



The Royal College of Pathologists

Pathology: the science behind the cure

RCPATH President's newsletter – December 2025



President's Message

Winter Pressures

Many of our hospitals are facing significant pressures currently – the usual capacity issues made worse by surges in several respiratory pathogens, notably flu. While we all try our best, it is frustrating that the clear underlying capacity issues and staff shortages, as well as waiting lists and primary care problems persist with no sign of things getting better. Pathology remains vital in all of this though, and ensuring our value is realised and is seen to be bringing solutions remains our important seasonal message.

Industrial action

Resident doctors in England are set to continue industrial action. While this comes at a particularly difficult time for the NHS, 83 per cent of resident doctors, with a turnout of 65 per cent, voted to continue strike action. We would again urge both parties to seek an urgent resolution.

The Government offer made to the resident doctors encompassed reimbursement for College exams, portfolio and membership fees. The offer was made without discussion with the medical royal colleges or the Academy.

The promise of an extra 4,000 training posts, while welcome, is largely aimed at converting

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locally employed doctor (LED) posts, with funding paid for by NHS Trusts. This model is unlikely to benefit pathology, given the relatively small numbers of LEDs and the ongoing reluctance of NHS Trusts to directly fund pathology training.

We will continue to advocate the vital need to ensure a robust pathology workforce to help deliver the [Government's 10 Year Plan in England](#) and other similar healthcare objectives across the UK.

RCPATH Forum: Rapid genomic testing for cancer patients

We organised and led this event to offer a unique opportunity for discussion and debate around key issues affecting cancer genomic testing in the UK.

Attended by over 100 delegates at the College, with a further 150 online, the programme included talks from experts providing perspectives from government, cellular pathology, genomic laboratories, pharmaceutical industry and diagnostics companies.

It is vital that rational discussions take place between the relevant stakeholders to ensure that the limited funding available is allocated where it can make the biggest impact and reduce turnaround times for genomic testing.

Thank you to our event sponsors: Roche Diagnostics, AstraZeneca UK, Pillar Biosciences, Biocartis, and Panakeia Technologies.

Prostate cancer screening

Working with College experts, we [responded to the National Screening Committee recommendation](#) not to recommend whole-population screening and to only screen men with the BRCA 1 and 2 mutation.

There is need for a robust strategy to tackle a disease that affects more than 63,000 men in the UK alone each year. An evidence based and targeted approach is needed to identify high risk

individuals without triggering a wave of overdiagnosis.

We hope that the cutting edge UK trials such as [TRANSFORM](#) will shed further light on this decision which should be kept under review.

Advocacy and Influence

Following an [article in the Guardian](#) where Alison Bennett MP discussed waiting times for diagnostics, we invited her to meet pathologists at her local hospital, the Princess Royal Hospital, Sussex.

She toured the pathology labs, shown round by College Fellow Dr Mark Taylor to see first-hand the fantastic work of pathology services. She also met the CEO, Dr Andy Heeps, to talk about their new strategy and issues of interest to local constituents. I will be meeting up with Alison in the New Year and I will also be visiting the labs in Brighton.

Prof Adrian Bateman, Chair of the RCPATH Cellular Pathology Specialty Advisory Committee, joined a roundtable organised by the [King's Fund](#) on innovation ready cancer services. His key points focused on workforce capacity, streamlined MDTs, and interoperable digital infrastructure.

We continue our programme of parliamentary engagement to raise awareness of the chronic workforce shortage affecting paediatric and perinatal pathology services.

Dr Clair Evens, Chair of the Speciality Advisory Committee, spoke at the All Party Parliamentary Group on Baby Loss highlighting the findings in our [recently published workforce report](#).

BMJ interview

In last month's newsletter, I wrote about the [recent pausing](#) of the College EQA NQAAP panels and QAPC.

I gave an interview on this issue [which has been published in the BMJ](#). In it, I make the case that a national system of governance is urgently needed to ensure safety and consistent

standards. This is now being actively discussed at many levels across Government, NHSE and MHRA, as well as within the professions.

Chief Medical Officer's annual report 2025: infections

The College welcomes the [publication of this comprehensive report on infections](#) in England from the Chief Medical Officer.

The report clearly demonstrates that infection plays a major part in the health of our nation. Infection management is the role of every person - from patients to government organisations, public health, primary care, acute and specialised services. We recognise that infection is managed by a diverse community of specialists, with the need for a system-wide approach to combating infections clearly highlighted in this report. The many aspects influencing the successful management of infections, including prevention through better hygiene, vaccination, accurate, high quality and timely diagnostics, diagnostic and antimicrobial stewardship and patient-based treatment, require a co-ordinated response from everyone involved in and associated with the infection specialty.

We welcome the opportunity to undertake a more in-depth review of this report, and work with our allied infection specialities and organisations to develop a comprehensive plan to achieve the report's aims.

[Appointment of new interim medical examiner](#)

The College welcomes the appointment of Dr Huw Twamley as the new interim National Medical Examiner.

This vital role provides essential leadership for the medical examiner system in England and Wales.

Huw's leadership will build on the excellent work of Dr Alan Fletcher, the first substantive National Medical Examiner.

Finally, I would like to wish you all the very best for the festive season and hope that 2026 is a great year for you all. Hopefully you will all get some well-earned rest at some point. While it remains difficult in healthcare, pathology still makes a huge difference every day, diagnosing, screening, treating and saving lives. We all matter...

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

LEPT Refresher Sessions 2026

To support Chemical Pathology and Cellular Pathology specialties ahead of the 2026 ARCPs, we're offering a series of LEPT refresher sessions:

- **February 2026:** Four sessions designed for Chemical Pathology and Cellular Pathology trainees.
- **March 2026:** Four sessions tailored for those in SUPER roles, including training programme directors, ARCP panel chairs, and deanery/LETB 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.

[Pathology careers webinar - Red cell haematology](#)

6pm, Monday 26 January 2026

This online event, aimed at undergraduates and foundation doctors, will shine a spotlight on careers in red cell haematology. Our speakers are consultant Dr Emma Drasar and senior specialty registrar Dr Chloe Merrion.

Developments in diagnosis and management of gram-negative bloodstream infections

12:30pm, Tuesday 3 February 2026

CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)

Join us for this free lunchtime webinar exploring the laboratory and clinical impact of rapid diagnostic tools in identifying and managing Gram negative blood stream infections, including rapid genotyping and rapid antimicrobial susceptibility testing (AST) methods. The speaker is Dr Lim Jones, Consultant Microbiologist at Public Health Wales. The chair is Dr Natasha Ratnaraja, a Consultant in Infection and Chair of the RCPATH Joint Medical Microbiology and Medical Virology Specialty Advisory Committee. The webinar is being delivered in partnership with bioMérieux and will last approximately 1 hour.

Booking will open soon, please check the RCPATH CPD calendar [here](#). This is the third webinar in this series, you can watch the first 2 webinars in the series [here](#).

Pathology Portal; Thank You from the Team

As we reach the end of the year, the team would like to thank our dedicated contributors and users for making the Pathology Portal such an important resource. Your feedback and submissions have helped us to identify gaps, provide development support and build the networks which are helping to continuously improve the portal.

The Pathology Portal has now reached more than 7,100 resources and the team are currently working on several new projects to fill gaps and retain important knowledge and resources. With over 6,700 users, the Pathology Portal saw record use in 2025.

The Pathology Portal team will continue to run drop-in sessions in the first half of 2026, keep an eye out on socials and the College's event calendar for the latest dates.

Please get in touch with the team at pathologyportal@rcpath.org for more information. To sign up, visit the [College website](#)!

Member Wellbeing Project – tender applications now live

The College's Workforce Team are seeking tenders for a research project to explore the wellbeing of the pathology workforce.

This study seeks to provide greater insight into how our members feel about their work, their workplace and pathology more generally. It also aims to unearth the impact if things stay the same and identify what the College can do to better support the retention of the pathology workforce.

You can access the tender brief [here](#). The closing date for submissions is 18 January 2026. For more information, please contact workforceplanning@rcpath.org.

Workforce Census Spotlight 3 – Pathologists in Training

Using data from the 2025 workforce census, spotlight 3 explores the training pathway, primary carer intentions and the wellbeing of pathologists in training from the lens of both medical residents and trainee scientists.

The 3rd workforce census spotlight uncovers how pathologists in training are prioritising wellbeing and work life balance, with many pathologists intending to train and work less than full time (LTFT)

The findings show that over half (61%) of residents who plan to gain a consultant position intend to work LTFT upon completion of training, and at least 11% of the future pathology workforce are unlikely to enter the NHS/HSC in any capacity after completion of training. Thank you to all those that contributed to the 2025 workforce census. [Read the full spotlight here.](#)

Get involved in the College

Vacancy: Chair, Death Investigation Committee

The College is inviting applications for the role of Chair of the Death Investigation Committee, a significant leadership position shaping the College's work in non-forensic death investigation across the UK.

The Chair will lead the committee in developing national autopsy guidance, learning resources, and standards of best practice, while also advising on interactions with key stakeholders. This is an excellent opportunity for a College Fellow with vision and a strong commitment to advancing high-quality autopsy pathology.

More information and the application form are available on the College [website](#).

Application deadline: Friday, 19 December 2025

Join the Trainee Advisory Committee

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:

- Immunology Trainee Representative
- Toxicology Trainee Representative
- Veterinary Microbiology 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 9 January 2026.

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 outcomes 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:

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

Replay the Highlights: International Pathology Day 2025 talks & roundtable discussion

On November 5, the College hosted virtual conference, sponsored by the [British Society for Haematology \(BSH\)](#) and [Diagnexia](#), to mark International Pathology Day. Catch up or listen again to the keynote conversation with Mr Jim Campbell, Director of the Health Workforce Department at the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), along with talks from other esteemed international speakers and the roundtable discussion. Visit the virtual resources page [on our website](#)

New Publications

Read our latest [annual report](#)

This year's report showcases what we have achieved for our members. We look at our activities in and outside of the UK and our progress in delivering our core strategic aims – pathology excellence, education and training, trusted advocacy, member belonging and sustainability. We also explore efforts to build stronger College communities, engage and influence key political stakeholders through our advocacy work, and develop partnerships with politicians, the public, kindred organisations, charities and industry.

- [G031 BPR The retention and storage of pathological records and specimens](#)

College Courses and events

[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 Training - In person](#)

Thursday, 7 May 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

News from external organisations

Interim Devices Working Group (IDWG) appointing professional members

The [Interim Devices Working Group](#) (IDWG) is looking to appoint [professional members](#) to the In Vitro Diagnostics Expert Advisory Group (IVD EAG).

The IVD EAG is an independent advisory committee of the IDWG that provides independent expert advice to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) on the development, implementation, and evaluation of IVD devices.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency values and promotes diversity and is committed to equality of opportunity for all.

Further details with how to apply are available via the [GOV.UK website](#). Please do not hesitate to contact cstrecruitment@mhra.gov.uk if you have any questions about the post.

The closing date for applications is 6 February 2026.

Other external events of interest

20-21 January 2026

[Virtual Advanced Prostate Pathology Course](#)

20-21 January 2026

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

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

04-05 February 2026

[GARDP & BSAC Antimicrobial Chemotherapy Conference \(ACC2026\)](#)

10 February 2026

[British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy \(BSAC\) New Agents Conference - Hope on the Horizon: Cutting-Edge Antimicrobials in Clinical Practice](#)

11 February 2026

[UCLH:Challenges in Myeloproliferative neoplasms \(MPN\)](#)

12 February 2026

[Scotland Myeloid Update 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](#)