

RCPATH President's newsletter – November 2025



President's Message

Challenges for the College and pathology

At the recent College AGM, I was delighted to learn that the College's financial status has after many years returned to a profitable status – a significant turnaround. Much of this has been due to better utilisation of our building as an events centre by Events@No6 colleagues, but also by increasing income from industry collaborations and many efficiency strategies within the College. Profits of course will continue to be reinvested in College activity.

As notified in the September newsletter, technical issues were experienced with the running of the FRCPath Part 1. The online examinations provider, RISR, and their online proctor, Talview, have subsequently issued a statement which is available on the [College website](#), alongside a College statement and apology. In line with [GMC guidance](#), and having notified the GMC of the issue, the College team have been working with examiners to ensure the marking and processing of results followed GMC guidance. Candidates and stakeholders received regular updates in the lead up to the publication of examination results on Friday 21 November. An interim report was provided to Trustee Board in October with a fuller report being provided to the Examinations Committee, Trainee Advisory Committee and Council this month. A range of derogations have been identified for affected candidates. Although some are applicable to all candidates, others differ by specialty and are dependent on the issues experienced by individual candidates, and what is feasible from the perspective of the panels of examiners. The team continue to work with RISR to discuss arrangements for the Spring examination session.

The recent pausing of the [College EQA NQAAP panels and QAPC](#) has been unfortunate but necessary. A reset is required to ensure funding, volunteers and indemnity can be guaranteed in whatever form of oversight is needed going forwards.

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This decision has not been taken lightly and has taken more than 5 years to get to this point. It is clear that the pause will and has generated the necessary concern and action. This is a pause in activity, with the aim that a reset can occur from which evolves a fully funded, fit for purpose structure that ensures we have the correct membership and governance/indemnity protection.

While this is focused on technical EQA, it is important that we also establish a better supporting framework for personal interpretative EQA in histopathology, which we hear are also pausing activity until a clear oversight mechanism can be established.

[Parliamentary reception to celebrate National Pathology Week](#)

Held at the House of Commons on 4 November, Pathology Solutions was an excellent opportunity for the College to showcase pathology, demonstrating its vital role in healthcare and how it is key to the successful delivery of the [NHS 10-year plan](#).

We were delighted be joined by [Dr Simon Opher, MP](#) who hosted the event. Dr Opher shared his experience as a GP, demonstrating first-hand how fundamental pathology is to healthcare and patients.

Over 150 people attended the event, including representatives from industry, government, research, health charities and think tanks. They were able to speak to members and other experts working in prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases, including cancer, diabetes, inherited diseases and infections, at our interactive stands.

We're very grateful to everyone who contributed to the event and its success, and I would like to thank our industry sponsors, Novo Nordisk, Roche Diagnostics and Illumina.

I would also like to recognise and thank all of you who organised your own National Pathology Week events, helping to showcase the crucial work of our profession.

[Paediatric and perinatal pathology workforce report 2025](#)

The College's latest report highlights the crisis facing paediatric and perinatal pathology (PPP) services across the UK.

37% of PPP consultant posts in the UK are currently vacant. There are no PPP consultants in post in Northern Ireland, and in the South West and Midlands areas of England, which has led to total service collapse in these areas.

The workforce is unable to meet demand, affecting families and bereaved parents who report long and harrowing waits for post-mortem reports and test result.

The solutions are not simple. Our report sets out steps that would start to address the challenges. Commitment from all 4 UK governments is vital, as is investment in paediatric services.

The findings in the report have been covered by [The Guardian](#), Sunday Times and Telegraph. Dr Clair Evans, Chair of the Specialty Advisory Committee, was also interviewed on [BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour](#).

Dr Clair Evans, Professor Marta Cohen and I met [Sarah Hall MP](#) in parliament with MPs from the areas most affected by the shortage of perinatal and paediatric pathologists.

We had a useful discussion about the current situation and the effect this has on bereaved families and medical professionals. A letter from Sarah Hall will be sent to Karen Smyth MP, Minister for Health, requesting a meeting to discuss long-term workforce investment.

On 4 December, Dr Evans will be presenting the report at the [All Party Parliamentary Group on Baby Loss](#).

College response to NHS 10-Year Workforce Plan (England)

The College has made a comprehensive response to the call for evidence for the NHS 10-Year Workforce Plan for England.

The response highlights that the pathology workforce is essential to realising the NHS 10-Year Health Plan for England's 3 strategic shifts: hospital to community, analogue to digital and sickness to prevention. It makes a clear and evidence-based case for strategic investment and workforce planning in pathology in view of anticipated significant increases in demand for services. It also outlines how working differently and innovatively requires targeted investment in automation, digital pathology, AI integration, infrastructure, training and diagnostic stewardship.

Thanks to all the members who contributed to this response. [Read the full response here](#).

1st Qatar Conference on Laboratory Medicine and Pathology

I was delighted to be able to travel to Doha earlier in the month to participate in this important pathology conference in the region. I was able to deliver 3 keynote talks at the meeting, visited some of the pathology labs in the city and meet many of our fellows and country advisors. Many thanks to the organisers for the hospitality shown.



People from left to right: Dr Moza KAD Al-Kuwari, Ms Somaiyya, Dr Aalia Amer, Dr Bernie Croal, Dr Mahir Petkar, Dr Ahmed Shaker Omran, Dr Hasan Rizvi.

Meetings and events

Strep infection in newborns

Dr Natasha Ratnaraja joined a parliamentary meeting, Stopping Group B Strep Infections in Newborn Babies, organised by [Cepheid](#) and the charity [Group B Strep Support](#), with a focus on diagnostic testing.

Prostate cancer screening

In anticipation of the [National Screening Committee](#) decision on whether to introduce a national screening programme, we developed a College statement, with support from Professor Dan Berney, on [prostate cancer screening](#). In early December, College Fellow, Luis Beltran, will be attending the [All Party Parliamentary Group](#) event, Diagnosing Prostate Cancer: Insights from Primary Care.

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

Pathology Portal Drop-In Sessions

The Pathology Portal has experienced a busy few months. We saw increased usage during the exam period, with new users coming onboard and also via the new trainee welcome days.

There are now 6,500 users from a wide spectrum of experience and specialties. Work continues to address gaps, particularly within the paediatric section, where new resources are being produced and contributors are getting involved.

The Pathology Portal was also part of the Educational Update meeting, which provided a view into what learning in the future may look like through the use of the Learning Hub's functionality.

If you would like to learn more about the Pathology Portal, the team will continue to run drop-in sessions in the new year. Keep an eye out on socials and the College's event calendar to be up to date.

Please get in touch the team at pathologyportal@rcpath.org for more information and to sign up, visit the College website.

LEPT refresher sessions 2026

To support the chemical pathology and cellular pathology specialties ahead of the 2026 Annual Review of Competency Progression (ARCP), we're offering a series of **LEPT refresher sessions**:

- **February 2026**: 4 sessions designed for chemical pathology and cellular Pathology trainees
- **March 2026**: 4 sessions tailored for those in SUPER roles, including training programme directors, ARCP panel chairs, and deanery/local education and training boards administrative staff.

These sessions will provide practical LEPT guidance and updates to help you prepare confidently for the ARCP review process. [Please log in to the LEPT system to view timetable of dates and joining details.](#)

Percy Lane Oliver Memorial Award Winners

The College is delighted to announce that the winners of the Percy Lane Oliver Memorial Award 2025 (Scientific or Technical Category) are Julie Staves and Nicole Thornton for their outstanding contribution to blood transfusion medicine.

The standard of applications was extremely high this year, and after much deliberation, the panel awarded the prize to 2 recipients. Both winners were presented with their award at the British Blood Transfusion Society Annual Conference held on 14–16 October 2025.

International Collaboration on Cancer Reporting (ICCR) – urinary tract datasets

The ICCR invites you to review the 4 draft urinary tract datasets listed below. Access the documents and consultation at the [ICCR Datasets Under Consultation page](#) and submit your comments by Wednesday 3 December 2025.

- Carcinoma of the bladder – cystectomy, cystoprostatectomy and diverticulectomy specimen (2nd edition)
- Carcinoma of the renal pelvis and ureter – nephroureterectomy and ureterectomy specimen (2nd edition)
- Carcinoma of the urethra – urethrectomy specimen (2nd edition).

Urinary tract carcinoma – biopsy and transurethral resection specimen (2nd edition).

International news

Join our webinar series on Managing Lower Respiratory Tract Infections

We are delivering a webinar series on 'Managing lower respiratory tract infections'. This webinar series deals with a set of clinical conditions that are important for their varied clinical presentations, overlapping signs and symptoms and challenges in arriving at a proper diagnosis with imaging and microbiology. The impact that these

challenges may have on the management and final outcome in patients will be explored in the webinar series.

Diagnosis of lower respiratory infections and pneumonia, both in adults and children is a challenge, despite all the technological advances made in the clinical microbiology laboratory. There has been a surge in molecular diagnosis of respiratory infections that are popular among clinical departments. However, a film array panel or a multiplex PCR result on lower respiratory specimens that is not interpreted appropriately for the clinical situation could well prove counterproductive while managing a patient with respiratory infection.

Webinar series programme:

1. [Wednesday 4 February 2026 – Community acquired pneumonia and lower respiratory infections](#)
2. [Wednesday 11 February 2026 – Healthcare-associated lower respiratory tract infections](#)
3. [Wednesday 18 February 2026 – Infective airways disease](#)
4. [Wednesday 25 February 2026 – Complicated lower respiratory tract infections.](#)

If you're interested in attending the webinars, please click the links above to find out more. If you have any questions about the webinar series, please email international@rcpath.org

New publications

- New Halloween-themed Chris Tiplady blog – [Don't say the "Q" word](#) – which discusses the spooky amount of superstition in healthcare.
- [Member spotlight blog – an interview introducing Dr Matthew Clarke](#) as the College's Undergraduate and Foundation Lead.

College Courses and events

[Autopsy webinar series – Maternal death, Part 1](#)

Wednesday, 10 December 2025

CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)

Maternal deaths are rare (only 80-100pa across the UK) but their autopsies are not generally done well, due to unfamiliarity. These two lectures present the overarching context of maternal mortality in the UK, cover the major pathologies of Direct & Indirect maternal deaths, and inform on how to perform the autopsies optimally. This event will take place at 1:00pm and last approximately 1 hour.

[RCPATH/BNS PathExplore; \(Neuro\)pathology teaching for undergraduates - Webinar 2](#)

Monday, 15 December 2025

CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)

Are you a medical undergraduate and keen to improve your pathology knowledge? Then why not sign up to the RCPATH/BNS Undergraduate Pathology Teaching! The teaching is delivered by a group of expert neuropathologists who will teach you about the fundamental aspects of the mechanisms of disease, including inflammation, cancer, infection, thrombosis, infarction, neurodegeneration and much more! As well as basic pathology knowledge each session will be supplemented with plenty of fascinating case examples from the world of neuropathology!

Webinar 2 - Cell death: apoptosis and necrosis

This event will take place at 1:00pm and last approximately 1 hour.

Autopsy webinar series – Autopsy liver pathology

Wednesday, 21 January 2026

CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)

This event will take place at 1:00pm and last approximately 1 hour.

Autopsy webinar series – Coroner's court

Wednesday, 28 January 2026

CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)

Attending Coroner's court can be a daunting experience for trainee pathologists and consultants, particularly as fewer inquests require a pathologist to attend, and pathologists may only be called to attend for more complicated cases. During this webinar we will hear from experienced Coroners, both medical and legal, experienced consultants and a trainee experience of Coroner's court. This webinar will help you understand the purpose and format of a Coroner's inquest, what the Coroner expects from a pathologist, how to give evidence and how to answer questions from other persons in the court.

This event will take place at 1:00pm and last approximately 1 hour.

An introduction to health economics for clinicians

Thursday, 29 January 2026

CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)

Health economics provides tools to understand how limited healthcare resources can be used most effectively to improve patient outcomes. This webinar will introduce key concepts in health economics and demonstrate their relevance to everyday clinical decision-making.

This event will take place at 12:30pm and last approximately 1 hour.

Autopsy webinar series – Maternal death part 2

Wednesday, 11 February 2026

CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)

Maternal deaths are rare (only 80-100pa across the UK) but their autopsies are not generally done well, due to unfamiliarity. These two lectures present the overarching context of maternal mortality in the UK, cover the major pathologies of Direct & Indirect maternal deaths, and inform on how to perform the autopsies optimally.

This event will take place at 1:00pm and last approximately 1 hour.

Autopsy webinar series – Neuropathology for the non-specialist

Wednesday, 11 March 2026

CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)

This webinar will cover macroscopic and microscopic neuropathology which a general autopsy pathologist can diagnose, when to refer to a neuropathologist, and practical tips about what to refer.

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, 14 January 2026

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)

Wednesday, 29 April 2026

CPD credits: 6

Medical Examiner Training - In person

Thursday, 7 May 2026

CPD credits: 6

Other external events of interest

27 November 2025

[Faecal Immunochemical Testing for Bowel Services](#)

27–28 November 2025

[Antibiotic Resistance and Mechanisms \(ARM\) Workshop for Researchers](#)

1–2 December 2025

[The British Society for Immunology Clinical Immunology Professional Network Conference 2025](#)

1–4 December

[British Society for Immunology Congress 2025](#)

2–4 December 2025

[The Federation of Infection Societies \(FIS\) International 2025](#)

4 December 2025

Antibiotic Stewardship and Infection Prevention & Control – For more information, please contact: nesrinehelmihanafi@gmail.com

9–10 December 2025

[Wegas Annual POCT Conference](#)

10–11 December 2025

[12th Digital Pathology & AI Congress: Europe](#)

11–12 December 2025

[Haematological Malignancy Diagnostic Service Course](#)

17 December 2025

[Online Teaching and Learning Workshop](#)

20–21 January 2026

[Virtual Advanced Prostate Pathology Course](#)

22 January 2026

[The Oxford Tuberculosis \(TB\) Meeting](#)

23 January 2026

[British Society for Haematology \(BSH\) Obstetric Haematology Special Interest Group \(SIG\) Annual meeting](#)

28 January 2026

[Post American Society of Hematology \(ASH\) Highlights for Scotland](#)

30 January 2026

Recent Advances and Reflections in Chronic Myeloid Leukaemia – For more information, please contact: a.sale@imperial.ac.uk

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](#)
