides guidance on achieving lasting peace and happiness and through daily activities, faith or realisation of the inner self.

SIDS and SUDC: Past, Present and Future – Virtual Event **Wednesday 17 and Thursday 18 November 2021**

CPD credits: 11

The aim of this event is to train the attendees on the epidemiology, risk factors and causes behind SIDS/SUDC, on the practicalities of the national protocol of SUDI and SUDC multiagency investigation and on the differential diagnosis of these conditions. The objective is to present an up-date on the current protocol of investigation, research and understanding of the physio-pathological mechanisms involved in cases of SUDI/SIDS.

This event is aimed at paediatric and forensic pathologists, histopathology trainees and paediatricians.

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.

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 session – Virtual Training

Thursday 15 February 2022

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 examiner officer training session – Virtual Training

Tuesday 10 February 2022

CPD credits: 6

For further information, please contact the RCPATH Conference Department at meetings@rcpath.org or on 020 7451 6700.

NEWS FROM EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

The cancer digital playbook: how digital technology can help improve and transform services

Join speakers from NHSX and the NHS England and NHS Improvement Cancer Team on Tuesday 16 November, 4pm to 5pm in an educational webinar looking at digital technology in cancer services.

Hear from clinical experts sharing experiences of implementing technology into care pathways including their challenges and successes; explore the Cancer Digital Playbook in more detail and engage in a panel discussion around the wider range of digital tools available to improve efficiency in care and services for patients. [Join the free event here](#).

Invite to participate in research into doctors' financial needs

The Research Department of Medical Education (RDME) at University College London (UCL) has been commissioned by the [Royal Medical Benevolent Fund \(RMBF\)](#) to identify the extent of unmet financial need in the medical profession. The RMBF is a charity for doctors, medical students, and their families who are in financial need due to ill-health. The research results will be used to better understand financial needs in the profession and provide recommendations so the RMBF can reach more potential beneficiaries in need. Please fill in an online survey. Participants do not have to have had any experience of financial difficulties to take part. Please follow [this link](#) for more information and to complete the questionnaire.

BMA free event – Understanding and eradicating bullying in the NHS

The BMA's committee for medical managers is holding a virtual event on bullying in the NHS from 12:30 to 2pm on Thursday 18 November. The webinar is free and open to both members and non-members, and places can be [booked here](#).

The panel event will feature talks from guest speakers and a Q&A session and will examine the causes of bullying, factors that intensify this problem in the NHS, and how work environments can allow it to fester.

- the impact that bullying has on individuals, the workforce, and patients
- how we can challenge a culture that permits bullying and implement meaningful change in our workplaces.

You can find out more information the [event page](#).

BMA Wellbeing support services

BMA's Wellbeing support services are available free to all doctors and medical students in the UK, regardless of BMA membership.

The services are free and confidential and include:

- 24/7 **counselling** line including a structured course of up to six sessions of therapy available over the telephone, online, and now also face to face until the end of October. This is also open to their spouses, partners and dependents aged 16–24 in full-time education.
- confidential **peer support** provided by other doctors
- a UK wellbeing support **directory** detailing various support services by geographical availability visit [sources of support page](#).

The BMA also provide a **Doctor support service**, an emotional support service specifically for any doctor undergoing a GMC investigation or facing licence withdrawal (regardless of BMA membership) – it's free, confidential and provided by fellow doctors.

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

02 November 2021

[BSAC Paediatric Antimicrobial Resistance & Stewardship Conference](#)

03 November 2021

[BSBMTCT Education Day](#)

05 November 2021

[FIS 2021](#)

05–06 November 2021

[Urothology in 2021. Joint BDIAP and BAUP Symposium on Urological Pathology](#)

08 November 2021

FRONTIERS – Empowering your CLL Treatment Decisions – For more information, please contact: frontiers@abbvie.com

08–09 November 2021

[FIS 2021 Online](#)

09 November 2021

[UK MDS Forum Education Day](#)

10 November 2021

Myeloproliferative Neoplasms Advances Day 2021

11 November 2021
UKMF Autumn Day

11 November 2021
Infection Prevention Society London Joint Branches Conference

11 November 2021
International Pathology Day 2021 Virtual Celebration at Helwan Medical School: How Technology Can Improve Pathology Learning & Diagnostics

13 November 2021-30 July 2022
30 Webinars in the EOE (Season 2)

15–16 November 2021
King CAR-T Cell Preceptorship

16 November 2021
Current Thinking in Haematological Malignancies

17 November 2021
UKFHD 52nd Academic Meeting

18 November 2021
Histiocytosis UK 2021

18 November 2021
Treatment Algorithm

19 November 2021
Birmingham Breast Update Course 2021

22–26 November 2021
Molecular Pathology and Diagnosis of Cancer

23 November 2021
On-Line Teaching & Learning Workshop

24 November 2021
24th London Lymphoma Forum

23–28 January 2022
Genomics and Clinical Microbiology

25–26 January 2022
4th Joint Winter Meeting of the Pathological Society and the Royal Society of Medicine: Embracing Complexity in Modern Pathology

10 November 2021
Pathology is Global

RCPATH CPD accredited online resources can be found at the following [link](#)

