


Date	12 June 2026	
Report title	Dean's report to AGM	
Report author:	Professor Subodh Dave, Dean	
Executive summary	An executive summary of work carried out since the last AGM	
Purpose (select one)	For Information	
Recommendation		
Link to College strategy	Addressing the Treatment Gap	
Resource implications	N/A	
Report history	N/A	
Next steps/timeline	N/A	
Appendices	N/A	

Executive Summary

This summary consolidates progress across the Dean's reporting period (July 2025–April 2026) alongside key achievements over the full deanship. It demonstrates sustained delivery against the College's strategic aim of addressing the treatment gap by strengthening the link between psychiatric training, workforce development, and patient care.

Strategic Impact of the Deanship

The period reflects a coherent programme of reform and growth focused on modernising psychiatric education and reinforcing the professional identity of psychiatrists as academic clinicians. Major achievements include the creation of RCPsych Learn, expansion of certification and diploma programmes, and the introduction of high-impact initiatives such as Dean's Grand Rounds, with engagement exceeding 10,000 participants.

The deanship has also delivered structural changes to training and assessment, embedding person-centred care, digital innovation, and expanded curricula into the MRCPsych framework.

Training, Assessment and Examinations

A central theme across the year is rising demand for psychiatric training and assessment:

- CASC examinations reached record application levels, with sustained expansion of UK and international capacity, including a new diet in Doha.
- By early 2026, sittings exceeded previous levels, with further expansion planned increase capacity at UK diets.

Significant improvements in quality and resilience include:

- Implementation of digital marking and expanded clinical stations.
- Rapid response to a major technical incident (Paper B, February 2026), with mitigation measures including resits and candidate compensation.

The Formative Assessment Framework, developed across 2025 and approved in late 2025 and to be rolled out August 2026, represents a major milestone, introducing entrustability measures, expanded assessment tools, and patient/carer feedback into training.

MRCPsych exams

The MRCPsych is a significant milestone for many in their psychiatric training journey. I am again reporting that more candidates than ever are taking the MRCPsych exam across the world – in 2025 there were over 6,000 exam sittings. Keeping up with the growing demand for CASC places has been challenging, but

I am delighted that we had record numbers of candidates achieving their MRCPsych in 2025.

In November 2025, the first sitting of the CASC examination was successfully delivered in the Middle East. This was the culmination of several years of planning and preparation, supported by the dedicated contributions of examiners from across the region and the efforts of the team in Doha.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all our 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.

Workforce, Recruitment and Career Pathways

The College has taken a proactive approach to workforce challenges:

- Establishment of a National Recruitment and Selection Task and Finish Group to review both the selection methodology and also the operational viability of any proposed changes to Core Psychiatry recruitment.
- Continued growth of the Portfolio Pathway, with rising application volumes and strong GMC performance, enabling more flexible routes to specialist registration with the General Medical Council. The College are pleased to confirm that the revisions to the Specialty Specific Guidance for Portfolio Pathway have been accepted and published by the GMC: We have been working towards having these changes confirmed for some time, so we are delighted to have them published.

The revised guidance, which importantly includes removal of Approved Clinician status, replaced with MHA s12 experience can be accessed on the [GMC Website](#).

Other important changes include clarity on roles relating to experience, and refining of supporting guidance.

At present, only the GA SSG is showing these revisions. All specialties will have the revised SSG published shortly.

Specialist registration activity increased significantly, reaching 440 CCT awards in 2025, the highest in over five years.

However, challenges remain, including:

- Persistent capacity pressures in examinations and training pathways

- The closure of the Medical Training Initiative (MTI) for new applicants in 2026 following NHS England funding withdrawal.

To support the development of strategic oversight of workforce need in order to ensure it can meet workforce needs we developed the West Midlands and Trent Workforce Pilot. across the West Midlands and Trent Division and a training event was held in January.

Inclusion, Training Experience and Professional Support

Across the period, there has been a strong focus on improving resident doctor experience and equity:

- Development and publication of a neurodiversity support framework/toolkit for psychiatrists in training and their trainers
- Expansion of reasonable adjustments in examinations and training and initiatives addressing differential attainment
- Strengthening engagement with resident doctors through the Psychiatric Resident Doctors' Committee (PRDC) and communication platforms such as *The Registrar* magazine

These initiatives collectively support a more inclusive and supportive training environment.

Education, Innovation and Professional Development

Educational provision has expanded substantially under RCPsych Learn, led by the expert guidance of Associate Dean for Advanced Learning, Dr Abdul Raof. We are working 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*”:

- eLearning

Our eLearning portfolio continues to expand, led by our Editor for CPD eLearning and MRCPsych eLearning, Dr Howard Ryland. In 2025, we published 6 new CPD eLearning modules and updated 44, along with the release of 11 new podcasts, and saw 26,608 CPD certificates generated.

2025 also saw the launch of CPD eLearning's *Big Questions in Psychiatry* podcast series, exploring the complex and messy questions shaping psychiatry, launching with *Responsibility in psychiatry – exploring blame, compassion and mental*

illness, followed by another podcast questioning *What is reality?*. This series continues to expand.

New categories were launched on CPD eLearning for Physical health and Women's mental health to accommodate the expanding new areas of content. So far in 2026 we have published a further 11 new resources and updated 6 modules, as we continue to release new and up-to-date learning.

MRCPsych eLearning Paper A resources saw 2,371 module certificates generated last year, supporting candidates preparing for the MRCPsych examinations. A 'Paper A: Practice Paper' launched in January 2026, linking to revision resources to further support preparation. It is free to access and contains 100 questions, offering a structured opportunity to test understanding of the syllabus and consolidate key knowledge.

The webinars libraries hosted on the eLearning Hub – a collaboration between eLearning and Events – continue to prove popular. The Congress Webinar Library for 2026 is currently in development, to launch in July.

- ***Blended learning courses***

RCPsych Learn continues to expand its offering of blended learning courses, while also rerunning existing courses, such as Section 12 and Approved Clinician Induction and Refresher courses, our Public Mental Health Leadership (PMHL) Certification course and our International Diploma on Older adults' mental health.

Our first Certification courses on Public Mental Health Leadership launched in 2024 and we continue to run two cohorts a year. Analysis of 2025's cohort 2 for the PMHL course shows an 82% improvement in average confidence between pre- to end-of-course surveys (from 4/10 to 8/10), representing a greater overall increase than that seen in 2025's Cohort 1, which saw an impressive 60% improvement. Attendance and engagement with the PMHL Learning Community online sessions remains high.

The Adult ADHD Foundation Course aims to support psychiatrists to respond to the needs of people with adult ADHD by successfully combining pharmacological and psychosocial interventions. It launched in autumn 2025 with almost 900 attendees. Learners reported a 44% overall increase in confidence across all measured areas, based on pre- and end-of-course survey responses. Feedback was very positive overall, and this popular course will run again in November 2026 with expressions of interest now open, while an Enhanced Adult ADHD Foundation Course is due to be developed from autumn 2026.

Content from the in-person Clinical and Educational Supervisor Training event has been transformed into a hybrid, self-directed learning course, comprising a set of 7 eLearning modules and an accompanying online session with Q&A. The

first cohort is due to attend their webinar in July, while a 'Register your interest' page is also open with future booking dates set to be in place shortly.

A Dementia International Certificate course is currently in development. This course transforms the dementia-related content from the International Diploma into a self-directed hybrid course focused on dementia. It will consist of several eLearning modules covering early- and late-stage dementia, plus an interactive webinar with an expert faculty. The audience for this course will be doctors outside the UK, to support ongoing training in this sub-specialty in countries where psychiatric training is focused on working age adults. This includes psychiatrists, other doctors with significant experience of working in the field of mental health (e.g. family practitioners), and clinicians working in the UK but trained externally. We hope to run two cohorts of the course in 2026.

The Enhanced National Autism Training Programme for psychiatrists is set to relaunch in September 2026, following the College's successful bid to deliver the next cohort for NHS England. The course will comprise of eLearning, live events and be supported with discussion forums to create a Community of Practice, as well as a mentoring scheme.

Over the past year, the International Diploma in Older Adults' Mental Health has continued to grow in both impact and global reach, reinforcing its role as a flagship international education offering. The first cohort successfully completed the programme in 2025. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with participants describing the diploma as "*intellectually stimulating and professionally transformative*" and highlighting meaningful improvements in their confidence, knowledge, and clinical practice, alongside a stronger commitment to advocacy for older adults' mental health.

The second cohort, comprising 15 learners from across all international divisions, is progressing well and now approaching completion.

Looking ahead, recruitment for the third cohort demonstrates strong and growing global demand. Applications have been received from a diverse range of countries, including the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Libya, Canada, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Trinidad and Tobago, India, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Turkey, and Bermuda. This breadth of interest reflects the programme's continued international relevance and appeal across a wide range of healthcare contexts.

Whilst 2026 marks the final cohort of the successful Eating Disorder Credential, we look forward to launching three new credential pilots in Addictions, Neurodevelopmental and Military.

Policy, Clinical Roles and Multidisciplinary Practice

Key developments in professional roles and governance include:

- Establishment and progression of the Multi-Professional Approved/Responsible Clinician (**MPAC**) Task and Finish Group, to undertake a review and to create guidance on how Multidisciplinary teams, which involve MPACs can work best in the delivery of good quality safe mental healthcare to patients.
- Publication of [updated guidance for Physician Assistants](#), ensuring appropriate supervision and safe integration into psychiatric services

These initiatives reflect ongoing efforts to adapt workforce models while safeguarding standards.

Outreach, Recruitment and Future Pipeline

The College has strengthened the future workforce pipeline through:

- Expansion of #ChoosePsychiatry initiatives, including Psych Stars, Aggrey Burke Fellowship and the new Foundation Doctor Congress Bursary.
- Delivery of national conferences and undergraduate engagement activities
- Development of an updated undergraduate curriculum and education strategy

These efforts aim to improve recruitment, diversity, and early engagement with psychiatry as a career.

Academic Leadership and Strategy

Progress has been made in promoting psychiatrists as academic clinicians through development of an Academic Strategy, increased visibility of academic career pathways, and engagement initiatives such as blogs and research surveys.

Mindmasters

June 2026 saw the 5th Deans Mindmasters quiz at congress. Nine teams from across the College participated, including teams from the Transcultural SIG and Higher Residents Team for the first time. RCPsych in Northern Ireland took the winning title for the third time.

Conclusion

Across the full reporting period and broader deanship, the College has delivered transformational progress in training, assessment, workforce development, and educational innovation.

Key strengths include:

- Expansion and modernisation of training and assessment systems
- Strong growth in educational provision and learner engagement
- Clear commitment to inclusion, workforce flexibility, and quality improvement

At the same time, external pressures, particularly workforce supply, funding constraints, and increasing demand, will require continued strategic focus.

Overall, the work delivered places the College in a strong position to continue advancing its core mission to develop a skilled, adaptable psychiatric workforce capable of meeting patient needs and reducing the treatment gap.