



The Royal College of Pathologists

Pathology: the science behind the cure

## RCPATH President's newsletter – March 2025



### President's Message

#### NHS England (NHSE)

Healthcare changes have accelerated recently. The announcement that NHSE is being abolished was sudden, largely unexpected and a decision that will bring much uncertainty in the short term. We have seen both Health Education England, responsible for workforce, training and education (NHSE WTE), and NHS Digital consumed and merged with NHSE over the last few years.

The future of these vitally important functions and workstreams for pathology now seems very uncertain. Responsibility also for training numbers, the GIRFT programme, the NHS Genomic Medicine Service, patient safety groups, the NHS App and even our own Pathology Portal all sit within NHSE. There are clearly going to be considerable cuts to oversight services. Staff are facing uncertainty and job losses. With the parallel announcement that the Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), the regional bodies that oversee NHS Trusts in England, are being required to make 50% cuts, then the scale of the disruption over the next year is very significant.

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***Our message to government is clear:***

we are able and prepared to contribute and collaborate to ensure vital NHS functions and services are not lost. This represents a major opportunity for the profession to step up and ensure that the many pathology related workstreams continue. NHSE pathology team, pathology networks oversight, Quality Assurance Dashboard, Clinical Advisory Group for Paediatric and Perinatal Pathology, and pathology coding workstreams are some of many existing entities supporting pathology services run through NHSE.

The College has, of course, worked very closely and productively with colleagues across NHSE in recent years, and many of the employees are College members. This will be a very challenging time for them both professionally and personally, and we give them our full support.

**Health Service Journal - [Modernising Diagnostics Forum](#)**

I spoke at this excellent meeting last week, albeit proceedings were shaken when news of the Prime Minister's announcement of the abolition of NHSE filtered through. This large meeting was attended by many representatives across pathology and radiology leadership, government, NHSE and the media. Many of the topics including innovation, digital and AI, pathology networks, community diagnostics centres, contingency planning and point of care testing, will all clearly continue to be important for future services.

**New Consultants Committee**

We will shortly be advertising for members of this new committee which provides an exciting opportunity to represent the views of new consultant College Fellows and to shape College activities and policies to support their interests. The College will be working with the chair of this committee (still open to applicants until Friday 21

March) to identify and select appropriate members in the coming weeks. An application portal will open soon on the College website.

**[Our Workforce Census is still live](#)**

Our workforce census remains open and is due to close in the next two weeks

We have had an encouraging response so far and really need responses from every invited participant. Your data will be the foundation for understanding current and future workforce and workload trends. These are critical insights that will shape how we train, retain and reform pathology services. It is also vital information for influencing government and policy makers to recognise and invest in services. All invited UK members will have received a personalised census link in their inbox from our research partner, Research by Design.

If you haven't completed the census, **we urge you to do so**. Please check your inbox (including your junk inbox) for an email from [email@boxsurveys.net](mailto:email@boxsurveys.net) and complete your census today.

**If you cannot find your census link, please email [workforceplanning@rcpath.org](mailto:workforceplanning@rcpath.org) directly and a member of the team will send you your personalised link.**

**RCPATH Achievement Awards 2025  
Closing date Monday, 31 March**

There's still time to nominate a team for the 2025 RCPATH Achievement Awards.

There are two categories:

- **Pathology services – Team Awards**  
Four awards will be given to teams who have achieved above and beyond what would be expected in their usual course of their work.

- **Sustainability – Team Award**

The awards panel are looking for innovative solutions for pathology services that have saved carbon (or carbon equivalents) with a quantification, that would be beneficial to be shared with the wider pathology community.

**[For more information and details about how to nominate visit RCPATH Achievement Awards.](#)** The closing date is midnight Monday 31 March.

### **The 10-Year Health Plan**

I will be meeting Dr Zubir Ahmed MP, Parliamentary Private Secretary in the Department of Health, at the end of March. We will be discussing the forthcoming 10-Year Health Plan and how we can work with government on areas that affect members.

Prof Darren Treanor, Chair of our Digital Pathology Committee, met Kendall Jamieson Gilmore, Lead Strategy Advisor in the System Strategy Unit at the Department of Health, to raise issues around digital pathology and interoperability of IT systems.

There are still opportunities for you to contribute to the plan individually. A new survey, mainly aimed at patients and the public, has been published on [Change.NHS.uk](https://www.change.nhs.uk) focussing on ideas that have emerged from the engagement process to develop the plan.

To find out more about the survey, visit following the [10YHP portal](#). The deadline is 5pm on Monday 14 April for your views to be considered as part of the development of the plan.

We will release our response to the 10-Year Health Plan when it is published and will promote this with government and key stakeholders.

### **Stakeholder engagement**

Last year we responded to the [General Medical Council consultation](#) on regulating Physician Associates and Anaesthesia Associates. Following this, the government has announced a [call for evidence](#) seeking analysis and research to support their independent review.

We encourage members to respond to this if you have relevant analysis and research. The conclusions of the review will help to inform the refreshed workforce plan that the government has committed to publishing in Summer 2025.

**Dr Bernie Croal**  
**President, The Royal College of Pathologists**  
X: [@RCPath](#)

### **In this issue:**

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A PDF version of this newsletter is available at  
[RCPath newsletters](#)

## Working for members

### **Staffing and workload guidance for cellular pathology departments**

In 2019 we consulted on a new edition of the *Staffing and workload guidance for cellular pathology departments*, an important tool in ensuring equitable distribution of work by benchmarking the relative values of 19 specimens from different organ systems against each other. Extensive work was required to address the consultation responses with the COVID-19 pandemic causing delays.

A new draft edition of the guidance document was generated in 2023. This document reflected the comments made in the 2019 consultation as well as changes to working practices that had taken place since, in relation to surgical and laboratory practices, molecular testing and ongoing advancements in technology (such as digital pathology and artificial intelligence). We consulted on this revised document from 31 January 2024 to 1 March 2024.

Owing to workload pressures, the authors addressing the second set of consultation responses have faced challenges in finalising the document. The College understands the importance of the guidance and the impact these delays will have on our members. We have developed a framework to support the authors in the completion of this guidance, which we hope to publish in the summer.

We appreciate the patience of our members and their employers as we navigate the many challenges faced in the revisions to this guidance. We are committed to ensuring that the work faces no further delays.

### **[College publishes position statement on animal health and antimicrobial resistance](#)**

Antimicrobial resistance is a global issue that affects the health of humans, domestic and wild animals, plants and the wider environment, requiring the cooperation of those in human and animal medicine. Veterinary microbiologists are at the forefront of tackling this issue, guiding appropriate antimicrobial use and carrying out robust surveillance.

The College's statement focuses on expanding surveillance training for veterinary pathologists, alternatives to antibiotic such as bacteriophages, veterinary vaccines, diagnostic tests and improved data.

### **First of its kind central register of AI-based pathology tools**

The National Pathology Imaging Co-operative (NPIC) have created an open-source public register of AI based pathology tools to support the implementation of AI in diagnostic services

AI-based tools must adhere to comprehensive guidelines and undergo rigorous evaluation before being adopted in clinical settings, but assessing the extent to which a new AI-based tool has been tested can be challenging.

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In response to this, Dr Gillian Matthews and colleagues at the National Pathology Imaging Co-operative have created a public register for digital pathology AI tools. Please visit [Launched – First of its kind central register of AI-based pathology tools](#)

### **Apply to be a Portfolio Pathway Assessor**

If you are interested in becoming involved with the College, becoming a Portfolio Pathway assessor is a good way to do so. The Portfolio Pathway assessors determine whether or not each Portfolio Pathway applicant meets the knowledge, skills and experience required to practise as a specialist in the UK for their specialty. Assessors will either recommend applicants for entry to the Specialist Register or outline what more needs to be done to meet the standard. Training and ongoing support will be provided, and assessors can self-accredit for CPD points for each Portfolio Pathway evaluation they undertake.

A role description and further information is available on the [College website](#). If you would like to apply, please send an email outlining how you meet the person specification, along with an abbreviated CV, to [training@rcpath.org](mailto:training@rcpath.org)

### **CPD returns deadline**

We offer CPD statements through our CPD returns process to help members assemble supporting information for [revalidation](#).

Although our CPD year ends at the end of March, you have until 30 September to submit your CPD return. Please submit your return [here](#) when you are ready.

Should you have any enquiries or need further assistance, feel free to reach out to the Member Engagement and Support Team at 020 7451 6720 or [cpd@rcpath.org](mailto:cpd@rcpath.org).

### **Learning Environment for Pathology Trainees (LEPT) system**

The LEPT team will be delivering remote refresher sessions during February and March. These sessions are for Chemical Pathology and Cellular Pathology specialties.

The purpose of these refresher sessions is to offer guidance, help and support for all users of the LEPT system involved in preparing for the annual review of competence progression (ARCP) meetings, organised by deaneries/LETBs.

For dates and times of the remote LEPT refresher sessions, please log into the LEPT system and refer to the information on the Alert section on the homepage

### **[Essay competitions for undergraduates and foundation doctors](#)**

We've opened our annual [Essay Prizes](#), the Hugh Platt Foundation Essay Prize and the Paola Domizio Undergraduate Essay Prize, for 2025. These competitions offer undergraduates, and foundation doctors in the UK the chance to take an in-depth look at a particular aspect of pathology through a written piece. This year's essay questions centre around innovation in pathology.

The winner of each competition will be awarded £250. They will also have their essay published on our website and in the College magazine, *The Bulletin*, and will be presented with a certificate at an RCPATH event. Please encourage undergraduates and foundation

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doctors you know to enter. The closing date for the Paola Domizio Undergraduate Essay Prize is 7 April and the closing date for the Hugh Platt Foundation Essay Prize is 12 May. Find out more including terms and conditions and how to enter on [our website](#).

### **The Pathology Portal**

Last month we celebrated reaching 250,000 launches of resources on the Pathology Portal, this number has continued to grow as we see users accessing the wide variety of more than 6,000 resources across 17 specialties. With case studies, lectures, recap videos, podcasts and resources, the Pathology Portal can be an incredibly helpful tool to support preparation for exams.

Over the past month we have continued to add new EQA circulations and teaching sessions, as well as joining various committee meetings in the College to promote the Portal to new users and introduce new editors to the platform.

If you haven't explored the Pathology Portal yet, visit the [College website](#) to join today. We welcome your suggestions, questions, and content contributions at [pathologyportal@rcpath.org](mailto:pathologyportal@rcpath.org).

## **Get involved in the College**

### **Join the Patient Safety Steering Group**

Are you ready to help shape the future of patient safety in pathology? The College is recruiting members for the new Patient Safety Steering Group. This is your opportunity to influence vital initiatives that improve the quality and safety of pathology services, reduce errors, and enhance patient outcomes.

By joining, you'll collaborate with like-minded professionals, share your insights, and drive meaningful change in healthcare. Applications are open until Friday 28 March. [Find out more and apply here.](#)

### **Vacant Chair role – New Consultants Committee**

The College is committed to setting and maintaining professional standards and promoting excellence in the teaching and practice of pathology, for the benefit of patients. Those holding office in the College contribute to this important work by providing professional leadership and contributing at a national level to the maintenance and development of pathology services and the quality of patient care.

Make a difference and help shape College activities and policies by representing the interests and views of College Fellows who are new consultants through the work of this newly-established committee. Information on the role and how to apply can be found [here](#). Deadline for applications is Friday, 21 March 2025.

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## New publications

The updated version of [Good Practice Series 6: Deaths of children and neonates](#) has now been published. This document focuses on how medical examiners interact with the statutory child death review processes, as well as noting related initiatives and issues to review mortality, such as the statutory child death review process in England, the Procedural Response to Unexpected Deaths in Childhood (PRUDiC) and Child Death Review Programme in Wales.

## College Courses

### [Getting the best results from endoscopic gastrointestinal biopsies in dogs and cats – a pathologist's perspective](#)

**4pm, Monday 24 March 2025**

**CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)**

Chronic canine and feline gastrointestinal disease is a frequent clinical problem in general practice with management challenging for both pet owners and veterinarians alike. This webinar will discuss when, and in which cases, it is appropriate to consider endoscopic biopsy samples. Advice on how best to submit samples to the histopathology laboratory will be discussed, including handling of samples and what clinical information is useful for the pathologist. Processing of samples and how to minimize artefacts will be briefly covered as well as the approach to histopathological examination and interpretation, considering WSAVA guidelines for scoring and various recent advances, highlighted by case examples.

Recognizing the limitations of endoscopic biopsies and when surgical biopsies may be more appropriate and when ancillary tests such as immunohistochemistry and/or PARR may be useful will also be discussed.

This event will take place at 4:00pm and last approximately 1 hour.

### [Autopsy webinar series – Cardiac pathology for the non-specialist](#)

**1pm, Wednesday 9 April 2025**

**CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)**

Cardiac pathology remains some of the most common pathology encountered at autopsy. This webinar will cover common and uncommon cardiac pathology which the non-specialist pathologist can recognise, practical tips about examining the heart, and when and how to refer to a cardiac pathologist.

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

### [Epipathology: pathology and epidemiology in conservation medicine](#)

**1pm, Wednesday 30 April 2025**

**CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)**

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Pathology is an ever-growing field within zoo and wildlife medicine as much of the knowledge of many species comes from performing postmortem examinations. However, in times of small case reports for certain species, epidemiology plays a key role in identifying patterns within those findings to compile information that helps us learn more about the species so that we may help the living. This event will take place via zoom at 1:00pm and last approximately 1 hour.

### **Liver Pathology Bitesize Webinars - Biliary diseases**

**12.30pm, Wednesday 7 May 2025**

**CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)**

This session will give an overview on biliary conditions affecting the liver including primary biliary cholangitis and primary sclerosing cholangitis, how to differentiate between the two, and how additional histochemical and immunohistochemical stains can help support these diagnoses.

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

### **Medical Examiner Annual Conference – Virtual Event**

**Wednesday, 14 May 2025**

**CPD credits: TBC**

The 2025 Medical Examiner Annual Conference will be held on Zoom on Wednesday May 14th. Speakers will cover a range of current topics relevant to the medical examiner service. This event may be of interest to MEs, MEOs, Registrars, Coroners and others working in death certification and registration.

Confirmed speakers include:

- William Vineall, Director of NHS Quality, Safety and Investigations
- Jonny Tinsley, Head of Health Data, Office for National Statistics
- Emma Whitting, HM Senior Coroner for Bedfordshire and Luton
- Representative of HASAG, the asbestos support charity
- More coming soon

Topics include:

- An update on the statutory system from the Department of Health and Social Care
- An update from NHS England
- Assisted dying - potential implications for MEs
- Asbestos-related deaths
- When are MEs interested persons?
- How accurate does the cause of death have to be?
- More coming soon

### **Autopsy webinar series – Sepsis**

**1pm, Wednesday 21 May 2025**

**CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)**

Sepsis is an inflammatory response, generally triggered by microbes, in which a cascade of molecules has a wide range of effects. The metabolic responses to these compounds have an

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important physiological role, but can lead to overwhelming clinical changes and death, especially in the already vulnerable or frail individual. The underlying source of sepsis may be obvious, but in up to 40% of cases, it is not. In such cases, detailed understanding of the clinical history is very important. There are recognised microscopic changes, but these vary in degree, and can be very difficult to identify in the decomposing body, even in the early stages. This event will take place via zoom at 1:00pm and last approximately 1 hour.

### **[Autopsy webinar series – Neuropathology for the non-specialist](#)**

**1pm, Wednesday 11 June 2025**

**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.

### **[Liver Pathology Bitesize Webinars - Steatotic liver disease](#)**

**12.30pm, Wednesday 9 July 2025**

**CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)**

This session will cover steatotic liver diseases covering the new nomenclature including metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD), Alcohol related liver disease (ArLD), and how to differentiate between steatotic liver disease and steatohepatitis.

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

### **[Liver Pathology Bitesize Webinars - Hepatitic liver disease](#)**

**12.30pm, Wednesday 3 September 2025**

**CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)**

This session will provide an overview as to acute and chronic hepatitic pathologies along with clues to help differentiate between different aetiological causes including autoimmune hepatitis, viral hepatitis and drugs.

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

### **[Autopsy webinar series - Two deceased in the same house](#)**

**Thursday, 18 September 2025**

**CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)**

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

### **[Liver Pathology Bitesize Webinars - Liver, the weird and the wonderful](#)**

**12.30pm, Wednesday 5 November 2025**

**CPD credits: 1 (self-credited)**

This session will cover the slightly more unusual elements of medical liver disease which we sometimes come across including genetic/inherited liver diseases and more.

**This event will take place via zoom 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.

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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](#)**

Thursday, 16 January 2025

CPD credits: 6

**[Medical Examiner training – Virtual](#)**

Tuesday, 25 March 2025

CPD credits: 6

**[Medical Examiner training – In-person](#)**

Thursday, 5 June 2025

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 Examiner Officer training – Virtual](#)**

Wednesday, 25 June 2025

CPD credits: 6

## News from other organisations

**[Nominations for the 2025 John Maddox Prize](#)**

**Nominations and self-applications are now open for Standing Up for Science - The John Maddox Prize.**

Standing up for Science - The John Maddox Prize, recognises researchers who stand up and speak out for science and evidence-based policy, advancing public discussion around difficult topics, despite challenges or hostility, and successfully making a change in public discourse or policy. Closing date for nominations – 30 April.

## Other external events of interest

07 March 2025

[UK Chronic lymphocytic leukaemia \(CLL\) Forum Annual Scientific Day](#)

07 March 2025

[Everyday Dilemmas in Gynaecological Pathology](#)

07 March 2025

[Digital Pathology reporting workshop](#)

11 March 2025

[National Pathology Imaging Co-Operative \(NPIC\) Innovation into Practice: Ask Us Anything](#)

13 March 2025

[UK North Myeloma Forum](#)

14-15 March 2025

[Mycology - Fungal Update 2025](#)

18 March 2025

[What's New in Haematological Malignancies](#)

19 March 2025

[UK Myeloma Society Spring Day](#)

19-20 March 2025

[British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy \(BSAC\) Academic Publishing Workshop](#)

21 March 2025

[Educational Day- Annual Review of Competency Progression](#)

25 March 2025

[Thrombosis, thrombophilia and pregnancy – a tale of patience and persistence](#)

27 March 2025

[East Midlands Lymphoma Forum](#)

27-28 March 2025

[12th Annual Oxford Bone Infection Conference](#)

31 March – 03 April 2025

[Microbiology Society Annual Conference](#)

01 April 2025

[From lab to clinic: Antiplatelet drugs and intracerebral haemorrhage](#)

25 April 2025

[Advances in Molecular and Clinical Diagnosis for Haematological Malignancies](#)

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