

Description of role

The Vice President for Policy and Advocacy is a high profile and vital officer role at the College, primarily focused on leading policy and external affairs in line with the College strategy.

The role balances strategic oversight and operational activity internally and externally. The Vice President for Policy and Advocacy supports the work of the College's Policy and Advocacy Executive which covers a range of areas led by College Officers including health improvement, child protection, health services, mental health, and workforce.

The role-holder will lead collaboration and engagement with a range of stakeholders across the UK. They will also work closely with the Devolved Nation officers and team. This includes, but is not limited to, engaging with government departments, NHS organisational leaders and systems, public health bodies, commissioning bodies, sector agencies, specialty groups, voluntary sector groups, and children, young people and families.

The Vice President will represent the RCPCH on external groups responding to child health policy and services matters. They will work with the policy and external affairs functions to co-ordinate RCPCH responses to consultation documents which relate to the provision of health and wellbeing and services for children. The Vice President also works closely with and provides clinical support and guidance to the divisional teams who support the delivery of this portfolio.

The VP has responsibility for overseeing the work of other Officers, including, but not limited to the Devolved Nations Officers, Officer for Health Services, Officer for Child Protection, Officer for Mental Health, and the Officer for Health Improvement in delivery of this portfolio. The VP will also liaise with the College's President, Registrar and Senior Management Team.

This role sits within the Membership, Policy and External Affairs Division, but works across all areas of College activity, including health policy, research and quality improvement, digital, external affairs and communication, and education and training. The Vice President will also have a substantive external stakeholder role.

Role details

- The post-holder is accountable to the President, and is accountable to Council and the Executive Committee for items relating to health policy.
- Term of Office (*normally 3 years with option of reappointment for a further 2 years*)
- This role will take office in March 2027

In accordance with College policy, all candidates should be in Good Standing with the RCPCH.

- The Registrar, the Treasurer and four Vice Presidents support the President of the RCPCH. Together these Senior Officers are responsible for distinct and inter-related areas of RCPCH work and uphold collective responsibility in decision-making.

The respective remits of the individual Vice Presidents are Education & Workforce, Training and Assessment, Policy and Advocacy (this post) and Science & Research. Each Vice President is supported by the director of the relevant division, in the case of the Vice President for Policy and Advocacy will be supported by the Executive Director of Membership, Policy & External Affairs.

- Any Vice President may be asked by the President or CEO to attend external meetings as appropriate and to undertake other duties as necessary to advance the work of the RCPCH.

Eligibility

The post calls for a significant interest, understanding and knowledge of UK health policy, the government agenda and of the quality of care and standards required to provide a safe and sustainable children's health service. Experience of RCPCH activities and committee work would also be advantageous.

Nominees must be Fellows of the RCPCH with a primary mailing address in the UK or Republic of Ireland. (Information available here on how to become a Fellow of the College: <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/membership/fellow>).

Appointment will be by ballot of all Ordinary Members, Fellows, Senior Members, Senior Fellows and Honorary Fellows of the RCPCH eligible to receive voting papers. Candidates must be nominated by at least two Ordinary Members or Fellows.

The RCPCH wants to represent all the communities we serve. The College is particularly keen to receive applications from black, Asian and minority ethnic candidates, who are currently under-represented at this level of the organisation.

Role purpose and responsibility

The Vice President for Policy and Advocacy will drive policy and external affairs priorities outlined in the College's strategy on relevant issues in paediatrics like prevention and health inequalities, health services, workforce, child protection and mental health, as well as four-nation activity.

Day-to-day, the postholder is responsible for overseeing the work of Officers within the Membership, Policy & External Affairs Division who form part of the Policy and Advocacy Executive who have specific responsibilities as well as Nations Officers. Officers and Committee Chairs responsible for these areas report directly to VP.

The responsibilities of the post holder are:

- Attending the College's Council (3 meetings per year) and Executive Committee (10 meetings per year) as a member of each committee.
- Chairing the College's Policy and Advocacy Executive Committee (5 meetings per year)

- Attending the College's Quality Improvement Committee (3 meetings per year) and Invited Reviews Board (3 meetings per year)
- Member of the national System-wide Paediatric Observations Tracking (SPOT) Delivery Board
- Supporting the President in representing the College in meeting with UK Government stakeholders and in the UK Parliament
- Representing the RCPCH at DHSC and NHS England stakeholder meetings
- Representing the RCPCH at Academy of Medical Royal Colleges' level
- Leading the development of the RCPCH's policy and external affairs agenda
- Leading on responding to national consultations
- Leading the development of health policy projects/provision with partners/collaborators
- Identifying opportunities and potential external funding for health policy research
- Overseeing the work of the Officers in the Division, supporting their work, appraising them and be available for consultation

Working relationships

The post holder will work with a number of individuals, including the President, the Registrar, other Officers, the RCPCH Senior Management Team and individual committee members.

Within the College, the Vice President's relationships can include:

- Work with Officers, committee Chairs and the policy team on preparing annual work plans. The post-holder is fully supported by dedicated staff and will lead, advise, guide and support their work to fulfil the College's mission to improve child health
- Work within College structure, principles and values. All officers champion the College's commitments on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Advise Senior Officers, Executive Committee and Council on policy matters
- Liaise, as appropriate, with committees on issues relating to health policy
- Develop or offer opinion and advice on policy, professional practice, education, training and workforce competences and models of care in relation to health policy
- Keep the membership informed via College updates and other channels of communication
- Seek participation and the views of children and young people where appropriate to the development of relevant advice and guidance to improve their healthcare experience

Time commitment

It is estimated that an average of two days per week will be required to carry out the above duties, some of which may be professional leave. Some work can be undertaken out of working hours by email and remote meeting attendance.

Support provided from the College

The first point of contact will be via the Executive Director of Membership, Policy & External Affairs, the Associate Director of Policy and External Affairs, as well as other team managers in the Membership, Policy and External Affairs division. This can include the Head of Policy, Head of Media and Public Affairs, Head of Policy & Public Affairs (Nations).

Officers will be reimbursed for the cost of travelling expenses (in line with the College's expenses policy) and subsistence to attend College meetings. Remote attendance options may also be offered for some meetings. Limited financial support may be available for secretarial work done at the VP's home Trust.

Knowledge, skills and experience required

Essential:

- [Member of the College in Good Standing with RCPCH](#) as a Fellow of the College. Normally resident in the UK or Republic of Ireland
- Has attended [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#) training within the last 3 years.
- Registered for and up to date with CPD
- Active in Clinical Practice, i.e. neither retired nor suspended from practice
- Commitment to the RCPCH and willingness to take an interest in all areas of the organisation
- Experience in the development and delivery of UK child health policy
- Knowledge of standard setting and child health service improvements that result in safe and sustainable integrated services for children and young people
- Knowledge of shaping policy around prevention and health inequalities in childhood
- Excellent communicator and experience of high-level engagement with government ministers and senior people involved in developing child health policy and workforce planning
- Well-organised with the ability to respond to time-critical and sensitive health policy matters.
- Advanced IS literacy
- Experience of leading and managing people

Desirable:

- Working knowledge and understanding of the RCPCH structure and function.

Process

Applications for roles should be submitted electronically at volunteering opportunities no later than the closing date. Your need to include a statement of up to 500 words outlining the relevant experience and reasons for applying to the post.

When undertaking a role at RCPCH all role holders must agree to respect and uphold the charitable objects, vision, and values of the RCPCH and uphold the [code of conduct](#) which embodies of the values that the RCPCH holds the breaking of which could lead to sanction. Core to RCPCH's values is the exemplary behaviour of its members, both as professionals and also as individuals.

Successful candidates will be asked to [register their interests](#). This is to ensure that personal circumstances that might compromise a volunteer's ability to be seen as acting correctly are properly disclosed.

The role holder must be committed to following the College's safer working practices guidelines when working with children, young people and adults at risk. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, with the role holder required to comply with the College's Safeguarding policy. Appointed candidates must also have attended Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training within the last 3 years.

The College may – at its discretion and with the agreement of the candidates – choose to offer this role as a job-share between more than one candidate once the appointment process is complete. Details will be discussed with candidates at the time should this arise.

The RCPCH wants to represent all the communities we serve and are dedicated to creating an inclusive working environment. The College is particularly keen to receive applications from those who belong to an underrepresented group as defined in the equality act 2010, including age, disability, sex, race, religion or belief, gender reassignment, married or in a civil partnership, pregnancy/parental leave, or sexual orientation.

The College is a disability confident leader, please let us know if you require any reasonable adjustments or accommodations as a result of a disability, impairment or health condition.

Members can also receive support to cover the costs of caring responsibilities, where these responsibilities would otherwise prevent them from undertaking voluntary work for the College, as per the [removing barriers](#) fund. Claims must be submitted using the appropriate form and the College should be made aware of these requests at least a month in advance. For further information please contact edi@rcpch.ac.uk.

Personal information about unsuccessful candidates will be held for 6 months after the position has been filled, it will then be securely destroyed. Personal information about successful candidates will be retained on their membership file. The information contained in this will be kept secure and will only be used for purposes directly relevant to that person's responsibilities as a committee member. Please also refer to the [membership privacy notice](#) which explains how we will use the data we collect from you.

Eligibility & Election

Applicants must be Fellows of the College normally resident in the UK. The post is subject to election by ballot of all Ordinary Members, Fellows, Senior Members, Senior Fellows and Honorary Fellows of the College eligible to receive voting papers.

Candidates must be nominated by two Ordinary Members or Fellows whose primary postal address registered with the RCPCH is in the UK.

If more than one eligible application is received, a vote by electronic ballot will be held after the close of the application process. Those eligible to receive voting papers will be Fellows, Senior Fellows, Ordinary Members and Honorary Fellows whose primary postal address registered with the RCPCH is in the UK.

Candidates standing for election will be invited to provide a video statement within guidelines set by the College. Candidates for election will also be asked to adhere to the RCPCH's guidance on canvassing in elections (available on our [website](#)). The election will be administered independently and supervised by the Registrar.

The 500-word written statement provided within your application form will be shared with all registered Fellows, Senior Fellows, Ordinary Members and Honorary Fellows whose primary postal address registered with the RCPCH is in the UK if there is more than one applicant for the position. If a vote has to be taken it will be used to communicate your proposals to the voters. Personal Information provided within your application form will not be shared with any other third parties

Professor Steve Turner
President
2026