

Appointment to the Lay Committee Information Pack

September 2021



We are volunteers who support, advise and influence the RCoA to continually improve patients' experience of anaesthesia and perioperative care

Message from the President

With two-thirds of hospital in-patients interacting with an anaesthetist, anaesthesia remains the UK's largest single secondary care specialty. The scope of practice of the modern anaesthetist often goes way beyond their clinical responsibilities – we are educators, communicators and medical leaders. To put it simply we are the glue which so often holds many areas of healthcare together.

Anaesthetists and intensive care doctors have played a vital role working at the front line of the UK's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a very important time to get involved in the work of the College to ensure that the patient voice is clearly heard as the NHS begins its journey to recovery.

In addition, our [current strategy](#) will be ending in 2021 and you will have the opportunity to help us deliver on the vision and aims we set out for how the patient voice will be represented across the work of the College.

Thank you for your interest in this role. If you would like to contribute to the future of a Royal College, with ambitious aims, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Professor Ravi Mahajan
President



Join the Lay Committee and help us shape patient care

We have several opportunities for people to join our influential Lay Committee, initially for a period of three years with a possibility of a further three years. This is an unpaid, voluntary role although reasonable expenses will be paid. Much of our work is now done remotely, however some travel may be required.

What the role offers

Our Lay Committee of volunteers was established in 1998 to provide a patient and public perspective on the College's activities. The role offers you the opportunity to influence the College's work focusing on improving patients' care and their experience of anaesthesia, intensive care and pain medicine.

You will have the opportunity to work alongside senior doctors, other health care professionals and College staff and contribute your views as a member of the public to discussions and decisions covering a range of issues.

Lay members make sure that patients are at the heart of everything the College does, for example helping develop guidance about care and treatment and contributing to reviews of anaesthetic services throughout the UK.

Most importantly you will ensure the patient and public voice is heard throughout the work of the College.

About you

We welcome people from all backgrounds and areas of the UK.

You do not need any specific qualifications or experience, although it would be useful if you have had experience of surgery and anaesthesia as a carer or as a patient.

The most important requirement is that you want to help make a difference to the healthcare people receive.

You do need to be enthusiastic and willing to discuss healthcare issues from the patient and public perspective. You need to be able to use and have access to email, internet and basic Office programmes, including Teams.

We offer induction, support and mentoring to new members.



About the Royal College of Anaesthetists

Anaesthesia is the largest hospital specialty in the UK. The Royal College of Anaesthetists is the professional organisation responsible for the specialties of anaesthesia, intensive care and pain medicine throughout the UK. The College ensures the quality of patient care through the maintenance of standards and training in these specialties.

How to apply

You cannot join the Lay Committee if you hold an anaesthetic qualification or if you are currently working, practising or managing services (including policy making) in health care. Background checks may be required for some College activities.

Please apply through [our website](#) by **5pm Friday 3 December 2021**. You will need to submit a CV of no more than three pages with the names and contact details of two referees. Make sure you tell us why you would like to join the Lay Committee and what you would bring to the role.

For more information on the Lay Committee please visit the RCoA website [here](#). If you would like to talk to a member of the Lay Committee about this role please contact laycom@rcoa.ac.uk.

Our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Lay Committee supports the [Joint Statement](#) by the College President and Deans of the Faculties of Intensive Care Medicine and Pain Medicine which condemns racism and discrimination in any shape or form. Read the Lay Committee's statement on equality, diversity and inclusion [here](#).



The Lay Committee: the patient's voice at the heart of the College

Pauline Elliott, Chair of the RCoA Lay Committee recounts a chat with her oldest friend, Joe about her new role and whether he'd had his COVID-19 vaccination.

'What does the RCoA actually do?' Joe asked me bemused.

Joe has never had an anaesthetic. In fact, despite being in his 60s, he has never even stepped into a hospital outpatient department as far as I know. That makes him a bit unusual (or maybe just lucky!) but none of us fits a mould, do we?

'Well...' I started slowly, playing for time while I got my head round an explanation. I started by explaining that the College is the professional body responsible for anaesthesia throughout the UK.

'The College focuses on ensuring the quality of patient care by maintaining standards of anaesthesia, critical care and pain medicine.'

'OK, sounds good,' said Joe. 'What's the Lay Committee bit about?'

'The College is committed to putting patients and the public at the centre of all its activities. It can't achieve its objectives without listening to what non-clinical people have to say about what it's doing and what it plans to do,' I explained. 'That's where the Lay Committee comes in.'

'There are 12 of us on the Committee. We're volunteers from all sorts of backgrounds. Some of us have clinical experience but you don't need it to do the role successfully. You just have to be enthusiastic about putting forward the patient perspective. You need an open mind, and you have to be prepared to speak up and challenge areas where you think the patient voice is not being heard. Sometimes you have to be tenacious to get your point across because everyone is focused on getting things done as quickly and efficiently as possible.'

'Got it,' said Joe. 'So what does the Committee actually do?'

'We get involved in different activities with clinical professionals and people from the College,' I explained. 'We're members of teams working on lots of programmes, like devising curricula for anaesthetists in training, setting and arranging exams, and supporting quality initiatives and research. For example, I'm the lay representative on the Board of the Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine. I've been involved in lots of things with them, from helping to judge a junior doctors' essay competition to supporting the development of patient information.'



Pauline Elliott
Chair of the RCoA Lay Committee

'Which reminds me, working on patient information, especially ensuring it talks about what patients want to know and is written in plain language, is a really important part of the role of Lay Committee members. If you have a [look on the College website](#), you'll see the information we've helped produce.'

'And you're the Chair of the Lay Committee. So what do you do?' queried Joe.

'Good question! I lead the Lay Committee and represent them on [College Council](#) which is the governing board for the whole College. I work with senior College staff to decide on future Lay Committee activities.

A couple of months ago we produced a strategic plan setting out our priorities for the year ahead. We want to increase our influence, while improving our communication and ways of working.

Supporting the College's drive to improve [equality, diversity and inclusion](#) is also really important to us. We're very keen to encourage people from all groups and communities to join the Lay Committee. If you know anyone who might be interested just ask them to get in touch at laycom@rcoa.ac.uk. I'm always happy to chat about the role.'

By the way Joe. Have you been to get your second vaccination yet?'

The Lay Committee Interim Strategic Plan

Our purpose and vision

We are volunteers who support, advise and influence the College to continually improve patients' experience of anaesthesia and perioperative care.

Link with the College's Strategic Plan

We represent patients and the public across the College. Strand three of the College's Strategic Plan 2018–2021 refers to our role. This interim strategic plan sets a clear direction for our future work. We will formulate a workplan and track our performance against our aims. We will contribute to the development of the College's new strategic plan (for three to five years from 2022), adjusting and finalising our plan to ensure we remain aligned with the College's vision and aims.

Our values

Expert	We are committed to supporting the College as it strives for excellence and develops expert clinicians.
Positive	We are constructive, collaborative and proactive.
Inclusive	We believe we should use our influence on behalf of all groups in our community. We value diversity and deplore discrimination.
Forward-thinking	We seek out and embrace opportunities to innovate and improve.
Ambitious	We believe the voices of patients and the public should be heard throughout the College.

We share the College values and interpret them in our own context.

The three strands of our strategic plan

1 Developing a stronger, more influential and representative voice

Vision

We are known and respected throughout the College as a team of lay people whose focus is firmly on ensuring the College puts safety and the interests of patients and the public at the centre of all its activities.

Aims

To develop the power of our own voice to ensure we influence every level of the College's work.

To play a significant role in the development of the new College strategy, influencing both direction and approach and advocating a focus on patient involvement.

To improve the breadth and depth of our influence by building a more diverse Lay Committee and championing equality, diversity and inclusion in everything we do and say.

2 Improving our communication and engagement internally and externally

Vision

We communicate effectively within our team and with the wider College as well as reaching out to engage with patients and the public.

Aims

To find and utilise ways of improving communication between ourselves and with people at the College, including Council, members and staff. To explore ways of extending our reach beyond the College so that we can:

- a** be advocates for the College;
- b** promote understanding of the role of anaesthetists in health care; and
- c** improve our own understanding of patients' and the public's views and priorities.

3 Maximising our contribution by developing effective ways of working

Vision

We work in ways that derive the most value from our volunteer resource and ensure we realise our potential to support the College in achieving its strategic objectives.

Aims

To improve the ways we work so that we operate as a supportive, effective and efficient team whose members enjoy and value their role with the College. To develop into an influential team which uses a variety of approaches to ensure the College hears patients' and the public's voices and makes those voices central to all its activities.

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

Working with our members, we ensure the quality of patient care through the maintenance of standards in anaesthesia, critical care and pain medicine.



24,400
fellows and members

The College, with our Faculties, is the third largest Medical Royal College by UK membership



99% of patients would recommend their hospital's anaesthesia service to family and friends



205

College Perioperative Local Leads are

based in hospitals across the UK



As at June 2021

75% of anaesthetic departments in the NHS are signed up to our **Anaesthesia Clinical Services Accreditation (ACSA)** scheme



Since its inception in 2008, the **National Institute of Academic Anaesthesia (NIAA)** has awarded over £11.6m in grant funding



There are **3,200 active users** on our web-based learning resource **e-Learning Anaesthesia** each month

Royal College of Anaesthetists

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Information correct as at September 2021