

Summary

RCPsych South Eastern Division

Strategic Plan 2025–2027



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Introduction

The purpose of our 2025-2027 Strategic Plan is to detail the work that the South Eastern Division Executive Committee will be undertaking on behalf of its members.

This document is a summarized version of our full document that determines the four overarching objectives that the Division have agreed on, that will have a regional focus at a local level.

This Strategic Plan has been developed in consultation with all members of the Executive Committee, the Division Manager, and key members of staff.

A comprehensive Implementation Plan will accompany the full Strategy.

About the Division

The Royal College of Psychiatrists is an international organisation and the professional body for psychiatrists in the UK that works to secure great patient care by promoting excellent mental health services, supporting the prevention of mental illness, training and nurturing outstanding psychiatrists throughout their entire career, promoting quality and research, setting standards and being the voice of psychiatry.

The College has eight English Divisions with South Eastern being the second largest behind London. The Executive Committee has forty three members and is composed of numerous roles including elected roles, appointed roles, co-opted roles and ex-officio roles and is led and represented by the Chair of the Division, Professor Rafey Faruqi/Dr Raj Attavar. The Executive Committee plays a key role in supporting psychiatrists and addressing regional needs and concerns.

Where we are now and where we want to be

The Division is a forward thinking, proactive and committed Executive Committee that is an extension of central College and acts on behalf of both the College and its Divisional members. We provide organizational direction and oversight, strategic thinking, decision-making, emotional intelligence, adaptability, communication, and the ability to inspire and motivate others. We have highly experienced Lead Committee members who are experts in the area that they are responsible for, and this ensures that we look at all focus areas relevant to psychiatry and have input from people who have the knowledge to contribute to discussions and decision-making.

The Division has produced a 3 year strategy which will enable us to lead and be involved with longer term objectives and projects to support our members and to improve mental health care provision, as well as improve engagement with members and key stakeholders in Mental Health at a local level.

Our Vision

To provide guidance to Psychiatrists to help them deliver an excellent standard of patient-focused care across our Division and to influence the provision of mental health services to ensure they are equitable and of an excellent standard and to offer our support to these decision makers.

Our Mission

The Division will work to secure the best outcomes for people with mental illness, intellectual disabilities, and developmental disorders. As a Division we aim to support and deliver training to Psychiatrists so that they can provide excellent mental health services, to support, nurture and look after the wellbeing of psychiatrists to help make them be the best they can be, whilst promoting quality and research in all that we do, setting standards and being the voice of psychiatry.

As a result of our emphasis on excellence and respect and in order to ensure the best outcomes for psychiatrists and patients, the Division puts equity, diversity and inclusion at the heart of all we do. The Division carries out a range

of initiatives to eliminate discrimination based on gender, race and ethnicity, disability and sexuality across our Division and mental health services.

Strategic Objectives

Presidential 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

- Ensuring excellent member experience and engagement.
- Additionally, there are core objectives:
- Being the voice of psychiatry
- Delivering effective use of College resources and excellent staff experience

In line with our President's priorities, the Division will focus on the following strategic objectives:

Strategic Objective 1. Support for Psychiatrists

- To support all psychiatrists throughout their training and tenure as Psychiatrists to maintain and improve their wellbeing and thus improve retention.
- To support overseas Psychiatrists/IMGs to enhance their move to the UK, giving them tools to promote ease of acclimatisation/acculturation, and oversee their training once in the UK.
- To support members and colleagues at all levels in their individual leadership journey, to improve their potential and highlight opportunities.

Strategic Objective 2. Workforce – including recruitment and retention

- To support the strong and cohesive College Workforce Strategy to approach the long-term problem of recruitment and retention in the South East region.
- To influence mental health workforce policy agendas and hold stakeholders to account on delivery.

Strategic Objective 3. Engagement and collaboration – internally and externally

- To proactively engage with all members of the Division.

A key way of the Division achieving its strategic objectives is to ensure that in addition to providing vital information to the central College office, the Division is able to directly influence local providers of NHS services in its patch. This is vital especially for issues such as recruitment, retention and wellbeing.

- To proactively engage with specific groups of psychiatrists e.g. Resident Doctors (higher and core), SAS doctors, Retired & Resting etc.
- To enhance engagement within the Executive Committee and any associated College Officer roles.
- To engage with external mental health stakeholders.

Strategic Objective 4. Health Inequalities and the importance of addressing physical and mental health holistically

- To identify the areas in mental health with the greatest health inequalities within our region and liaise with local key stakeholders regarding addressing these inequalities.
- To address workforce inequalities across the Division and seek to find solutions to the challenges that are being faced in relation to recruitment and retention (discussed in objective 3 above).
- To address the importance of the association between physical and mental health and focus on a regional level to identify inequalities between this association across the region and seek to influence and find solutions to support ICBs in commissioning/primary and secondary care in provision of the right approach to address concerns.

Priority Services

- We will develop a communication strategy to keep members updated on what we are doing, to ask members what they want us to be doing on their behalf, and what is happening in their region, and this will be via numerous methods.
- We will continue to improve collaboration with ICBs, Trusts and Medical Directors, private sector, voluntary and other external organisations, and other Divisions and departments in the College and extend invites to join the Executive Committee.
- We will support the RCPsych Presidential work where we can and appoint Division Leads where appropriate.
- We will enhance the support to psychiatrists by providing education/training courses including clinical education as well as areas such as wellbeing, mentoring/coaching and QI, signposting to resources, support any action against violence towards psychiatrists and offer travel bursaries to give opportunity to travel outside of area to training and educational events.
- We will continue to provide support for residents as we know they are our next generation of psychiatrists, and this will be throughout their training and into their initial years as consultants. We will provide specific training for residents and offer discounts to our training/educational events.
- We will provide support to our recruitment campaign by, supporting Spring/Summer/Autumn schools and careers fairs, develop links with each PsychSoc and promote recruitment into psychiatry through medical student and foundation doctor events by supporting them physically and financially, and provide bursaries for attending International Congress and the National Students' Psychiatric Conference each year. We will also provide prizes for medical students and foundation doctors who are excelling within an area of psychiatry.
- We will Develop Leadership within the Division by providing events to provide members with the skillset and tools to become a leader and provide a bursary for single parents to attend a Fellowship course to help further their leadership.
- As an Executive Committee we feel it is important to ensure the voices of patients are heard and incorporated into our activities, adopting a co-production approach where possible.
- We will work with the College to support SAS Doctors, and will determine ways on how to implement the UK strategy at a local level.
- To support international trainees to further their psychiatric training in the UK, we will work with the International Team to support IMGs and produce clear actions regarding what we will do and how we will achieve it.
- We will create a workforce working group to support Core Resident Doctors and encourage and inspire psychiatry as their chosen career path and to support retention of Core Resident Doctors to Higher Resident Doctors. We will liaise with ICBs and Trusts on how we can support workforce challenges and collate and review data on workforce and raise issues in the Executive Committee.
- We will produce and implement a QI Action Plan for the Division.
- We will work with the Presidential Lead for physical health to influence systems across the South East region to implement measures that will help to close the mortality gap and to reduce the risk of early death for individuals with mental illness, especially SMI, including encouraging research and innovation aimed at reducing the risk of early death for individuals with mental illness. We will provide education and training to support the association between physical and mental health.

- We will provide relevant evidence to support members who are addressing the treatment gap and will take an influencing regional role in ensuring there is a full range of treatment options available to those with mental illness, and to ensure that psychiatrists have the skills and the necessary psychotherapeutic approach to deliver them and to have a positive influence on parity of esteem and workforce need.
- We will create/provide an incentive scheme for Executive Committee members to acknowledge the hard work being undertaken on behalf of the Division. We will endeavour to work with Trusts to show the benefits of taking up a role.
- We will incorporate the use of digital and AI into our activities and training.

Underlying principles

Planetary Health and Sustainability

The Division are committed to reduce the environmental impact and carbon footprint of activities undertaken within the Division. We will endeavor to promote learning and raise awareness of sustainability for all Division members, and we will be committed to reducing waste and lowering carbon emissions generated by activities within the Division. To encourage sustainability, we will collaborate with other organisations to promote environmental sustainability in mental health care.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Division recognise our responsibility to support those from marginalised groups and call out discrimination and bias when we see it. We will be committed to promoting equality for all Division members and create an environment where all members can make best use of their skills. As a Division and as an Executive Committee, we will support and promote inclusion to all groups of people and will take an initiative-taking approach in creating equal opportunities for LGBTQ+ members and we will tackle inequity driven by gender, race and ethnicity, disability and sexuality, with attention given to intersectionality.

Conclusion

The Division continues to embed the work that we do into the work of the College, and by using the experience and skills of our members, the Executive Committee, and working closely with our regional partners, we aim to meet our vision of being an influencer and supporter in the provision of mental health care services and provide guidance to Psychiatrists to help them deliver an excellent standard of patient-focused care across our Division.

We have set ourselves a strategy that is bold and ambitious but reflects the passion, determination and the willingness to work hard to achieve our goals. Through everyone's efforts we aim to play a significant role in improving and enhancing the lives of psychiatrists, improving the provision of mental health care and in turn the outcomes for people with mental illness, and to raise the profile of not just the Division but for psychiatry as a whole.

