

Dean's report for AGM 2025

I am now in my final year as your Dean. My overarching vision has been to make our College's education and training explicitly and directly linked to patient outcomes.

RCPsych Learn

Translating this idea to action, last year we created RCPsych Learn to bring many of the College's learning activities under one roof. Under the expert guidance of Associate Dean for Advanced Learning, Dr Abdul Raouf, we have been working hard behind the scenes to create bespoke learning products that meet the professional development needs of our members and upskill the mental health workforce in areas of clinical need. As the tagline of RCPsych Learn- says – *"Learning in the service of patient care"*.

In 2024, we published 10 new CPD eLearning modules and updated 35, along with the release of 7 new podcasts, and saw 24,308 CPD certificates generated. So far this year we have published a further 4 new resources and updated 14 modules, continuing to release new and up-to-date learning. We have also launched an add-on option for institutional subscriptions to CPD eLearning to personalise their subscription, designing bespoke learning paths or selecting CPD eLearning resources to create a mandatory training package.

We have rebranded and expanded Trainees' Online (TrOn), which saw 6,848 module enrolments last year, to MRCPsych eLearning - RCPsych's online learning resources to support resident doctors preparing for the MRCPsych examinations. In addition to our Paper A resources (formerly TrOn), specifically designed to support revision with module topics drawn from the basic science subject areas of the exam syllabus, we have mapped our CPD eLearning resources relevant to the clinical components of the Paper B syllabus, as well as creating space for other resources not specifically mapped to the syllabus to support resident doctors. We are also currently developing a practice question paper to support Paper A revision.

The final cohort of the NHSE-funded National Autism Training Programme for Psychiatrists (NATPP) completed the course in March 2025, with 1,800 psychiatrists having completed the programme since it launched in November 2021.

In recognition of the impact of accessing all the high-quality training delivered via our eLearning Hub, RCPsych won Bronze at the Association Excellence Awards 2024 for Best Association Partnership or Collaboration for our work with D2L, our Learning Management System (LMS) provider.

Our Congress goes from strength to strength, and we welcomed 2871 attendees to Edinburgh in June 2024. With an expanded Fringe programme, a new SAS Doctors' Lounge and a record number of Poster presentations, it was our most ambitious Congress yet. We received excellent feedback with 54.3% rating their

overall experience as 'Excellent'. To top it off we were a finalist in the prestigious and hotly contested 'Best Event by an in-house PCO' category at the Association of British Professional Conference Organizers' Awards.

In line with our mission to upskill the workforce we ran new events on Lifestyle and Mental Health, Menopause and Mental Health, AI in Psychiatry and ADHD for general adult psychiatrists collaborating with Faculties, SIGs and other groups around the College.

RCPsych Learn has also been developing courses to support candidates taking CASC and in 2024 we opened our CASC Masterclass to candidates who had attempted CASC previously. We hope this is the first of many and have recruited Sherlie Arulanandam as our Curricular and Examinations Course Director who will be leading on this going forward.

In 2024, we opened up the Leadership and Management Fellowship Scheme (LMFS) to SAS doctors for the first time with seven taking part in the 2024-25 cohort. I would like to pay particular tribute to Alex Till who finished his term as LMFS Course Director in May this year and who has been instrumental in leading the transformation and success of the scheme over the past four years. David Bishop has succeeded him as Course Director.

Deepa Krishnan has cemented the success of the Dean's Grand Rounds in her new Grand Rounds Lead role and in 2024 we delivered five grand rounds on a range of topics with colleagues and collaboration from around the world.

Public Mental Health and International Diploma in Old Age Psychiatry

RCPsych Learn launched the first of our certification courses, the Public Mental Health Leadership Certification Course in 2024, and the second year is underway with the first cohort of 2025 set to complete the course in June. A collaboration between eLearning, events, training and workforce, and the NCCMH Public Mental Health Implementation Centre, the course is designed to create local champions of a population-based approach to mental healthcare. 65 learners completed the course in 2024, expressing a 59.9% increase in confidence in being able to apply a public mental health approach to develop a culture change within their local system of health and social care, from an individualised model of clinical psychiatry to a public health-based approach.

The International Diploma in Old Age Psychiatry, the College's first ever knowledge enhancement programme of its kind, has also sold out.

Mindmasters

Mindmasters heats and finals will run for the 4th time this year at Congress in Wales. As usual there will be 9 teams from across the College including a team of Presidential leads Resident Drs and Wales. Questions have been written and now I am looking forward to the actual event at Congress.

Supporting Future Psychiatrists

We have again worked in partnership with The Careers Office to deliver an "Access to Medicine" day for school students from widening participation backgrounds to support them in the early pursuit of their medical careers.

We are thrilled that we have been able to open applications for a second cohort of Aggrey Burke fellows. This two-year fellowship offers a range of benefits to Black Medical Students interested in Psychiatry.

We also received a record 100 applications for the College's Psych Star scheme's 2025-26 cohort. In addition to the College Psych Star places on offer, all thirteen faculties are this year also hosting a Psych Star with an interest in their sub-specialty.

The National Student Foundation Conference is co-hosted with a student Psychiatry Society each year. The Psych Soc is selected following a competitive application process. Kent and Medway Medical School Psych Soc were selected from a very strong pool of applications to host the 2026 conference. The KMMS team will be building on the incredible success of the 2025 conference, held in Leeds.

We continue to engage our active foundation network to share good practice and ensure excellent experiences in Psychiatry foundation training.

Highest Recruitment Ever

Recruitment into Core and Higher Specialty Training in psychiatry continues to improve and we are seeing exceptionally high competition for the highly regarded UK training programmes. We have embedded the Core and Higher Training Posts, and I continue to work with colleagues across the four nations to ensure psychiatry training is robust, available and well supported by experienced supervisors.

There are still challenges across psychiatric education, not least the ongoing need to increase educational and educator capacity in the face of increasing pressure on clinical services. I continue to work to reduce this pressure by advocating for senior psychiatrists who wish to retire and return to educational roles alongside our Specialist and Specialty doctors and consultants through the implementation and monitoring of our guidance on Recognition of Trainers.

I welcomed the decision by the Psychiatric Trainees' Committee to become the Psychiatric Resident Doctors' Committee in late 2024 and this has now become embedded in our bye-laws from 2025. I meet regularly with the Resident Doctors and their excellent Chair, Dr Claire-Marie Hosein, and am pleased we have such a good and professional relationship with our resident doctors when working through the challenges we all face. Throughout 2024, we recommended 385 resident doctors and 14 CESR/Portfolio Pathway applicants to be entered into the GMC's Specialist Register to increase our senior

psychiatric workforce and welcomed over 160 delegates to the annual Resident Doctors' Conference in Birmingham in April 2025.

We continue to work to improve the education and training of resident doctors, specialist and specialty doctors and consultants across all psychiatric specialties to ensure they have the right skills and capabilities to treat patients. The NHSE funded RCPsych credential in eating disorders is an example of this, with 34 psychiatrists completing the first cohort of the year-long, assessed credential and a further 55 psychiatrists completing perinatal masterclasses throughout 2024. Our work to support neurodivergent resident doctors and trainers continues with the development of a [Reasonable Adjustments form](#) for resident doctors and further guidance and an eLearning module coming later this year to support trainers.

MRCPsych exams

I am sure you all agree that our exam is critical in maintaining public and professional confidence in psychiatric training. It is also a significant milestone for many in their psychiatric training journey. I am glad to report that more candidates than ever are taking the MRCPsych exam across the world – in 2024 there were almost 950 first attempts at Paper A. In January this year we examined a record 749 candidates at the CASC whilst also supporting the increasing need for reasonable adjustments for candidates with disabilities.

In the 2023 assessment strategy review I sought improvements to candidate feedback at the CASC. Since September 2024 we have been providing personalised free-text feedback to candidates after the exam to support their future preparation.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all College examiners and panel members, and indeed all educators for the investment you make in the future of our profession. This is much appreciated.

I wish to thank the Chief Examiner, Dr Vivek Agarwal, for leading the MRCPsych exam

Portfolio Route (formerly CESR)

The Portfolio route to specialist registration has been simplified for those with appropriate experience and recruited more evaluators so that we can make decisions on applications quicker. We're also developing further guidance for applicants and trusts. My thanks to all our evaluators – you play a critical role in assuring the integrity and quality of our workforce.

Workforce

Our **Retention Charter**, due to be launched later this year, focuses on key actions that can be taken under the four elements of Developing Leadership, Creating a Culture of Belonging, Supporting Doctors considering leaving the NHS, and Supporting Doctors' Mental Health and Wellbeing. These four elements are

repeatedly cited as challenges and opportunities to improve retention across the NHS and align to our SAS strategy, created by our SAS Committee under the excellent leadership of the Chair, Lily Reid, which highlights the value of Specialist and Specialty psychiatrists within the NHS workforce.

The RCPsych workforce census was sent out to employers within the NHS at the end of March 2025. There is a separate, individual survey being sent out for Private and Independent Psychiatrists developed in collaboration with PIPSIG; it will be sent to all PIPSIG contacts as well as private organisations to ensure it is widely disseminated. In collaboration with the Addictions Faculty, an individual survey has been developed to capture data from psychiatrists who may be working within the third sector. Census surveys will be open until the end of July. A period of consolidation and analysis will then follow with full publication expected early in 2026.

My Amazing Team

In delivering my key objectives, I have been wholeheartedly supported by my Associate Deans - Dr Neeraj Berry (Equivalence), Dr Declan Hyland – Choose Psychiatry (recruitment into psychiatry), Dr Abdul Raoof (Advanced Learning), Dr Indira Vinjamuri (Curriculum and Assessment), Dr Israel Adebekun (Trainee Support), Professor Charlotte Wilson-Jones (Undergraduate Psychiatry) and Professor Rohit Shankar (Academic Psychiatry Training).

Also the Specialist Advisors - Dr Fabida Aria (Medical Training Initiative), Dr Helen Bruce (Credentiailling), Dr Paul Emmerson (Portfolio Online), Dr Suyog Dhakras (Quality Assurance in psychiatric education), Dr Jeremy Mudunkotuwe (Chair of our DMEs' Network) and Professor Nandini Chakraborty (National Lead, Core and Specialty Recruitment).

I would like to thank Dr Isreal Adebekun, Associate Dean for Trainee Support (to be changed to Resident Doctor Support from this AGM) and Dr Charlotte Wilson-Jones, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, who step down from their roles today. They have both been instrumental in improving educational standards over the past five years. Dr Adebekun has led our annual, sell-out International Medical Graduates' Conference and supported IMGs and Resident Doctors throughout psychiatric Training. Dr Wilson-Jones has built a network of psychiatric leads across the UK medical schools, tirelessly highlighting the importance of increasing exposure to high quality psychiatric placements throughout undergraduate education. She led the RCPsych Undergraduate Education Forum through the covid pandemic, during which time the group created shared psychiatry teaching tools and resources for medical students. She has also contributed to the development of [Student Space](#), providing expert information and advice to students. I'm looking forward to working with Dr Ross Runciman and Dr Sherlie Arulanandam who take up these roles respectively today.

I am very grateful to them and to the incredible College staff team who have consistently helped me translate my ideas into action. A big thank you to all of you, nationally and internationally, for delivering and improving clinical and educational outcomes year on year.