

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

President's Message of the Month

Working for you our members

We have been working extremely hard to highlight the workforce and resource issues that affect all our specialties in all our four nations and which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the related backlog. To this end, in the last month I have raised these issues with Sajid Javid (SoS Health & Social Care), Amanda Pritchard (CEO NHSE), Dame Sue Hill (Chief Scientific Officer NHSE) and have a meeting booked in October with Jeremy Hunt (Chair Health Select Committee).

In addition, we have been in communication with and are working to organise meetings with Robin Swann MLA (Minister Health, Northern Ireland), Eluned Morgan MS (Minister for Health & Social Services, Wales) and Humza Yousaf MSP (Cab Sec Health & Social Care, Scotland) as well as the Chief and Deputy Medical Officers of the devolved nations. Working to get you the resources you need to do your job as well as is possible is a prime directive for the College and one we will continue to very actively pursue. I have discussed this more in the October Bulletin.

Government Response to the Justice Committee Inquiry on the Coroner Service

We have highlighted that the Government's response to the Justice Committee inquiry on the Coroner Service is a missed an opportunity to invest in and reform the Coroner Service. Bereaved families will continue to experience a service that is fragmented and inconsistent. We will continue to push for reform of this vital service.

Ministerial visit to pathology lab

It was a pleasure to show former Health Minister, Jo Churchill MP, around my laboratory at the Charing Cross hub, North West London pathology. It was a great opportunity to discuss pathology and how best we can all work to improve services and patient care. Thank you to everybody who was involved in the visit. We will be getting to know her successor in the role over the coming months.

GIRFT national specialty report – pathology

The Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) programme published its latest report on pathology services earlier this month.

The College values the thorough and comprehensive review of pathology services across England carried out by the GIRFT team. The detailed route map to improve pathology services set out by the team is one we can support. You can download a copy of the report via our website.

Forty new Community Diagnostic Centres

The Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England have announced that 40 new [Community Diagnostic Centres](#) will open across England. The centres which will be fully operational by March 2022, will be in a range of settings from football clubs to shopping centres and have been designed to be one-stop-shops for checks, scans and tests and will be open seven days a week. GPs will be able to refer patients to the centres for diagnostic tests which will be staffed by multi-disciplinary team staff including nurses and radiographers.

We welcome the move to introduce easier access to diagnostic services centred around patients. There will be real benefits to patients with quicker, easier access through a 'one stop shop' leading to earlier diagnoses, better outcomes for patients and lives saved.

Investment in these new diagnostic hubs, with sufficient resources in terms of staffing, IT provision and connectivity with other systems (such as GP practices), will support their successful introduction.

There will also need to be further expansion of the pathology workforce, and new ways of working, to manage the increase of referrals for further investigative tests from the new centres.

The Students and Trainees on Medical Placements (STOMP): Tackling Discrimination Study

We, and other medical royal colleges, are supporting this study led by the University of Bristol. The study asks medical students about their experiences of distressing behaviour/comments from patients while on clinical placement. You can read more about this study online [here](#). If you're willing to participate, please [use this link](#) to access the online consent form and questionnaire; students in the Republic of Ireland should [use this link](#). Once you have read and signed the consent form the questionnaire will begin automatically.

On the agenda

- I was very pleased to see the work of pathologists recognised in parliament during a [debate on immunology research](#). Dr Rosena Allin Khan MP (Labour, Tooting) highlighted that the work of our members 'has been pivotal in delivering a route out of the pandemic'.
- Chris Bryant MP (Labour, Rhondda) highlighted, during Prime Ministers questions, the shortage of pathologists to diagnose and treat cancer and called for action now from the Government on this issue.
- As a member of the Inequalities In Health Alliance, we've [written to the Prime Minister](#) calling for an explicit health inequalities strategy, that considers the role of every department and every available policy lever in tackling health disparities.
- The College has [welcomed the new cancer blood test trial](#). This trial has the potential to make earlier diagnosis a reality for many people, across a range of cancers that can be especially difficult to diagnose. As with any screening programme, it will be vital to ensure that results are expertly interpreted, and we will be very interested to see the results in detail.

- We are pleased to see the decision by the Government to add folic acid to UK flour to help prevent birth defects. The College supported the Faculty of Public Health position statement and responded to the Department of Health and Social Care consultation in 2019. [Read our response.](#)

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COLLEGE NEWS

RCPATH Diversity Network

The next meeting of the Diversity Network is 28th October 2-3.30pm via zoom. I will be chairing this meeting and I will be co-chair of this important group going forward. Anyone is welcome to come along and contribute to this valuable work shaping how the College will improve diversity and inclusion. If you want to join the network or attend the meeting please contact esther.youd@glasgow.ac.uk or Jessica.zago@rcpath.org

The Royal College of Pathologists Statement on Use of Remnant Serum

The College has issued a statement on the use of anonymised/pseudo-anonymised remnant serum or plasma specimens for the purposes of quality control assessment, reference range adjustment and method evaluation when changing analyser or method. [Read the full statement here.](#)

COVID-19 training impact survey results

COVID-19 has disrupted training and examination schedules for many across the pathology specialties. There is concern about the impact of this on the progression of trainees through their training programmes, and also on their well-being.

There is a determination to restart and reboot training to address the significant issues that the pandemic has caused for trainees. To help ensure that pathology trainees receive all the necessary support and resources to help them move forward, the RCPATH [Trainees' Advisory Committee](#), the ACP Trainee Members Group and the RCPATH Learning Team produced a survey to assess the impact of the pandemic pathology training. With special thanks to Dr Caroline Russell (RCPATH TAC Cytopathology Representative) who led the survey construction and development.

[This report](#) presents the results of the survey. The data will be used in discussions with HEE, the devolved bodies and other interested stakeholders to provision for the future of pathology training.

Educational Update 2021 meeting

This annual meeting will be held remotely on Friday 26 November 2021 at 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 \(rcpath.org\)](#)

How the College supports research and innovation

The College has endorsed and signed up to the NIHR's new Associate PI scheme. This provides an excellent opportunity for trainees, consultants, nurses, and AHP's to gain formally recognised experience of clinical trial research. More information can be found here: [Associate Principal Investigator \(PI\) Scheme \(nihr.ac.uk\)](https://www.nihr.ac.uk/about/associate-principal-investigator-scheme) There will be a launch event for the scheme on 3 November. Please fill out the [Expression of Interest Form](#) if you are interested in attending. If you have any other questions about the Scheme, please contact the Associate PI Scheme team at associatepischeme@nihr.ac.uk

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.

Co-opted Trustee Board roles

The College is seeking to recruit two co-opted trustees to the Trustee Board. College members and trainees are eligible to apply. As the College is constituted as a UK registered charity, these particular roles are only open to those who are based in the UK.

We are actively seeking to bring more diversity of perspectives to our board. We especially welcome applications from people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, the LGBTQ+ community, disabled, low socioeconomic background, younger people and allies, as these groups are currently under-represented on our board.

A role description, which includes the person specification, and application form can be found on our [website](#).

Applications must include:

- a completed application form
- an abridged curriculum vitae
- a short covering letter.

Applications should be sent by email to Richard Sams, Business Administration Manager, at: Richard.Sams@rcpath.org. The closing date for applications is 5pm on 21 October 2021. Interviews will be held by video conference on 1 November 2021.

Medical Microbiology CSTC Chair and Virology training leads

The College is advertising two opportunities to take a leading role in medical microbiology and virology training. We are advertising for a [Medical Microbiology CSTC Chair](#) and a [Virology Recruitment Lead](#). Information about the roles, including a role description and person specification are on the [College website](#) with a closing date of Monday 11 October at 5pm.

REGIONAL SYMPOSIA

Scotland Symposium 2021: Challenges and Opportunities During Recovery (3 CPD points)

Friday 8 October 2021, 1.30–5pm

The Scotland Symposium 2021 will include presentations on *Recovery: Build Back with Labs; From Zero to Hero – The Story of Covid Testing in the North East of Scotland, Pathology challenges, Blood supply resilience during COVID, and beyond, RCPATH Trainees' Report on the impact of COVID-19* and more. You will also hear from the President, Professor Mike Osborn, about the College's work in Scotland.

REGIONAL SURGERIES IN ENGLAND

The College's Regional Representatives on College Council are introducing new and innovative ways to hear and understand views from members across the region they represent.

A series of 'surgeries' will be held over the next few months, where all members in the region are invited to meet with their Regional Representative via a Microsoft Teams virtual session. This will be an open time for Regional Representatives to meet you and hear about your work, areas of concern and points of interest that you wish to raise. These are planned to be held in the time before College Council meets to present the region's interests and concerns. These surgeries are also an opportunity for you to meet via Teams with colleagues across your region.

The second round of regional surgeries will be held on the following dates:

- **London surgery:** 19 October 2021, 1pm–3pm – *led by Dr Rachael Liebmann (rachael.liebmann@rcpath.org), English Regional Representative to Council (London)*
- **South of England surgery:** 25 October 2021, 2pm–4pm – *led by Dr Negar Maghsoodi (negar.maghsoodi@rcpath.org), English Regional Representative to Council (South)*
- **North of England surgery:** 8 November, 12.30–2.00pm – *led by Dr Ali Robb (ali.robbs@rcpath.org), English Regional Representative to Council (North of England)*
- **Midlands and East of England surgery:** date and time to be confirmed – *led by Dr Laszlo Igali (laszlo.igali@rcpath.org), English Regional Representative to Council (Midlands and East of England).*

INTERNATIONAL

International Pathology Day (IPD) 2021

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 10.00–14.00 (GMT) in association with sponsor Sonic Healthcare UK and our partner the British Society for Haematology (BHS). Sonic Healthcare UK are sponsoring the poster competition. Enter by Friday 22 October to be in with a chance of winning one of three great prizes.

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.](#)

PROMOTING PATHOLOGY

National Pathology Week and RCPATH's Diamond Jubilee – dates for your diary

We [recently announced](#) key dates for the coming year, which will include [National Pathology Week](#) this November and a programme of special events for the College's 60th birthday. We invite members to get involved – here's a reminder of what is happening:

- National Pathology Week 2021 – 1 to 7 November. Theme: 'All Together Now'
- National Pathology Week 2022 – 20 to 26 June. Theme: 'Pathology: Past, Present and Future'
- 60th Anniversary of the RCPATH and Open Day at the College in London – 21 June 2022.

There will also be events and activities running throughout 2022, around the UK, to celebrate our Diamond Jubilee.

It's not too late to get involved in [National Pathology Week 2021!](#)

- Check out our event [organiser guides](#) and [activity resources](#) for ideas.
- If you're running an event or activity in your hospital or local community, please tell us about it by [registering it via our website.](#)

- Order free branded materials and information booklets for your NPW events via [our quick online order form](#).
- Attend one of our online events – full details of all our events can be found on the [NPW page](#).

RCPATH Book Club - featuring 'Ten Drugs'

Our popular [Book Club panel-discussion series](#) will be back on Monday 1 November (18:00). The virtual event will feature *Ten Drugs: How Plants, Powders and Pills Have Shaped the History of Medicine* by Thomas Hager. Find out more about the RCPATH Book Club and register for free via the [RCPATH Book Club page](#).

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)
- 28 April 2022 (9.30am to 5pm at the College's headquarters in Alie Street, London).

You need to have previously attended the standard level training to book for the advanced course. For more information about the training and how to book [see our website](#).

COLLEGE CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

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, 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 2 December 2021

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.)

Further dates for 2022 to be announced in due course.

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

NEWS FROM EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

Specialist Cardiac Pathology

The South East and East Genomic Medicine Service Alliances (GMSAs) are working with the British Heart Foundation (BHF), NHS England and the Chief Coroner to improve access to inherited cardiac condition services for the families of those that experience sudden cardiac death. College President, Professor Mike Osborn is on the committee. BHF has identified seven pilot sites that map to the seven GMSA regions and the aim is to develop, implement and evaluate a new care pathway in these pilot locations. If successful, this will be commissioned nationally.

An essential component of the pathway is access to specialised cardiac pathology. GMSA would like to scope the current provision of specialised cardiac pathology in England with the aim of ensuring that all cases are able to access appropriate expertise. College members with cardiac pathology expertise are encouraged to make contact with maxine.mantle@rcpath at RCPATH. GMSA would like to follow up with individuals to establish their current provision and capacity and availability for working with the project.

Independent Assessor Opportunities at UKAS

Independent assessors, with a technical or clinical background are a crucial part of the UKAS assessment process. With such a wide range of clinical areas covered by UKAS accreditation, independent assessors provide UKAS with the essential pool of expertise required to deliver robust assessment and ensure the ongoing clinical relevance of assessments. Becoming an assessor for UKAS provides a unique and rewarding opportunity for pathologists to utilise their skills and facilitate continual

improvement in pathology. UKAS is actively seeking assessors in any of the pathology disciplines listed: biochemistry, haematology, microbiology, cellular pathology, andrology, virology, molecular genetics, cytogenetics, immunology, histocompatibility and immunogenetics.

Applicants would benefit from having a working knowledge of international standard ISO 15189, although training will be available. If you're interested, we'd love to hear from you. Please email nicholas.gibbons@ukas.com or [follow the link](#).

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)

The 5th edition WHO Classification of Tumours – update on progress and feedback

The timeline for the 5th editions is in the main, on schedule. However there are some delays in publication of the print versions.

Work has started on the Haematolymphoid tumours volume, which is one of the largest in the series. This haematolymphoid volume uses the same process developed for the 5th edition in 2018 and the IARC has published a series of [FAQs on this process](#).

In line with the IARC's [open science policy](#) the draft classification for the [Haematolymphoid volume has been published for the first time](#). A dedicated email address for comments and suggestion on content has also been set up at: haematolymphoidtumours@iarc.fr. Please send your submissions by 15 October.

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

01 October 2021

The Wessex & Gloucestershire Gastrointestinal Pathology Course – For more information, please email: PDU.WX@hee.nhs.uk

04 October – 01 November 2021

[Virtual Lymphoma Management Course](#)

04 October 2021
CSC Autumn Study Day

05 October 2021
BSAC Infection Clinical Dilemmas: Treatment of systemic fungal infections

6 October 2021
Virtual-Hybrid Blood Club III

06–15 October 2021
Let's Talk Clots 21

07 October 2021
Understanding EUCAST recommendations for Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing (AST)

07–08 October 2021
ISSP2021 National Meeting of the Irish Society for Surgical Pathology

08 October 2021
UK CLL Forum Clinical Sciences Day

12 October 2021
Ask the Experts: HR-MDS - What can we do for our patients now and in the future? 1

13 October 2021
Pathology Grand Round Lecture, Sponsored by the Jean Shanks Foundation & The Pathological Society 5

14 October 2021
Into clinical practice: Meeting the challenges of Gram-negative infection management

15 October 2021
UK EBMT Nurses and AHP Group

15 October 2021
Association of Breast Pathology Fourth Annual Conference

19 October 2021
Ask the Experts: HR-MDS - What can we do for our patients now and in the future? 2

02 November 2021
BSAC Paediatric Antimicrobial Resistance & Stewardship Conference

09 November 2021
UK MDS Forum Education Day

13 November 2021–30 July 2022
30 Webinars in the EOE (Season2)

18 November 2021
Histiocytosis UK 2021

19 November 2021

Birmingham Breast Update Course 2021

22–26 November 2021

Molecular Pathology and Diagnosis of Cancer

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

