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

# RCPath President's newsletter – October 2026



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**Winter is here!**
The last week has seen several big storms wreak havoc across the UK. At the time of writing, my home in Aberdeenshire is entering its 6th day without power, accompanied by sub-zero temperatures. These are significant challenges for many of our staff and patients – especially those who are dependent on specialist equipment and monitoring devices.

Meanwhile, all year-round winter level pressures continue to bring gridlock to NHS services, impacting patient care and mortality. Planned industrial action in a few weeks' time by consultants in England will bring further controversy and challenges for healthcare.

Finally, concern continues to rise over the future role of pathologists and scientists across NHSE and Getting It Right First Time, as the infrastructure continues to deteriorate and more employees leave the service as part of voluntary redundancy arrangements. Colleges need to be ready to ensure that valuable input from the profession in the future Department of Health and Social Care continues.

**Pathology engagement**
I was able to visit Belfast last week, meeting the new Minister of Health, Robbie Butler and the Chief Medical Officer, Professor Sir Michael McBride. Much discussion was had on the proposed Blueprint model for pathology services and the formation of a standalone 'agency' pathology service for the whole of Northern Ireland – a

true integrated service delivered without consolidation pressures. This was followed by a great symposium organised by Alison Watt, chair of the RCPath Regional Council. This showcased the significant impact being made by pathologists, scientists and trainees. I followed this by an extended meeting with trainees, where we had an open, honest Q&A session.



**Dr Croal with Professor McBride, Robbie Butler and Dr Watt.**

I travelled on to Birmingham, to speak alongside Lord Carter, on the future of pathology services and the concept of integrated pathology services at the Clinisys Annual Meeting. It is clear now that alignment of views is possible on the future makeup of pathology services. Fully integrated and joined up services can be achieved without full physical consolidation. It is essential, however, that other elements such as IT, digital, management, finance, quality and contracts can align over large areas to ensure the benefits can offset the challenges we are facing around increasing demand. Efficiency and productivity increases will be essential for pathology services to cope in the years ahead.




Next, I will travel to Dublin next week to attend the ACBI conference and also meet with officers of the Pathology Faculty of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, to discuss common challenges around workforce, training and digital/AI implementation.

**Major award**
I was delighted to learn that College Vice-President for Communications, Dr Noha El Sakka OBE, has recently been awarded the prestigious Scottish Muslim Award for Healthcare. A huge honour for her and her department in Aberdeen.  Noha will take up the role of Registrar next month and remain a College officer.

**Engaging our stakeholders on our joint white paper – Making every test count**
Our joint white paper with Roche Diagnostics has generated significant interest and engagement.

We had a positive meeting with Dr Rhydian Phillips, Director of Diagnostics & Transport, Suchita Joshi, Head of Pathology and Professor Jo Martin, National Specialty Advisor for Pathology at NHSE, focusing on the NHSE pathology transformation programme.

Following this, we have now arranged a workshop on service delivery, diagnostic pathways, demand optimisation and digital pathology.

Professor Sarah Coupland, President-Elect, spoke at the Roche symposium on HPV, on *Cervical screening: Then, now and in the future,* drawing on themes in our white paper. The audience included laboratory

managers, senior biomedical scientists, operations managers, histology and cytology consultants, programme leads and cancer alliance representatives from across the UK and Ireland.

**Parliamentary engagement**
It was encouraging to hear Members of Parliament speaking in the debate for Baby Loss Awareness Week draw on the findings in our paediatric and perinatal workforce report which highlights the extent of the workforce crisis in paediatric and perinatal pathology.

**Changes to Government proposals on patient safety in the Health Bill**
We welcome the Government's decision not to abolish the Health Services Safety Investigations Body (HSSIB) or transfer its functions to the Care Quality Commission, as had been proposed in the Health Bill currently progressing through Parliament.

Throughout the Bill's passage, we have consistently supported HSSIB's independent 'safe space' approach to investigations and raised concerns that the proposed changes could weaken the separation between patient safety investigations and regulatory oversight.

**Political conferences**
Professor Sarah Coupland attended the Labour party conference. She attended the Royal College of General Practitioners' and the Royal College of Physicians' event 'Delivering neighbourhood health: who cares?', which explored one of the biggest questions facing the NHS: the shift of care from hospitals to communities.

**Wales Wellbeing Walk**
Emma Short, Chair of the Wales Regional Council, was joined by local politicians for the Council's Wellbeing Walk on Saturday 19 September. Welsh politicians took part in the walk from Castell Coch to Cardiff Castle along the River Taff.

The politicians welcomed the opportunity to engage directly with pathologists and NHS staff from different disciplines and to gain a greater understanding of the vital work our members do.

You can find a full list of who took part on our news post.

**Member Survey 2026**
I would like to thank everyone who has already completed our Member Survey 2026. If you haven't yet, you have until Thursday 5 November to have your say.

All College members should have received a survey link via email from mailbase@rcpath.org. This is your opportunity to give your feedback on the College's activities and services, where we're doing well, and where we could do more to support you.

The survey should take just 5–10 minutes to complete. Your response will be invaluable in helping us to shape our services and support in line with your needs.

If you have not received your link, please get in touch with the Member Engagement and Support team at mycollege@rcpath.org.

**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

**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 the ExCeL in London on 27–28 January 2027. Professor Sarah Coupland, who will be College President in January, 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 unbeatable 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 armed 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, there's something for everyone! Find out more.

**Sign up for our upcoming implementation guidance webinars.**

Chaired by Professor Peter Johnston and presented by the guideline authors, each 45-minute webinar focuses on areas that are important to the guideline user, with time for questions from the audience. Find out more and sign up for free today via our webinar page.

- Thursday 29 October, 1pm GMT — Implementation guidance for tissue pathways for native medical renal biopsies.
- Monday 16 November, 1pm GMT — Implementation guidance for non-operative diagnostic procedures and reporting in breast cancer screening.
- Thursday 3 December, 1pm GMT — Implementation guidance for histopathological reporting of carcinomas and borderline tumours of the ovaries, fallopian tubes and peritoneum.

## Watch the World Patient Safety Day webinar recordings

To mark this year's World Patient Safety Day, we hosted a series of 3 webinars exploring different aspects of patient safety across the pathology specialities. The recordings are now available to watch at www.rcpath.org/WPSD.

1. Improving patient safety through Point of Care Testing
2. Advancing paediatric and maternal health in the UK and abroad
3. Joined-up healthcare: designing error out of diagnostic pathways

**National Pathology Week 2026 2- 8 November - It's not too late to take part!**

National Pathology Week (NPW) 2026 is fast approaching and we've just published our handy 'Get Involved' guide, which has lots of ideas for how you and your teams can take part this November. If you're running an event or activity, please register it on our website so we can add it to our events calendar. You can order free promotional materials for any in-person NPW events you're running here – please note only orders received **by COP on 21 October** will be sent out in time for NPW.

The theme for National Pathology Week (NPW) 2026 is 'welcome to the lab' and we're working with the Pathology Alliance on a series of webinars about careers in different pathology specialties including forensic pathology, immunology and veterinary pathology. These are running throughout November and are aimed at sixth formers, undergraduates, and foundation doctors. Please share the links to these events from our public events calendar with anyone you know who might be interested. More information on NPW and events running throughout November can be found in our recent news post.

## Free educational webinar on circulating biomarkers – 17 November

We're delivering an educational webinar entitled *From methylome to multi-ome: harnessing the full potential of cfDNA* in partnership with Illumina on Tuesday 17 November 2026. The webinar is free to attend and runs from 12:30 to 13:30 GMT.

We're delighted that Dr Alexandra Clipson, Deputy Team Leader, Non-Invasive Multi-omics Team, Cancer Research UK National Biomarker Centre, has agreed to deliver this webinar and share her research on the development of circulating biomarkers to support clinical decision making in oncology.

Dr. Clipson will discuss how her team harnesses a multi-omic liquid biopsy approach—integrating genomic, epigenomic, and fragmentomic features from circulating cell-free DNA (cfDNA)—alongside machine-learning classifiers, for the detection and molecular characterisation of tumours.

The webinar will be chaired by Dr Alicia-Marie Conway, Consultant Medical Oncologist and is worth 1 CPD point. To find out more and book your place visit the event page.

**NIHR-Funded Study on Support for Disabled Trainee Doctors**

An NIHR-funded research study at the University of Aberdeen is exploring how trainee doctors (foundation, GP and specialty trainees) with disabilities, neurodivergence, or long-term health conditions are supported within training and workplace settings across the NHS.

Recruitment of disabled trainee doctors to interviews is ongoing. We are also recruiting colleagues whose roles involve working with or supporting disabled trainee doctors to take part in online interviews. This includes educational and clinical supervisors, training programme directors, occupational health professionals, wellbeing staff, administrative and human resources professionals, and others involved in educational, workplace or pastoral support. We are interested in hearing about colleagues' experiences of working with and supporting trainee doctors, as well as their perspectives on what helps and hinders effective support in

practice. Anyone interested in finding out more about the study or taking part in an interview can contact the research team at ddnihr.recruit@abdn.ac.uk.

**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.

**Educational Update 2026 meeting**
**09:45–12:00, Friday 6 November**
This annual meeting will be held remotely on Friday 6 November 2026 at 9:45am to 12:00pm. This year's theme is focused on Artificial Intelligence (AI). The keynote speaker is Dr Mark Ragoo MBA PGDip Health Informatics FRCEM FHEA. This event is principally for trainers and assessors in chemical pathology, cellular pathology, medical microbiology and medical virology specialties. Trainers from the JRCPTB specialties are also welcome to attend. The programme and how to book your place is available here.

**CPD Returns Reminder**
The College's 2025/26 CPD year has come to an end. Submitting your CPD return is an important part of maintaining your revalidation record, so please remember to complete and submit your CPD return here when you're ready.

Should you have any questions or need support with the process, our Member Engagement and Support Team will be pleased to assist:
020 7451 6720. cpd@rcpath.org

**The Pathology Portal – October update**
The Pathology Portal has recently been supporting several teaching sessions, making use of the ease and speed of uploading content and easy access for attendees. These training sessions are just part of the 8,000 resources available which have been accessed over half a million times since we launched 4 years ago.

The Pathologist recently published an interview with project lead, Professor Jo Martin, about the progress that has been made with the Pathology Portal. The interview can be found here.

If you've 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.

## Get involved in the College

**Trainees Advisory Committee member vacancies**
We are inviting applications from trainees interested in joining the Trainees' Advisory Committee (TAC), which represents all specialties and College regions. TAC Members play an active role by attending committee meetings, participating in discussions, and ensuring

trainees' views are shared within their specialty. This is a valuable opportunity to influence how your specialty is organised, network with peers, contribute to College activities, and support your professional development.

Roles currently available include:

- Academic Trainee Representative
- Research Trainee Representative
- Toxicology Trainee Representative
- Healthcare Science Trainee Representative
- Veterinary Microbiology Pathology Trainee Representative
- Veterinary Clinical Pathology Trainee Representative

Successful applicants will be expected to attend four Trainees' Advisory Committee meetings each year and two Specialty Advisory Committee meetings, providing updates on behalf of their specialty. Applications must be submitted using the nomination form by 5pm on Friday 6 November 2026.

## College courses and events

**Autopsy webinar series – Cervical spine injury**
**Wednesday, 18 November 2026**
**CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)**
**This event will take place at 1:00pm and last approximately 1 hour.**

**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.**

**Liver Pathology Bitesize Webinars series**
Following some excellent sessions on medical liver disease in 2025, and based on feedback received from delegates, the UK Liver Pathology Group in conjunction with the Royal College of Pathologists are pleased to announce the continuation of our virtual liver pathology bitesize series. Given the variability in exposure to liver pathology during training across the UK, some of the cases discussed will include FRCPath style cases but also cover entities which pathologists may come across regularly as part of their working practice. There are six webinars which take place during 2026, which this year will be focussing on lesional liver pathology, and will aim to return to medical liver disease in 2027.

Each 1-hour webinar session will be hosted by the UKLPG resident representatives and presented by an expert in the field of liver pathology. We plan to cover a different theme in each session, including case-based discussions in addition to hints and tips in how to approach the cases. There will also be the opportunity for delegates to pose questions to the speakers via the Q&A function. Where possible, we aim to provide attendees with the opportunity to view the digital slides before each session.

**Liver Pathology Bitesize Webinars - Hepatic cysts**
**Wednesday, 4 November 2026**
**CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)**
**This event will take place at 12:30pm 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.

**2027 dates will be available soon.**

**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.)

**2027 dates will be available soon.**

## Regional news

**Getting pathology to the top of the agenda in Wales and Scotland**
In Wales, we have raised key issues affecting pathology services in Wales with the Senedd's Health and Social Care Committee, and issues related to paediatric and perinatal pathology services with the Senedd's Early Years, Children, Young People & Education Committee. We are also preparing a College response to the Welsh Government's call for evidence on the Cancer Strategy for Wales alongside the Wales Regional Council.

Wales Regional Chair, Dr Emma Short, also met with the Conservatives Health Spokesperson in the Senedd, Natasha Asghar MS, to discuss how we can work together to hold Welsh Government to account on our members' key priorities. We hope to work with her to boost our wider political engagement in the Senedd.

In September, Scotland Regional Council Chair, Dr Charu Chopra, met with the Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Health & Care, Angela Constance MSP. They discussed workforce issues affecting Scottish pathology services (highlighting our recent workforce reports), the opportunities for introducing digital pathology and AI into the NHS, and the need for robust, interoperable and functional IT systems.

**Political engagement following the forensic pathology workforce report**

Following the publication of the College's forensic pathology workforce report we sent the report out to ministers and politicians across the four nations.

We were pleased with the quality of response from the ministers we have engaged with. We have received substantial responses from ministers in England & Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland with some meetings scheduled to discuss issues in further detail. This will include involvement in future workplans to transform forensic pathology services and create more sustainable services.

## New publications

**October Bulletin**
The October Bulletin marks the launch of the National Allergy Strategy, with articles by allergy experts from within and beyond the Strategy Group.

**New guidelines**

- G141 Tissue pathways for non-neoplastic ophthalmic pathology specimens, by Dr Luciane Irion, Dr Caroline Thaung and Dr Zainab Al-Dubbaisi.

G195 BPR Non-CBRN mass fatality incidents – the pathologists' roles, by Dr Philip Lumb.

## News from external organisations

**Food Standards Agency 2026/27 recruitment campaign**
The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is recruiting new members to join its Scientific Advisory Committees (SACs) and Science Council as part of the 2026/27 recruitment campaign.

Applications are encouraged from individuals of all backgrounds and from a broad range of scientific and professional disciplines. The FSA is committed to building diverse committees that draw on a wide range of expertise, perspectives and experience.

The FSA's SACs and Science Council provide independent scientific advice that helps inform evidence-based decision making on food safety and standards. Their work plays an important role in protecting public health and consumer interests.

Recruitment is taking place across the following committees:

- Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food
- Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment

**IFCC C-MDO Survey on Molecular Diagnostics Based on Circulating Biomarkers in Oncology**
The IFCC Committee on Molecular Diagnostics (C-MDO) is conducting this survey to assess the current implementation of molecular diagnostics based on circulating biomarkers (e.g., cell-free nucleic acids, circulating tumor cells, and extracellular vesicles) in diagnostic laboratories worldwide. The results of the survey will help identify current practices, unmet needs, and opportunities for harmonization and standardization, and will support future IFCC C-MDO recommendations and educational activities. One response per laboratory is preferred.
The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

## Other events of interest

20 October 2026
Pitfalls in amyloidosis: an MDT approach

21 October 2026
Current Thinking in Haematological Malignancies (Glasgow)

22 October 2026
Beyond the Microscope: Skills that Strengthen Practice

29 October 2026
2nd Immunodeficiency faculty meeting: Immune Failure - Cases from the Edge of Diagnosis

04 November 2026
Behaviour change and Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) (Insight Webinar)

05 November 2026
Healthcare Infection Society (HIS) Outbreaks Training Course

05 November 2026
British Society of Blood and Marrow Transplantation and Cellular Therapy (BSBMTCT) Education Day

06 November 2026
Birmingham Breast Pathology Update Course 2026

06 November 2026
UK Lymphoma Research Group

06-07 November 2026
48th Annual Conference of Association of Clinical Biochemists in Ireland

09-11 November 2026
Leeds Lymphoma Course

10 November 2026
Getting it right for the patient, what is happening with Point-of-care testing (POCT) including Direct-to-Consumer Testing (DTCT)

11 November 2026
UK Myeloma Society Autumn Day

12 November 2026
The Consultant Files: Managerial skills for Senior SpRs & New Consultants

12-14 November 2026
I0th International Conference of the Sri Lanka British School of pathology (ICON 2026)

17 November 2026
UK Forum on Haemoglobin Disorders (UKFHD) 62nd Academic Meeting

18 November 2026
South West Myeloma Group

19 November 2026
North West Haematologists' Association Meeting

20 November 2026
BAUP Annual Meeting with Uropathology EQA Circulation

20 November 2026
Myeloproliferative Neoplasms Advances Day 2026

20 November 2026
British Lymphoma Pathology Group (BLPG) Autumn Meeting 2026

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

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

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

08 March 2027
Pathology Study Day

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