

# **RCPsych** **in Scotland**

## **Our strategy** **2025-28**

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# RCPsych in Scotland Strategy 2025-28



## Vision

To champion psychiatry in Scotland by supporting our members, advocating for those with mental illness, and influencing policy to ensure equitable, evidence-based mental health care across the nation.



## RCPsych Mission

The College works to secure the best outcomes for people with mental illness, intellectual disabilities and developmental disorders by promoting excellent mental health services, supporting the prevention of mental illness, training outstanding psychiatrists, promoting quality and research, setting standards and being the voice of psychiatry.



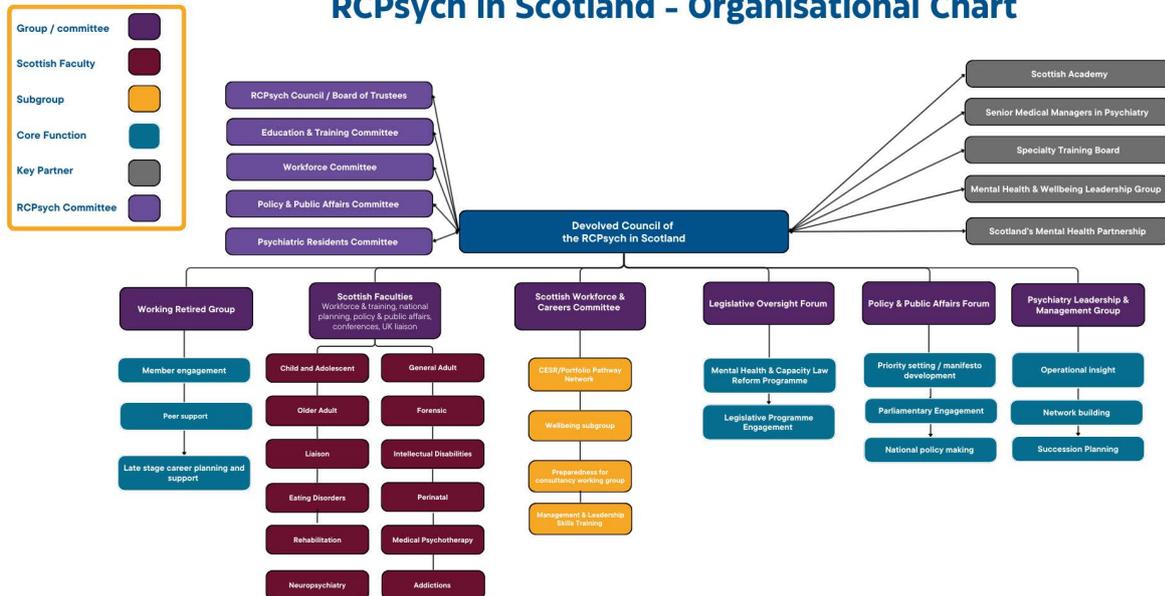
## Who we are

As the professional medical body for psychiatry in Scotland, we set standards and promote excellence in psychiatry and mental healthcare. We lead, represent and support psychiatrists nationally to government and other agencies, aiming to improve the outcomes of people with mental illness, and the mental health of individuals, their families, and communities.

We are a Devolved Nation and Council of the Royal College of Psychiatrists. We have over 1,500 Members, Fellows, Affiliates and Pre-Membership Trainees in Scotland.

# How we work

## RCPsych in Scotland - Organisational Chart



## Foreword from the Chair:

Chair of RCPsych in Scotland  
**Dr Jane Morris**

I am proud to Chair the College in Scotland, working alongside a powerhouse staff team and admirable colleagues. This strategy sets out how we will use that strength to make a difference. Our College operates within many systems, so our plan must reflect responsibilities across all these spheres. At its heart, this strategy is about advocacy and impact: for Scotland within the UK and internationally, for psychiatry to the Scottish public and other medical specialties, and — most importantly — for the wellbeing of our patients and our profession in dialogue with the Scottish Government.

We want this strategy to turn pride into progress. We already see signs of confidence: tartan at the Awards, Gaelic on our webpages, and many of our up and coming psychiatrists making their mark beyond Scotland. Yet awareness of Scotland's distinct mental health landscape remains limited — even here at home. Our autonomous NHS, distinct mental health law, and cultural differences shape psychiatry in ways that must be understood and respected. This strategy aims to make those realities visible and influential.

It is built on the richness of member input — from Forums and Drop-ins to Council workshops and conferences. That diversity of views strengthens our voice on a broad range of subjects, from ongoing legislative and workforce reform through to the ongoing debate on assisted dying. Increasingly, we are trusted to advocate not only for patients but for the wellbeing of our members. Unions fight for pay and conditions; defence bodies fight legal battles. But only a College can use influence — not adversarial action — to uphold respect and human concern for our profession.

Over my career, psychiatry has moved from apologetic to assertive, proud of its holistic bio-psycho-social model. This strategy calls for even greater assertiveness and energy — to retain the wisdom of experienced colleagues and the idealism of residents and SAS doctors. If we succeed, we will help our members flourish and deliver excellent mental health services for the future. That will be the true legacy of this strategy.

## Dr Jane Morris

Chair of RCPsych in Scotland

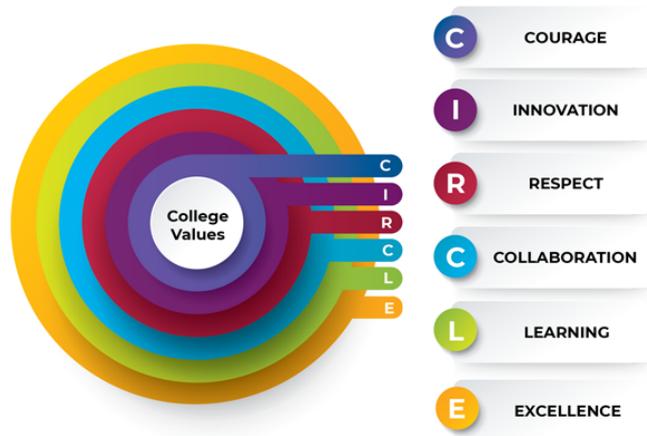


# RCPsych strategic priorities

- Addressing the treatment gap
- Nurturing and supporting psychiatrists
- Fairness for all
- Promoting research in mental health
- Advancing international psychiatry and wider mental health services
- Ensure excellent member experience and engagement.

As a Devolved Council within the College, RCPsych in Scotland shares and supports the College's strategic priorities. This strategy focuses our efforts and resources on delivering these priorities in ways that reflect the unique needs, context, and contributions of Scottish psychiatry and its members. It offers a clear roadmap for how we'll make meaningful progress for Scotland, within a four-nation College.

# RCPsych values



# Strategic priority 1: Workforce

## Aim:

**Stabilise and grow the psychiatric workforce in Scotland by supporting sustainability, wellbeing, and career development across all grades.**

## Background:

Supporting the Scottish psychiatric workforce has long been a cornerstone of RCPsych in Scotland's strategic focus. In recent years, this commitment has led to the publication of the *State of the Nation: Scottish Psychiatric Workforce Report*, alongside in-depth explorations into key workforce issues — including the experiences of Scottish Resident Doctors, members' readiness for Consultant roles, the rise in locum psychiatry, and the wellbeing of our members.

Our advocacy has contributed to tangible progress: increased training numbers, the directive to abolish 9:1 job plans, and the release of the first-ever *Scottish Government Psychiatry Recruitment and Retention Report and Recommendations*.

In this new Term of Office, we intend to build on this work by delivering the following priorities:

## Key Actions:

- Support transitions from core to higher training and into consultancy roles.
- Re-establish and enhance the Scottish Leadership and Management Skills Programme.
- Promote and strengthen take-up of the Portfolio Pathway and support for applicants.

- Develop FinishWell guidance to support members in late-stage career planning.
- Develop and promote a clear College position on the value of generalist psychiatry.
- Work with the Scottish Government and employers to make substantive roles attractive again and end the over-reliance on locum doctors, whilst ensuring that those appointed hold titles based on their level of qualification.

## Measurables:

### **Annual Scottish Membership Survey**

Gather direct member feedback on the impact of workforce initiatives, including support for career transitions, leadership development, and recruitment reforms.

### **Workforce Data Monitoring and Reporting**

Track and publish changes in workforce composition, including uptake of substantive roles, Portfolio Pathway applications, and late-career planning engagement.

### **Collaboration with the Scottish Government Psychiatry Workforce Implementation Group**

Jointly monitor progress against agreed recruitment and retention recommendations, with a focus on reducing locum reliance and promoting appropriately titled roles.



## Strategic priority 2: Policy and public affairs

### Aim:

Utilise strategic relationships and evidence to ensure that the priorities of our members are reflected at the highest level of decision-making in Scotland - both in the run-up to the 2026 Scottish Parliament election and throughout the next parliamentary term.

### Background:

Policy and public affairs work is central to achieving systemic change in mental health care. With the 2026 Scottish Parliament election approaching, we have a critical opportunity to influence party manifestos, shape the legislative programme, and secure commitments that reflect the priorities of our members and the needs of their patients. Our approach will combine evidence-based advocacy, strategic engagement, and collaboration with key stakeholders across government, health, and the third sector.

### Key Actions:

#### Pre-election:

- Position mental health - and neurodevelopmental conditions (NDCs) - as a key electoral issue.
- Strategically utilise existing relationships with policymakers to embed the five pillars of our manifesto into party manifestos.
- Mobilise support from third-sector partners to amplify calls for a needs-based, stepped-care, whole-society approach to NDCs.

### **Post-election:**

- Establish and strengthen relationships with newly elected MSPs, Cabinet members, and civil servants to embed our priorities in the new Government's agenda.
- Deepen collaboration with national stakeholders (e.g., COSLA, NES, third sector) for coherent implementation of mental health priorities.

### **Funding and accountability:**

- Campaign for legislative guarantees of 10% NHS funding for adult mental health and 1% for CAMHS, alongside improved budget transparency and reporting mechanisms.

### **Public health and workforce:**

- Advocate for the First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Health to declare a public health emergency in mental health.
- Ensure delivery of clear, evidence-based public guidance on well-being (screen time, social media, exercise, sleep) in collaboration with academic and public health partners.
- Maintain focus on psychiatric workforce retention through direct engagement with government officials.

### **Mortality gap:**

- Secure commitment to a fully funded national strategy to halve the mortality gap by 2050 for people with severe mental illness and learning disabilities.

### **Legislative programme:**

- Proactively influence Scotland's legislative agenda by contributing written evidence, MSP briefings, and oral evidence on key workstreams, including human rights legislation, assisted dying, and capacity law reform.

## Measurables:

- Presence of our calls to action in party manifestos for the 2026 election.
- Number and quality of meetings with policymakers and subsequent policy outputs.
- Mentions in Scottish Parliament and official government reporting. Progress toward securing funding commitments.
- Adoption of our proposed approach to NDCs.
- Perceived influence on legislative developments relevant to our members.



## Strategic priority 3: Member engagement

**Aim:** We will grow awareness and engagement with the Scottish membership to ensure the College captures and reflects its needs — while also celebrating and championing Scottish psychiatry

### Background:

Membership engagement is central to the work of RCPsych in Scotland, underpinning our ability to reflect the needs, priorities, and aspirations of psychiatrists across the country. By improving access to events, strengthening outreach, and creating meaningful opportunities for member voice and representation, we aim to build a more connected and responsive College.

### Key Actions:

#### Improving access

- Host the first Membership & Fellowship Ceremony in Scotland in 2026.
- Coordinate with UK colleagues to bring Congress back to Scotland in 2027.
- Host the UK GAP Faculty Conference in 2026, ensuring programmes reflect Scottish priorities and diversity.
- Deliver a consistent annual programme of high-quality events tailored to the needs of Scottish members.

#### Strengthening Engagement and Outreach

- Improve visibility & availability of relevant Scottish content on RCPsych website.

- Introduce conflicts of interest declaration to all RCPsychiS outputs.
- Increase proactive engagement with established psychiatric structures across Scotland to strengthen collaboration and visibility.
- Facilitate annual meetings between Officers and the Psychiatry Resident Doctor Committee representatives (PRDC).
- Conduct annual check-ins with Scottish Faculty Officers and executives.

### **Member Voice and Representation**

Create meaningful opportunities for members to contribute to and

- shape RCPsychiS priorities through structured consultation & involvement.
- Continue Chair's drop-in sessions to provide open, informal spaces for member dialogue and feedback.

### **Measurables:**

#### **Scottish Membership Survey**

Use the annual survey to track satisfaction with access to events, visibility of Scottish priorities, and opportunities for meaningful member involvement in shaping College activity.

#### **Engagement Metrics Monitoring**

Monitor attendance at RCPsychiS events and track member engagement across platforms — including newsletter interactions, consultation responses, drop-in sessions, and participation in Scottish committees and working groups.

## Strategic priority 4: RCPsychiS identity in a four nation College

**Aim:** As the RCPsych seeks to become a truly four nation College, we must move beyond the devolution phase to recognise and reflect the needs of modern Scotland.

### Background:

In 2018, the College formally recognised Scotland’s devolved status, marking an important step in shaping how we work nationally. But Scotland has continued to evolve — and so must we. It’s time to move beyond the devolution phase and ensure the College reflects modern-day Scotland: its culture, its priorities, and its distinct identity within a four-nation framework.

### Key Actions:

#### Identity

- Advocate for updating the term “Devolved Council” with “Scottish Council” or “Council of Scotland” to better reflect national identity.
- Ensure Scotland is recognised as a distinct nation within the College, with its own diverse culture, needs, and priorities — moving away from the generic “devolved nations” grouping.
- Introduce Gaelic language elements on Scottish webpages — where appropriate — to celebrate and reflect Scotland’s cultural heritage.
- Increase the visibility and recognition of Scottish faculties and their contributions at a UK-wide level.

- Ensure Scottish members are appropriately and proportionately represented across UK College Committees and workstreams, in recognition of Scotland's distinct & diverse geographical, demographic, and structural context.

### **Empowerment**

- Improve financial transparency to enable more strategic and effective use of the Scottish budget.
- Advocate for all Vice Presidents to attend relevant UK Officers' meetings to support equitable representation and collaboration.
- Introduce a clear and consistent framework to guarantee representation from all four nations in College reports, projects, and decision-making processes.
- Standardise inclusive language across all College communications — for example, replacing “Divisions and Devolved Nations” with terminology that reflects national identities.
- Ensure all College documents and webpages clearly indicate which nations they apply to, supporting clarity and relevance for members.

## **Measurables:**

### **Member Perception**

Use the annual survey to see if members feel Scotland's role in the College is becoming more visible, valued, and better understood.

### **Language and Identity**

Keep track of how often updated terms like “Scottish Council” are being used in College documents and communications — as a sign that our identity is being recognised and respected.





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