



# RCPCH Strategy 2024–2027

**RCPCH**  
Royal College of  
Paediatrics and Child Health  
*Leading the way in Children's Health*

# Message from the President

**At the risk of stating the obvious, it is really important that our College needs a strategy which informs its members, staff and partners what our plans are. Where do we want to be in one, three, ten years' time? How are we going to get there? And where don't we want to be?**

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This strategy has an even stronger emphasis on member benefits.”

To many people, a strategy is perceived as a rather dry, abstract process which is not relevant to them. But I hope you find this strategy is a refreshing read which is both aspirational and realistic.

The future is a tricky thing to plan for. However, we know that our charitable aims will be perennial, and include caring, training, educating and advocating. In addition to these core “business as usual” activities, we were mindful when putting the strategy together that there are going to be some unexpected challenges that will draw on College resources. The SARS-Cov-19 pandemic was an extreme but nonetheless

pertinent example of the predictable unpredictability of life. So, this strategy is designed to steer our College in a direction that will allow us to deliver on our core, pre-existing commitments whilst we develop new areas and prepare for the unexpected.

There is always more demand than resource. We can't do everything. The recent member survey has been a keystone for this strategy and compared to previous College strategies, this has an even stronger emphasis on member benefits. We are the College for paediatricians and children, and this strategy develops our role as a leading advocate for children in the UK and overseas,



including providing a voice for children and young people.

Our IT systems are rapidly reaching their “used by” dates and investment is needed to modernise to provide members and staff with an even better experience when interacting with our College. I hope this is one of the first changes you notice.

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to the creation of this strategy, and many thanks to you for reading it. Our strategy is a living document and we will continually review how best to achieve our strategic goals; we are informed by views of

our members so please do let me know your thoughts at [president@rcpch.ac.uk](mailto:president@rcpch.ac.uk).

**Professor Steve Turner,  
President, RCPCH**





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This strategy will provide a roadmap for the College for years to come.”

We know that strategy development is a perilous business. Organisations need well-founded strategies, to set goals and guide their activities, in order to give them the best chance of achieving their purposes. But it is all too easy to construct a wish list of high-flown aspirations, unconnected to the reality of daily life and unconstrained by available resources. Such documents read well but are difficult to implement and impossible to measure.

The trustees are confident that this strategy has avoided those pitfalls. Through a rigorous process, led by staff and officers, informed by members and children and young people,

and supported by experts, this strategy will provide a roadmap for the College for years to come. It offers clear 'guide rails' for the College's activities, and a strengthened framework to help monitor, measure and assess performance over the short, medium and longer terms. I hope that you will also find it a good read, and that it will inspire you to work with us, for the benefit of paediatrics and child health.

**Joanne Shaw,**  
**Chair of trustees, RCPCH**

# Message from the Chair of Trustees

In our College, strategy is owned by the members and executed by officers and staff. The role of the trustee board is to approve the strategy, having regard to our Charitable Objects and long term financial sustainability.



# Message from the Chief Executive Officer

**A compelling sense of where you want to be in the future and how you are going to get there is a must, especially in this day and age.**

As a Royal College, our operating environment politically, economically, socially and technologically is ever-changing; we cover the four nations of the UK, and have international reach with a growing international membership.

In developing this fresh three-year strategy, we thought and reflected deeply on how the world could change over the next 10 years. Of course, it's difficult to exactly predict the future but it's possible to make reasonable judgements based on trends and other insight. Throughout 2023 and 2024, we worked closely with our members and children and young

people to gather views to develop our vision and inform our strategic direction.

But that's not the end of the story. We learned much from our previous strategies such as being ever-mindful to reconcile our strategic ambition with the day-to-day, responding well to any uncertainty and being assured that the strategy remains relevant throughout its duration to those we represent. Strategies should be living and active. Even as we embark on the start of this one, we will continue to assess what is new on the horizon and draw on latest intelligence to reflect on what has been achieved thus far

and consider what can be paused in the context of a new and urgent priority.

My thanks to all involved in working together to bring this strategy to fruition.



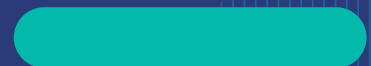
**Rob Okunnu**  
**Chief Executive Officer, RCPCH**



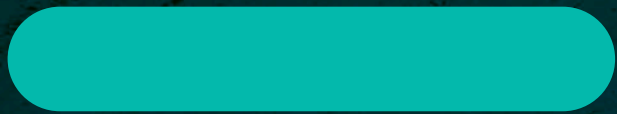
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# Background

**Our College is a registered charity, and our charitable objects are:**

- ✦ To advance the art and science of paediatrics
- ✦ To raise the standard of medical care provided to children
- ✦ To educate and examine those concerned with the health of children
- ✦ To advance the education of the public (and in particular medical practitioners) in child health, the prevention of illness and disease in children and safeguarding their optimal development





**We have focused on how our members' needs and priorities tie into the College's role as a strong advocate for children and young people.**

This strategy is designed to match our membership offer with our members' stated priorities to support their working lives and be a powerful advocate for a healthier future for children and young people.

Throughout 2023 and 2024, we have worked closely with our membership, College leaders, College committees and children and young people to gather insights to develop our vision and strategic direction. In particular, our 2024 member survey has shaped this strategy. These elements have been the foundation of our strategy, enabling all those who are part of the College to share in delivering impact for our members and staff in our mission to support children and young people.

We have focused on how our members' needs and priorities tie into the College's

role as a strong advocate for children and young people, and anticipated what the world might look like leading up to 2034. From this we have developed four 10-year strategic goals. The first three years, 2024-27, focus on our UK and international membership, the workforce of the UK and embedding more voices of children and young people in our own work and across the sector.

Thinking from our previous strategic period has not been lost. We will continue to expand our work on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and are now working to make this part of our day-to-day activity across the whole College. Our ambition to tackle climate change is now embedded across key teams, including work to further our environmental sustainability as a College and specialty, and an ongoing policy focus on the impact of air quality

on child health. A third example of extending on our previous strategy is our work on health inequalities; this remains a key component in our role supporting the paediatric and wider child health workforce as we work with decision makers to help create the healthiest generation of children ever. Following prioritisation of Progress+ we can focus our attention on expanding online learning which has a benefit both in the UK and across our international reach.

Taking a 10-year approach and considering actions beyond 2027 requires some careful consideration now, but ensures a higher degree of preparedness, resilience and adaptability. Such future planning allows us to be clearer about how we will support members and children and young people in the longer term.

# Our strategic outlook

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Our vision is:

**A world where every child is healthy and well.**

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Our mission is to:

**Advance child health practice, shape policy, set educational standards and empower paediatricians. We are led by insights from our members, children and young people.**

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Our values are:

**I innovate:**

✦ I aim for quality in everything I do, take pride in my work to have the greatest impact on the services provided by the College.

**I influence:**

✦ I act with integrity, being open and honest, checking and challenging my behaviour and practices to improve working practices, and advance the work of the College.

**I include:**

✦ I will treat others fairly and with respect, ensuring that my behaviour is appropriate at all times. I will value individual differences, perspectives and contributions.

**I inspire:**

✦ I will be inspired by and open to possibilities, seeking to first understand the ideas of others. I will have the courage to embrace change and openly share my ideas freely with others to improve the way we work.

**Working together and with members and children and young people, we have developed strategic goals that are practical, progressive, and have distinct outcomes.**

These goals will guide us throughout the 10-year strategic outlook, alongside our values, they will make sure we always remain true to our vision. These are supported by our enablers and they set, guide and monitor specific outcomes, activities and objectives:



**GOAL 1**

The size, skill and welfare of the UK child health workforce are prioritised by senior NHS decision makers to meet the needs of children and young people across the four nations.



**GOAL 2**

Child health is at the centre of decision-making across the four nations.



**GOAL 3**

Research, evidence and clinical standards improve safety and child health outcomes.



**GOAL 4**

RCPCH has an international impact in paediatrics and child health.

**OUR ENABLERS:**

- 1. Improving our membership experience.**
- 2. Improving the offer for members with College roles and staff.**
- 3. Enabling efficiencies and diversifying our income.**



# Goal 1

Our members made it clear in the 2024 member survey that they are determined to deliver the best possible care for children and young people. However, the NHS continues to be stretched as never before and members across all career stages are facing high levels of stress leading to burnout for many. We will play our role in advocating a realistic work life balance and also retention of paediatricians in the workforce.

We want to improve the experience of being a College member, responding to different needs throughout the career journey. We will provide effective training, development and technology, designed around our members to support day-to-day work, career progression and impact in clinical practice.



## We will use our role to:

- ✦ Reduce stress and help our members thrive by increasing flexibility in our training
- ✦ Support more members to use new digital resources, mapping out the skills required to do this and supporting through CPD planning and management
- ✦ Empower members to more effectively support each other and their wellbeing
- ✦ Influence at the top, using our unique access to powerful, frontline evidence
- ✦ Lead world class and forward thinking assessments



**We will play our role in advocating a realistic work life balance.** ”



## The size, skill and welfare of the child health workforce are prioritised by senior decision makers to meet the needs of children and young people across the four nations.



### We will complete the following actions to reach our goal:

- ✦ Develop the tools members need to support paediatric services and workforces, including case studies, exemplars and business cases for workforce change and innovation. We will do this alongside reviewing and refining our eLearning education portfolio, identifying where we can use bitesize learning to increase flexibility
- ✦ Expand and enhance Thrive networks, creating a welcoming and innovative space for members to support each other
- ✦ Review and improve the College exams and continuing professional development process for members, creating industry-leading platforms that focus on user-experience, a new theory exam delivery system and centre provider, and more sustainable and progressive College examinations that harness the best in digital and education
- ✦ Define a case for change based on the most up-to-date data and evidence, gathered from key workforce data, Facing the Future Standards and State of Child Health report



### By the end of 2027 we will know we are successful when:

- ✦ Members can access our expanded eLearning capabilities that include new formats and subjects, including clinical subjects and also training in research, leadership and management
- ✦ An increased proportion of our members are actively accessing our training resources (including signposting), skills roadmaps, and CPD planning and management
- ✦ Due in part to our support of members and influence on their behalf, there is a reversal in current data trends in General Medical Council workforce modelling and membership surveys that show increasing mental health concerns and burnout in paediatrics
- ✦ Progress+ allows more training journeys for paediatric doctors to be designed flexibly to their needs and is underpinned by a refreshed and progressive assessment strategy
- ✦ College examinations are redeveloped using the best in digital and educational structures and access to flexible and digital education and resources are maintained to at least the same level as pre-pandemic



# Goal 2

We are already a powerful voice for children and young people at the highest levels of decision-making, like advocating for policies which prevent harm, such as vaping legislation and banning of cigarettes for young people, to policy solutions for child health services and child protection and safeguarding. Our College and our members will use this strong voice to make a positive difference to child health outcomes.

Our work is strengthened through a child-rights based approach, bringing the theory from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into reality through our policy, advocacy and workforce development in paediatrics and child health. RCPCH &Us volunteers have asked the College and those we work with to be active in how children and young people's views and wishes are asked for, listened to and acted on (Article 12) and to do all we can through advocacy, legislation and asking the Government to implement these rights, protecting children and young people from the harm of being overlooked and forgotten in health planning (Article 4, Article 24).

We want to put child health at the centre of decision-making in all four nations in the UK so that appropriate resources are allocated to improving children's health and wellbeing.



## **We will provide clear direction and leadership for child health at the highest level:**

- ✦ Through our advocacy and influencing of Governments and the NHS, all four nations' Governments will have a cabinet-level Minister for Children (or equivalent within each devolved structure)
- ✦ Policy and advocacy campaigns reflect the insight from our members and children and young people and child health impact assessments are utilised on relevant government policies
- ✦ In all UK nations, governments are more clearly held to account for progress, using indicators of child health



## Child health is at the centre of decision-making across the four nations.



### We will complete the following actions to reach our goal:

- ✦ Make sure every change we advocate for is based on robust evidence where available
- ✦ Build on our existing platform for advocacy, supporting the influencing work of our members, children and young people with local hospitals, care settings and Health Commissioners across the four nations as they advocate for better health outcomes
- ✦ Produce a powerful case for change, based on a robust evidence base that brings together key workforce data, our Blueprint for Child Health Services, Facing the Future Standards and a State of the Child Health Workforce Report



### By the end of 2027 we will know we are successful when:

- ✦ Cabinet-level Ministers for Children (or equivalent within each devolved structure) are in every UK nation
- ✦ Child health impact assessments are used in the development of relevant government policies
- ✦ Governments across the four nations use indicators of child health to track progress
- ✦ Our well-recognised RCPCH brand continues to be trusted and respected among members and policymakers
- ✦ The NHS in every UK nation has clear child health considerations in their workforce plans



**We want to put child health at the centre of decision-making in all four nations in the UK.**



# Goal 3

We are the organisation that speaks for both paediatrics and children in the UK. We are in a unique position to ensure developments in child health are based on the best data, knowledge, evidence and insight.

We will keep on advocating for and supporting evidence-based clinical practice that moves paediatrics forward, and to build on our strong foundations to support more of our members to work in other research and quality improvement organisations and settings.



## **We will continue to expand evidence-based guidance to improve care for children and young people:**

- ✦ We are recognised as a source of authoritative, robust and accurate data that supports research and advocacy in child health
- ✦ Develop RCPCH clinical audit and be ready to launch a quality improvement service that supports child health service delivery
- ✦ Have a continually expanding portfolio of evidence-based guidance for members in priority areas, incorporating new illnesses that impact children and young people
- ✦ Working with members to create training on how to develop and use digital technologies



## Research, evidence and clinical standards improve safety and child health outcomes.



**We will keep on advocating for and supporting evidence-based clinical practice that moves paediatrics forward.** ”



### **We will complete the following actions to reach our goal:**

- ✦ Develop a Quality Improvement Service where members can learn and support each other to improve safety and QI
- ✦ Embed our Child Rights Impact assessments, grow our children and young people's engagement standards and develop our Voice Bank — an online library of ideas, concerns and expectations expressed by children and young people
- ✦ Create centralised signposting for members about the efficacy of new technologies and map the knowledge and capability of paediatricians regarding digital technology
- ✦ Continue to develop our resources and networks to support members becoming actively involved in research



### **By the end of 2027 we will know we are successful when:**

- ✦ Members can identify the most relevant technology in their setting to help make the largest improvements to real world child healthcare
- ✦ Our Children and Young People Engagement standards are recognised across the sector
- ✦ Members are learning and supporting each other to improve safety and quality improvement
- ✦ Members can access a library of up-to-date resources, information and resources to enable participation in research throughout their career



# Goal 4



We have two distinct areas of international work: First, global humanitarian programmes with governmental and non-governmental local partners in low- and middle-income settings including Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Myanmar, Nepal and Lebanon. Second, our examinations and training work that are available globally through test centres.



## **We will strengthen our international work and reputation to:**

- ✦ Contribute to reducing rates of maternal, newborn and child mortality and morbidity in selected strategic countries
- ✦ Increase the number of clinical examinations available to members around the world and support the global examination network in assessment changes
- ✦ Provide more eLearning opportunities for members globally

## RCPCH has an international impact in paediatrics and child health.



### We will complete the following actions to reach our goal:

- ✦ Continue with high-quality programme delivery in global settings and increase awareness of our high-impact humanitarian activities
- ✦ Provide international members with targeted digital services, resources and eLearning content, relevant to their geographic and cultural settings



### By the end of 2027 we will know we are successful when:

- ✦ Reduced rates of maternal, newborn and child mortality within the global settings where we are working
- ✦ Increased access to clinical examinations and learning opportunities for international members, increasing knowledge and child health expertise
- ✦ Members have recognised nomenclature that is synonymous with successful completion of the three College Theory Exams



# How we will support the delivery of our strategy

The first phase of our 10-year strategy will be supported by three enablers. To fully realise this longer term impact, we need to be confident that we are one strong organisation, aligned towards our vision.

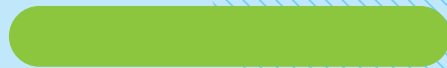
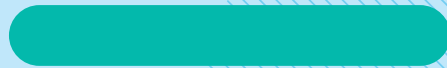
**Over this three-year strategy we will work to shore up our foundations. We will improve upon three “enablers” to provide more efficient and joined-up working, a better membership experience and develop a wider range of income sources. These enablers will run through the four goals and free up time and resource which can in turn be used to create greater impact for our members and for child health.**

To support the strategy we will need to:

- 1. Improve the membership experience**  
Based on our latest member insight, and by continuing to collaborate with our members, we will put a plan in place to respond to pressing membership issues by targeting urgent improvements to the financial and experiential value of College membership, as well as implement longer term systematic changes to make membership of RCPCH the best it can be.
- 2. Improve the offer for members with College roles and staff.** We will review and map out changes that are needed to improve how we recognise and support clinicians with roles in the College, and use our People and Culture Plan to support the development of talent within our staff team.



**3. Enable efficiencies and diversify our income.** We will ensure governance structures and relationships between committees and Boards are optimised to improve agility, collaboration and to enable efficient and effective digital ways of working. We will seek to increase core income through diversified income streams that give us a stronger and more stable financial base, allowing us to increase impact through continual insight, innovation and developments in our offer.



# What this means for our members with College roles and staff

**Working with our leadership team, we have already begun serious investment in order to upgrade areas of our infrastructure to enable more efficient operations.**

We are keeping a close eye on value for money with accountability at the highest internal level. We are reshaping our financial forecasting and budgeting to provide a better understanding of longer-term costs (moving from one to three-year budgets), as well as the chance to review and course-correct more quickly if needed.



## Enabler 1: Improving the membership experience

We know our members' careers have an element of uncertainty navigating the ever-changing environment of the NHS and the wider healthcare and social care sectors.

We are determined to make it as easy as possible for members to interact with our College and provide a valuable and effective membership offer. The benefits of College membership and the experience members have with us need to be of the highest quality, delivered through a stable, reliable and welcoming service.

### **We will complete the following actions to reach our goal:**

- ✦ Create a new digital front door, by implementing a new membership database to provide a more accessible, smoother, quicker and easier way for our members to connect, transact and engage with the College. This will speed up response times to our members' enquiries, increase capacity for our members' self-service, provide improved reporting and analysis to better understand members' engagement with the College, and deliver best practice in payment and finance approaches, and day-to-day transactional processes, increasing our overall efficiency and quality of service to members
- ✦ Deliver and implement a new Service Desk as part of our digital front door, improving response times on enquiries and complaints, and enable AI to answer frequently asked questions in a time and place that suits our members

### **By the end of 2027 we will know we are successful when we have:**

- ✦ Clearly articulated the benefits of being an RCPCH member
- ✦ Simplified and sped up interactions by enabling digital access to all our services and resources for all our members

## Enabler 2:

### Improving the offer for our members with College roles and staff

The success of our strategic goals is reliant on offering the best to our members with College roles and to our members of staff. We have made strides forward working for change in our EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) space, and we recognise that EDI is everyone's business. This strategy acknowledges and encompasses the work of every individual in every department, working together to support members and child health.

We will develop, implement and deliver the best possible offer for those members with College roles, and each member of College staff.

#### **We will complete the following actions to reach our goal:**

- ✦ Improve the ways we recruit, plan with, and recognise members with College roles and staff throughout the College, embedding our Values and Behaviours into our recruitment processes
- ✦ Sustain a safe and healthy work environment by embedding principles of equality, diversity and inclusion in every area of our College and increasing core safeguarding knowledge across all members of staff
- ✦ Develop and harness the diversity, size and depth of our talent pool, while improving structures and skills development plans and opportunities
- ✦ Embed and support a culture of learning and professional development that ensures members with a College role and staff understand changes in processes and systems and utilise technological developments

#### **By the end of 2027 we will know we are successful when we have:**

- ✦ Improved experiences, support and guidance for our members with College roles
- ✦ Understood and delivered prioritised activities, as set out in the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) review
- ✦ Created a collaborative culture where staff and our members with College roles recommend RCPCH as a great place to work and/or have a role

## Enabler 3: Enabling efficiencies and diversifying our income

As the only Royal College with members and the community we are serving in its Charter, we have a potentially limitless set of challenges to tackle with limited resources. So, our College must work efficiently and effectively across all its functions and activities whilst creating a sustainable financial base on which to grow.

We need to understand, invest and implement changes that will unleash our full, sustained potential.

**To ensure we improve efficiency, increase income and develop effective ways of working, we will:**

- ✦ Develop and implement robust and resilient digital systems that drive efficiencies throughout the College, while delivering improved service
- ✦ Reform our process ecosystem across the entire College to empower staff and members with College roles to work smarter
- ✦ Transform our long-term financial planning and reporting to drive efficiencies and improve membership service
- ✦ Create more opportunities to diversify income streams that fully support and advance our charitable objects and strategic goals

**By the end of 2027 we will know we are successful when we have:**

- ✦ Removed and re-engineered our most inefficient and complex processes, releasing staff time to further support our members and child health goals
- ✦ A sustainable multi-year financial model that allows strategic investment in our membership and child health driven by higher quality and tailored financial reporting and optimal day-to-day support to staff and external stakeholders
- ✦ Reinvested income from selling additional services into delivering our College goals



## Strategy 2024–27

Royal College of Paediatrics  
and Child Health

The Royal College of Paediatrics and  
Child Health is a registered charity  
in England and Wales (1057744)  
and in Scotland (SCO38299)

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