



Patient and Public Engagement Role Description Lay Advisory Group Member

Appointed by and responsible to:	College Council
Working relationships:	Clinical Director for Publishing and Engagement and VP Communications
Term of office:	Three years from the date of appointment, renewable for 3 years
Commitment:	Average of one to two days per month

Introduction

Pathology is the study of disease. In practice, pathologists are the expert doctors, vets and scientists responsible for the laboratories across the NHS and elsewhere, which test patient samples to reach a diagnosis, and thus define appropriate treatment. Pathologists are therefore at the heart of healthcare and involved with the care of virtually every patient. There are 17 specialties within pathology e.g. histopathology, microbiology, veterinary pathology. Some specialties also involve the direct care of patients e.g. haematology, while others have a strong strand of public health e.g. virology. Pathologists also undertake research and teach undergraduates and post-graduate trainees.

The College

The College, with over 12,000 members worldwide, is the organisation responsible for setting standards for the practice of pathology across the UK. We define standards for training of pathologists and run examinations which test competence and allow admission as a Fellow and which are the route to appointment as a consultant. We also support pathologists at every stage in their career through educational events, conferences and clinical guidelines. The elected officers of the College, supported by experienced College staff, provide professional leadership, and thereby contribute at a national level to the maintenance and development of pathology services, and the quality of care that patients receive.

We have a strong strand of public and professional engagement, reaching out to diverse audiences including university students and junior doctors to provide information about health and disease (in humans and other animals) and to encourage careers in pathology.

We are committed to increasing diversity and inclusion within our organisation, as well as using our voice and platform to help make pathology as a profession more inclusive. This means reflecting critically on issues of diversity and inclusion within all that we do, identifying and taking appropriate actions to reduce inequality, and welcoming challenge.

We welcome applications from anyone regardless of their disability, ethnicity, heritage, gender, sexuality, religion or socio-economic background.

Lay Advisory Group

We consider lay input as essential to our work, ensuring that we always see our professional activities through the prism of the patient and the public. We are expanding our Lay Advisory Group and are recruiting to fill specific lay roles within the College according to applicants' background and expertise. We also wish to be able to call on our Lay Advisory Group to advise on ad hoc issues as needed, and to review certain guideline documents. Induction on the scope of College activities and structure will be given on joining the Lay Advisory Group. The point of contact for professional matters will be the Clinical Director for Publishing and Engagement, while administrative support will be handled through the Committees team.



Main Purpose

The Lay Advisory Group member is responsible for contributing a lay perspective on matters of importance to the College by working with committees or working groups assigned to oversee or manage specific areas of interest.

Lay members contribute the perspectives of patients, people who use services, experts in related fields of interest, or communities to a committee's work. This means they tend to offer a different point of view from other members on a committee.

Lay members usually have a strong understanding of what matters most for people using health services.

The Lay Advisory Group Member will:

1. Become familiar with the College, its high-level processes, and the detailed work of specific group(s) or committee(s). This may include occasional attendance at College Council as an observer.
2. Through membership of one or more College committees, advise the College Council and provide a lay perspective on College matters, acting as a 'critical friend'.
3. Keep up-to-date with the College's activities through access to Presidents' newsletters, The Bulletin and website.
4. As needed and by negotiation, provide lay input to ad hoc work as required e.g. to develop a College policy position on specific topics of public concern.
5. Horizon scan for issues of possible interest to the College.
6. Reporting within the Lay Advisory Group and to the Clinical Director on the lay input to committees with which they are working with and attend three annual Lay Advisory Group meetings online.
7. Contribute to an annual report to Council that is submitted in writing by the relevant committee(s) on which they sit.

Background information about public engagement at the College

The Royal College of Pathologists' mission statement includes 'To further public education' and the College's corporate and public engagement team runs an annual programme of activities and events to achieve this. We have a dedicated area of the College website: <https://www.rcpath.org/discover-pathology.html>.

The programme focuses on engaging foundation doctors and undergraduates studying medicine, biomedical science, dentistry and veterinary subjects. The corporate and public engagement team work in partnership with College members and relevant organisations to highlight the incredible range of careers on offer within pathology. This is done through in-person and web-based events, [videos](#), [podcasts](#), printed materials and [careers information on our website](#). A strong focus for this work is to ensure information and opportunities for engagement are accessible for students from all backgrounds – we partner with various organisations such as the Social Mobility Foundation to reach students from under-represented groups.

The College is a leading partner in the delivery of [National Pathology Week](#), supporting our members to run events and working with the Pathology Alliance to reach people from diverse audiences. The College corporate and public engagement team also work with Lab Tests Online UK to reach patient groups – this has included creating social media content about pathology tests. The team are exploring other ideas and partnerships that would extend our engagement with patient groups. In addition, we run [annual competitions](#) and support members with free resources.

The corporate and public engagement team are part of the Communications directorate and work with colleagues in the press and public affairs department to further increase awareness and understanding of pathology via press releases and engagement with parliamentarians and policy makers.



The Royal College of Pathologists

Pathology: the science behind the cure

The team also works on activities to achieve the College's strategic aim to 'develop industry partnerships to share knowledge and insights across pathology.' This area of work is not as established as the public engagement work and does not feature as part of this lay advisory member role's specific duties.

Specific duties

The focus of this new post will be working with the Corporate and Public Engagement Manager in promoting awareness of College function and its 17 pathology specialties to our target audiences. They will support the development and delivery of public engagement events and activities. There will be opportunities to assist in the review and development of planned resources and materials to support public and patient engagement.

The post-holder will also provide, with other lay members, input to College guidance for the profession, and to applications for national Clinical Excellence awards.

This post would suit an applicant with a background in public engagement (in health or otherwise), or with experience in the health sector. Experience in patient involvement and engagement would be an advantage as this is an area that the College is looking to develop and expand on over the next few years.



**Person specification
Lay Advisory Group
Member**

Requirements	Essential	Desirable
Experience / Knowledge		
Successful experience of operating within a committee or board in a charitable, public sector or commercial organisation	✓	
Experience of chairing committees		✓
A proven track record of sound judgement and effective decision making and integrity	✓	
Experience in positions of responsibility involving judgement and contribution to strategy	✓	
Proven experience of working constructively as part of a team	✓	
Experience of effective working relationships with medical and scientific professionals and staff teams	✓	
Role specific requirements (for non-general roles)		
Background in public engagement (in health or otherwise), or with experience in the health sector.	✓	
Skills / Abilities		
Excellent verbal and written communication skills	✓	
Ability to make decisions and give guidance	✓	
Ability to present effectively to an audience, using a variety of methods, and to respond to questions and queries	✓	
Ability to take responsibility and show evidence of leadership	✓	
An ability to think creatively and apply knowledge strategically	✓	
Good, independent judgment	✓	
Willingness to listen and learn and to speak their mind	✓	
Qualities		
Excellent interpersonal and communications skills	✓	
Flexible and proactive attitude	✓	
Awareness of personal limitations	✓	
Track record of achievement	✓	
A commitment to the College and its objectives	✓	
Commitment to equality and diversity and understanding of how this would apply to own role and responsibilities	✓	