

# Our five-year commitment

Safe, more effective, patient-centred  
care delivered by a well-trained,  
supported and valued workforce

Caring and Supportive | Just and Fair | Innovative and Progressive | Open and Responsive





## Our five-year commitment

Nobody knows what the next five years will bring, in the same way that five years ago, we could not have predicted the scale and immediacy of change that the pandemic was to unleash.

However what we do know is that we, the Royal College of Anaesthetists, need to be agile and adept in supporting and training clinicians in the fields of anaesthesia, pain medicine and intensive care medicine to continue to deliver the best possible care for patients, whatever the circumstances.

At the time of writing, many of our colleagues feel tired, stretched and frustrated due to the pressures and constraints caused by COVID-19. We have at least a 1,400 shortfall in consultant and SAS anaesthetists in the UK, along with a shortage of training places. This is against a backdrop of more than six million patients awaiting surgery.

It is clear we cannot meet the challenges of the next five years by simply continuing on the same path, but we believe that everything we have achieved until now has laid the foundation upon which we can work with you to build for the future.

Our aim is to provide you, the professionals in our specialities, with the tools and support you need to be able to look after your own and each other's welfare and to care for patients. We will continue to advocate at all levels – from the individual patient wondering if surgery is right for them, through to championing our workforce at the highest decision-making levels in government – to make this a reality.

Most importantly we must remain truly connected to our membership, staff, patients and public as we forge these new paths together. We need to listen and respond to what is important for them, so that collectively we can be the best we can be. We need to stay financially strong, so that we have the resources to follow through on our commitments.

Our five-year plan will provide the focus we need to achieve these aims for 2022–2027, building in the vision, agility and compassion that recent history has shown are so important for the College's work, for our members, our staff and for patients.

I look forward to working with you in the years ahead.

**Dr Fiona Donald**  
President

Our vision for 2022–27 is safe, more effective, patient-centred care, delivered by a well-trained, supported and valued workforce.

**We will achieve our vision by:**

- taking an integrated approach to our specialties: anaesthesia, pain medicine, and intensive care medicine
- delivering our four strategic aims and acting on our values
- being mindful of our responsibilities to patients, the public, our members, our staff and resources
- securing the future of the College through our organisational planning.



**We will deliver our goals through:**

- a sound and sustainable business plan
- an innovative infrastructure plan
- engagement and collaboration with our partners
- a People and Operations plan that offers support and drives excellence.



## Our strategic aims and programmes in detail

We have identified four focus areas to guide the progress and development of our specialties from 2022–2027. Behind each strategic aim is a matrix of operational plans: some that can be actioned almost straight away and others that will take a little longer – especially as we incorporate Fellow and Member views, opinion, and experience to develop robust changes to meet future needs.



Our strategic aim  
**Championing  
our membership**



It's not just about listening: it is about involving our Members, embracing their views and needs, and driving change that truly represents what is important to them and patients.

**Through our ambition to achieve continuous improvement in our service to Fellows and Members, we will:**

- ✓ enhance systems, processes and interactions with members so that their experience of the College is always timely, friendly, helpful and supportive
- ✓ ensure the College remains supportive of and relevant to our membership by strengthening effective communication across all communities, regions and nations
- ✓ seek new ways of demonstrating and delivering value for money for our Fellows and Members, alongside a renewed focus on engagement.

**Through our partnership approach to Fellows and Members, we will:**

- ✓ work inclusively with our membership, regularly seeking their views, and acting on issues that are important to them.
- ✓ promote, support and develop all members of our specialties to deliver excellent care and enjoy rewarding careers.

**Through our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, we will:**

- ✓ ensure that College activities are reflective of the diverse voices of our membership
- ✓ actively encourage our Fellows and Members to contribute to the work of the College and to shape its future
- ✓ ensure our values are embedded throughout the life of the College.


**Through our focus on high standards of leadership, management and development, we will:**

- ✓ actively engage and involve our staff in the process of seeking solutions for Fellows and Members, championing innovation and delivering improvements to the College
- ✓ ensure that our actions will always be consistent with our governance and best practice for our organisation.





Our strategic aim  
**Shaping the future  
of our specialties**

A photograph of two healthcare professionals in a clinical setting. The woman in the foreground is wearing a white surgical mask, glasses, and blue gloves, and is using a pink stethoscope. The woman in the background is also wearing a white surgical mask and blue scrubs. The image is partially overlaid by a large blue graphic on the left side, which consists of several curved, parallel lines. A dark purple text box is positioned at the bottom center of the image.

It's all about people – the specialists who provide the care, the personal experiences and expertise that should drive system-wide improvement – and the patients whom we ultimately serve.

**Through our commitment to ensuring the future of the workforce, we will:**

- ✓ advocate for growth and retention of a high-quality, flexible workforce to meet the needs of the healthcare system, now and in the future
- ✓ ensure our Fellows and Members are well trained, supported and represented by the College
- ✓ demonstrate high ethical standards, compassion and professional behaviour.

**Through our involvement in evidence-based policy and advocacy, we will:**

- ✓ be a leading voice for our specialties among policymakers and the public, providing clear evidence, guidance and direction
- ✓ conduct and facilitate research to inform improvements in the care of patients
- ✓ champion innovation and harness advances in medicine, science, education and technology to drive improvements across our specialties.

**Through our commitment to improving care across the patient pathway, we will:**

- ✓ continue to embed perioperative care across the healthcare system, as a means of improving the effective provision of care, addressing public health challenges and delivering better patient outcomes.

- ✓ improve outcomes for patients by supporting the delivery of collaborative cross-disciplinary working.

**Through our commitment to managing resources with care, we will:**

- ✓ commit to promote environmental sustainability for the specialty
- ✓ commit to deliver environmental sustainability at the College, and work towards carbon neutrality
- ✓ ensure the College is resourced and equipped to carry out its strategy: now and in the future
- ✓ deliver an integrated People Plan that will help us recruit, train and develop our staff team to deliver for our members: now and in the future
- ✓ foster the health and wellbeing of the workforce and College staff
- ✓ celebrate diversity in our staff team and ensure we provide a fair and inclusive working culture.





Our strategic aim

**Pursuing excellence  
in everything we do**



Our standards are necessarily high – people's lives depend on it.

**Through our focus on education, training and examinations, we will:**

- ✓ continuously improve the calibre of our examinations, ensuring that they are delivered in line with best practice
- ✓ support professional growth and excellence through developments in training assessment and lifelong learning
- ✓ develop and maintain curricula and professional standards for training that will provide the workforce with the skills, capabilities and behaviours to meet the needs of the healthcare system.
- ✓ become a world leader in the provision of educational resources equipping our membership and the wider workforce with the skills, tools, resources and guidance they need to develop and deliver the highest quality healthcare
- ✓ provide a comprehensive and fact-based education to those who deliver anaesthetic care, focussing on modern and effective treatments while setting changes in practice into context with an understanding of the heritage of our specialties.

**Through our focus on clinical quality and research, we will:**

- ✓ ensure high quality, evidence-based, safety and care standards for our specialties to secure the best outcomes for patients

- ✓ develop and deliver accreditation and peer review schemes across the NHS and the independent sector
- ✓ deliver sustainable change and reduce variability in services through our quality improvement programme.

**Through our leadership of perioperative care, we will:**

- ✓ promote, implement and share our world class research into anaesthetic and perioperative practice
- ✓ advocate to improve education and communication around the whole patient pathway.

**Through our commitment to team development, we will:**

- ✓ build the capability of our teams and networks to work collaboratively and effectively with each other, and to share good practice, in order to promote continuous improvement in standards and performance.





Our strategic aim

## Promoting healthier outcomes for all



To achieve better outcomes for patients, we need to focus on broader health goals: health equalities, public health and healthy lifestyles.



**Through a partnership approach to delivering good outcomes for patients, we will:**

- ✓ educate and empower patients in their healthcare choices
- ✓ co-produce and signpost information and resources that will equip patients to make decisions about their care
- ✓ ensure that the patient voice is heard and integrated with the work of the College to improve the experience of anaesthesia and perioperative care for patients and the public
- ✓ work collaboratively with other healthcare organisations and specialties to improve the health of patients, promote equity of access and reduce health inequalities
- ✓ engage with global partners to promote safer anaesthetic practice and educational standards
- ✓ ensure that College activities are reflective of the diverse voices of patients and the public.

**Through our commitment to evidence-based improvements in healthcare, we will:**

- ✓ promote best practice where it is shown to improve patient outcomes and/or cost effectiveness across healthcare
- ✓ lead, deliver and facilitate high quality evaluation and improvement to reduce variability in healthcare services and improve outcomes.

**Through our focus on improving the working lives of our members and staff, we will:**

- ✓ champion safe and supportive working environments that promote healthy work-life balance, enable teams to do their best work and to be proud of the care they deliver
- ✓ seek and promote innovative and sustainable solutions that support fulfilling working lives
- ✓ promote compassionate leadership and kindness in the workplace.



## Our values guide how we act as a College in everything that we do

Kindness and compassion are important to us – kindness for others and kindness for the world in which we live. We are both open to constructive challenge and seek and include the views of our diverse members and communities.





## Caring and Supportive

We will support our members and staff according to their needs, at all stages of their careers, and equip them to meet the high standards needed to ensure the best possible care for patients.

We care for the environment and will act on our responsibilities to improve it.

### We are:

- thoughtful, respectful and responsive to the needs of our people and of our responsibilities to the environment.

### We believe that:

- people are our greatest asset
- kindness and compassion are signs of strength
- environmental stewardship and healthcare are inextricably linked, so greater care for one will have a positive impact on the other.

### We will:

- protect and support patients by enabling safe, high-quality care
- help our members, fellows and staff to achieve their full potential

- do all we can to improve the wellbeing of our members, volunteers and staff
- provide our staff and volunteers with healthy working environments
- be mindful of our environmental responsibilities and commit to setting and achieving sustainability goals
- take care to set reasonable expectations of ourselves and each other.

### We will not:

- tolerate bullying or intimidation, or be rude or dismissive in our dealings with others.
- ignore poor behaviour.



# Just and Fair

We will act in an open and honest way in everything we do, championing health equality and building trust through integrity.

## We are:

- opposed to racism and discrimination of any kind
- honest, trustworthy, transparent and fair in the way we conduct ourselves and in the way we work.

## We believe in:

- inclusivity and respect for all
- equity of access to healthcare
- the value of transparency and openness, which drive better, fairer outcomes.

## We will:

- embrace an inclusive and representative culture that supports and celebrates our differences
- listen to diverse voices among patients, the public and our workforce
- maintain fair and consistent standards in everything that we do
- act honourably towards each other and towards our stakeholders
- reflect on and learn from our own and others' experiences.

## We will not:

- tolerate discrimination
- act dishonestly.





# Innovative and Progressive

We are ambitious for our College and our specialties, and will excel through expertise and innovation

## We are:

- committed to innovation and development to drive continuous quality improvement.

## We believe in:

- being a learning organisation that strives for excellence
- delivering our core responsibilities well.

## We will:

- set the highest standards for clinical and professional practice
- learn from our own and others' experience
- embrace innovation and opportunity
- seek out excellence and disseminate learning
- use our expertise to influence healthcare policy.

## We will not:

- be resistant to change
- be deterred in the pursuit of better patient care
- dismiss new ideas without due consideration.



# Open and Responsive

We seek opinions, listen with purpose to our stakeholders, evaluate evidence with care and act in collaboration with our membership, patients and the public.

## We are:

- an agile organisation that is open to new ideas.

## We believe that:

- collaborative, informed, multidisciplinary working is essential for the best outcomes
- listening to our membership and staff, evaluating their input and acting in their interests will improve their experience and add value to the work we do.

## We will:

- work to understand the changing landscape of healthcare and act to promote the best outcomes for members, staff and the public
- welcome input from a wide range of stakeholders

- seek out evidence to support our actions where possible and act at pace based on expert opinion when needed
- ensure that our work is informed and influenced by our members, patients and the public.

## We will not:

- make assumptions about the needs of those with or for whom we work without seeking their views
- be defensive about feedback, but will use it constructively.



## About the Royal College of Anaesthetists

The Royal College of Anaesthetists is the professional body responsible for the specialty throughout the UK.

We are the third largest medical royal college in the UK by membership. With a combined membership of more than 24,000 Fellows and Members we along with the Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine and the Faculty of Pain Medicine – ensure the quality of patient care by safeguarding standards in the three specialties of anaesthesia, intensive care and pain medicine.

### Royal College of Anaesthetists

Churchill House, 35 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4SG

020 7092 1500 | [info@rcoa.ac.uk](mailto:info@rcoa.ac.uk) | [rcoa.ac.uk](http://rcoa.ac.uk)

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