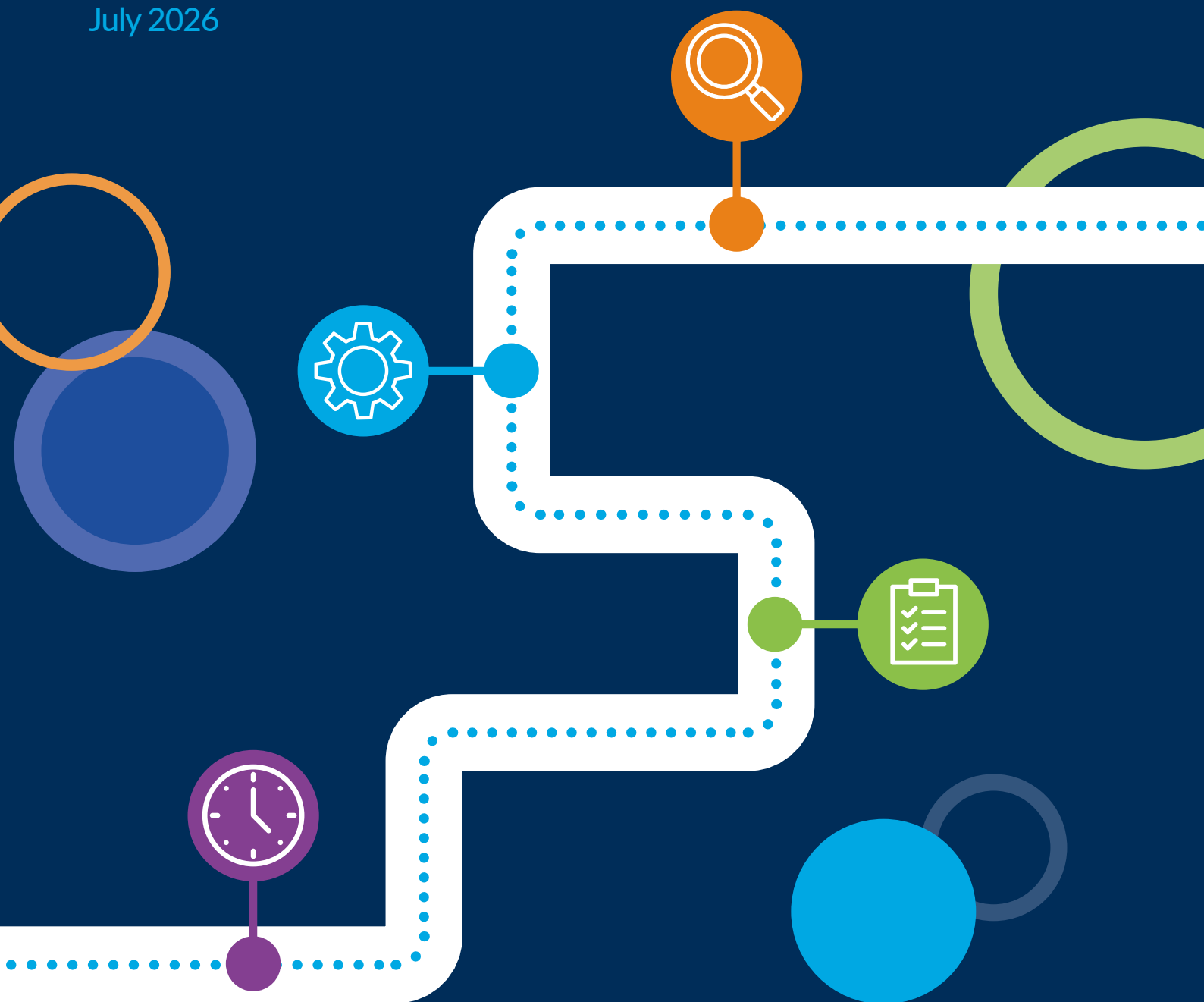


RCGP Research Roadmap 2026-2029:

Embedding research and evidence at the heart
of general practice

July 2026



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Executive summary

General practice is a discipline of complexity, continuity and care for whole populations. As patient needs become more complex, and health inequalities widen, workforce pressures intensify, and health systems evolve, high-quality research in general practice has never been more important. Research enables the development, evaluation and refinement of models of care and new therapeutic interventions that are safe, effective and equitable, grounded in the realities of everyday clinical practice. General practice provides a unique opportunity to empower frontline clinicians as research leaders, bringing research closer to the point of care. This ensures research studies are truly responsive to patient needs within our communities.

Evidence shows that research-active practices deliver high quality care and demonstrate strong organisational performance, with benefits for patients and professionals alike. Research engagement can improve care processes, patient experience and outcomes, and can inform workforce planning and investment decisions that support long-term sustainability. Despite this, the level of participation in research across general practice remains relatively low compared to other health settings. Clinical academic GPs are under-represented within both the GP and wider clinical academic workforce, and there are ongoing concerns about a lack of stable investment in academic general practice within medical schools.

The gap in research capacity in general practice has been recognised for some time, and key organisations have been working to strengthen this, including the RCGP, the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), NIHR School for Primary Care Research (SPCR) and Society for Academic Primary Care (SAPC). It is vital that we build on existing excellence and ensure we continue to grow primary care research in the UK through collaborations.

Research and innovation are central to national health policy. The UK Government's 'Fit for the Future 10 Year Health Plan', alongside strategies across the devolved nations (e.g. Scotland's Health and Social Care Service Renewal Framework), emphasise embedding research into everyday clinical practice, expanding research delivery in primary care, strengthening clinical academic careers, shifting care from hospitals to the community, and making better use of population health data. General practice must be clearly positioned within this agenda.

The RCGP and primary care played a significant role in the pandemic response and in support of pandemic research studies. The PRINICPLE trial, for example, was facilitated by the Research and Surveillance Centre (RSC) and the PANORAMIC trial, a UK-wide clinical study, is the largest trial of COVID-19 treatment delivered in primary care in the world.

This Research Roadmap builds on the existing strengths of academic primary care, research delivery, and our established RCGP programmes, including the [Scientific Foundation Board \(SFB\)](#), [Research Engagement Hub](#), [Research Ready](#), the GP with Extended Roles (GPwER) framework in research delivery, the [Research and Surveillance Centre \(RSC\)](#), [British Journal of General Practice \(BJGP\)](#) and [BJGP Open](#). It sets out a shared direction for working with our members and partners to strengthen research in and for general practice. This Roadmap aligns with RCGP's Strategic Plan 26-29 to [shape the future of general practice](#), and with one of the five key priorities to support [sustainable and rewarding GP careers](#).

The roadmap sets out four interdependent objectives that together form a coherent research ecosystem for general practice:

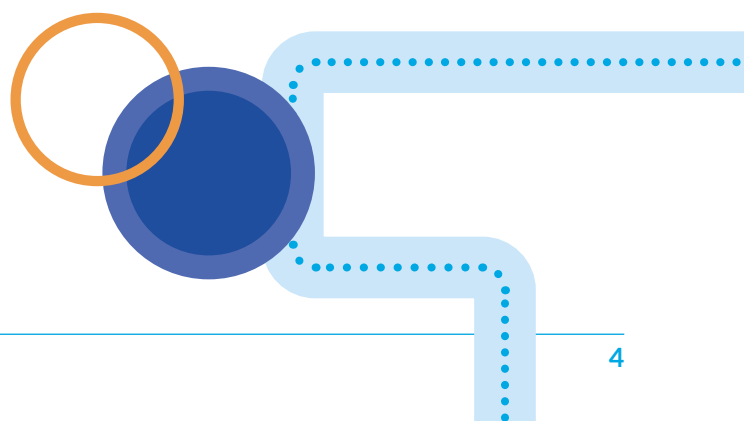
- 1 Embed research culture and capabilities across the profession and within routine practice**, strengthening research literacy, critical appraisal and curiosity as core skills throughout training, practice and leadership, and integrating research into everyday workflow, making it a collective commitment to better care.
- 2 Strengthen the evidence-base for our discipline and maximise the impact, visibility and influence of general practice research**, ensuring that research informs clinical practice, education, policy and system design, targets the right populations in the right settings, and that general practice perspectives shape national decision-making.
- 3 Build and sustain clinical academic careers in general practice**, recognising academic GPs as essential to intellectual leadership, education, policy influence and the long-term sustainability of the profession.
- 4 Support and expand high-quality, sustainable multidisciplinary research delivery in general practice**, ensuring that participation in research is ethical, proportionate, equitable and aligned with patient care, workforce wellbeing and reaching net-zero goals.

Across all objectives, the roadmap emphasises workforce sustainability, equity, inclusion, and real-world impact. Research is positioned as a core professional business for general practice, integral to quality care, professional fulfilment and the future of the NHS.

By 2029, the RCGP aims to support:

- GPs across all stages of careers to feel part of a stronger research community that enables them to deliver, engage with and embed learnings from research.
- A profession that has greater confidence in using and generating evidence.
- Clear evidence that research conducted in and for general practice is improving patient care, informing policy and reducing health inequalities.
- A more visible clinical academic workforce.
- Sustainable and equitable research delivery across the UK.

This RCGP Research Roadmap is both a statement of intent and a commitment to partnership. The College will work closely with its members, patients and communities, the academic general practice community, policymakers, system partners and the research ecosystem more widely, to ensure that general practice is recognised as a learning, scholarly and intellectually vibrant discipline, generating knowledge that matters and making a difference where it counts most.



RCGP Research Roadmap 2026–2029

Research and evidence at the heart of general practice

Supporting a learning, research-active and intellectually vibrant profession



By 2029 we aim for:



A research literate profession with greater confidence



Research that informs policy, education and clinical practice



A stronger and more visible GP academic workforce



Sustainable and equitable research across the UK and our communities



More research-active practices and collaboration

Foreword

General practice is, at its heart, a discipline of learning. Every day, GPs work at the frontline of uncertainty: caring for people with complex needs, navigating incomplete information, and making decisions that matter deeply to patients, families, and communities. This daily practice generates questions about what works, for whom, and for which context. By applying learning in context, we continuously shape and refine our approach to patient care. Research is how we pursue those questions with curiosity, rigour and purpose.

For too long, research in general practice has been seen as something separate from clinical work, or as the preserve of a small number of individuals. This strategy sets out a different vision. It recognises that the most meaningful research in general practice often emerges directly from clinical care, from reflective practice, from close relationships with patients, and from a deep understanding of communities. When research and clinical practice are brought together, they generate insights and solutions that are both intellectually robust and practically relevant.

General practice is one of the most intellectually stimulating specialties in medicine. It requires breadth of knowledge, tolerance of uncertainty, and the ability to integrate biomedical, psychological and social perspectives. Scholarship, the careful generation, interpretation and application of knowledge, has always been central to our profession. This roadmap is a commitment to reclaiming and strengthening that scholarly tradition, and to recognising research as core professional business for general practice.

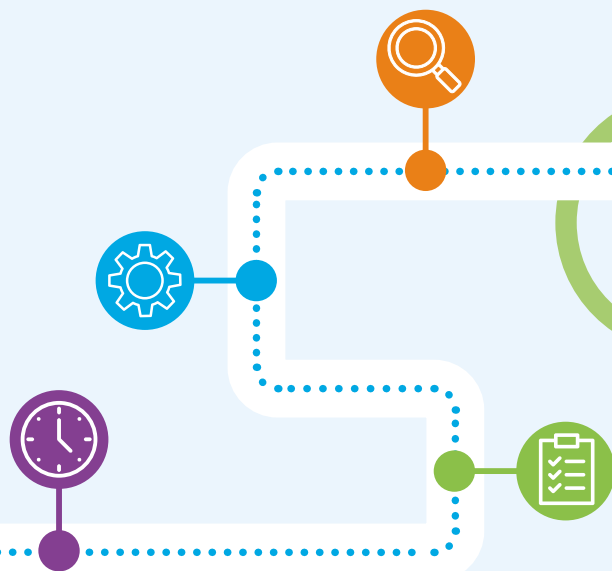
I am particularly proud that this is the Royal College of General Practitioners' first externally published dedicated Research Roadmap. It reflects both how far general practice research has come and how much potential lies ahead. It builds on the strong foundations already in place across the College, the wider academic community and practice-based expertise, while setting a clear and ambitious direction for the future. Connecting with existing research infrastructure and building stronger partnerships with key stakeholders is essential to delivering our shared goals, and to ensure research in general practice is not only active, but more inclusive, relevant and impactful.

This Research Roadmap is not about asking every GP to become a researcher. It is about creating a culture in which curiosity is valued, evidence is used thoughtfully, and opportunities to engage in research, whether through clinical academic careers, research delivery, or evidence-informed practice, are visible, supported and sustainable across all career stages.

As President, I am committed to working in partnership with our members, the academic general practice community, patients, and policymakers to realise this vision. By doing so, we can strengthen our profession, improve care for our patients, and ensure that general practice continues to lead as a learning, research-active and intellectually vibrant discipline.



Professor Victoria Tzortziou-Brown
RCGP President



Introduction

Why research matters in general practice

High-quality research in general practice is more important than ever. An ageing population, diverse patient groups, health inequalities, rising multiple long-term conditions, evolving environmental challenges, workforce shortages, system reform and technological advances require general practice to continually adapt. Research enables the development, refinement and evaluation of new models of care that are safe, effective and equitable.¹

There is growing recognition that equality, diversity and inclusion are essential to reducing health and social inequalities. Marginalised communities and populations are often underrepresented in research studies. When study populations do not match the demographics of those affected, results cannot be generalised. This makes general practice an ideal setting for research; being at the heart of the community means that GPs play a critical role in reaching a large and highly diverse patient population, ensuring research reflects real patient populations, thus improving research equity and scientific validity.

In parallel with the evidence from secondary care that research-active hospitals have better clinical outcomes than non-research hospitals, there is now evidence that research-active practices are associated with high clinical quality of care and strong organisational performance, with benefits for patients and professionals alike.^{1,2} Engagement in research can facilitate improvements in care processes, improve patient satisfaction, and lead to better health outcomes. Research also can inform workforce planning and investment decisions, supporting long-term sustainability.^{1,3} Further, research increasingly suggests that practices engaged in research have lower GP burnout and higher staff retention. Research activities provide variety to GPs' work which helps to enhance job satisfaction and reduce feelings of professional isolation as they often feel more connected to a wider professional community.⁴

Despite the association with improved quality of care, data from the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Research Delivery Network (RDN) suggest that only around 1,600 GP practices in England – 25% of all GP practices in England – recruited participants to NIHR-supported studies in 2024/25. This figure has dropped since 2023/24, when more than half (56%) of GP practices in England took part in RDN-supported research.⁵

Academic GPs remain underrepresented at 0.05% of the GP workforce, and they make up a small proportion of the UK clinical academic workforce (7.2%).^{3,6,7} There are also concerns in regards to the declining visibility of GP academics in medical schools.⁸ In Scotland, the academic GP workforce reduced by 25% between 2013 and 2017, with over two-thirds of senior GP academics aged over 55.⁶ Evidence also shows that women are under-represented in academic medicine.⁹

“With Primary Care Research we are faced with the Law of Inverse Opportunity in that the largest part of the medical profession has the least research opportunities.”
(Sir Denis Pereira Gray, 1991)¹⁰

While research is traditionally perceived as a separate and specialist activity, often conducted outside general practice, there is a growing shift towards a model where research is embedded within the workplace culture for all. This roadmap will seek to address how to support the GP workforce to engage in research more broadly.

Policy context and UK research infrastructure

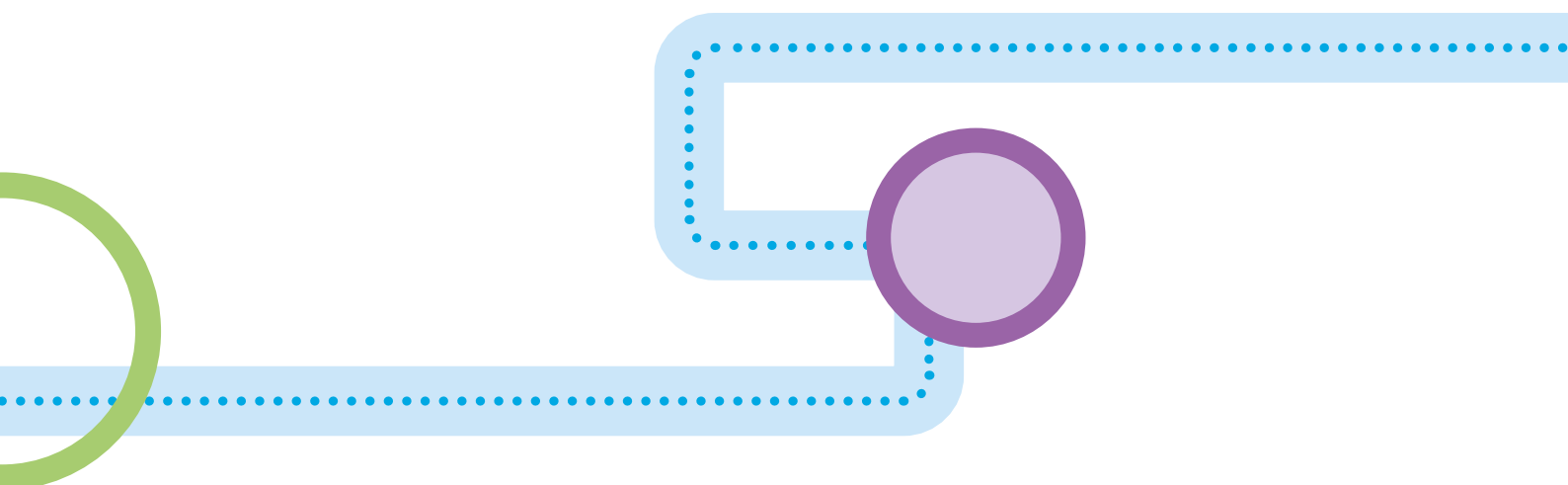
Research, development and innovation are central to national health policy. The Government's 'Fit for the Future: the 10 Year Health Plan' for England mentions three shifts: hospital to community, analogue to digital and sickness to prevention as the core components of our new care model. The Government is committed to making research and innovation a core part of everyday clinical work, including in primary care, expanding clinical research delivery, increasing the number of clinical academic roles, and improving the use of population health data.¹¹

The experience from the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated more than ever the importance of primary care research, as the insights from general practice were crucial to the pandemic response.¹² Following the O'Shaughnessy review, there is a UK Government imperative to increase industry sponsored research activity in primary care. There has been significant investment into primary care to increase clinical research delivery capacity across the UK.

In Scotland, the Health and Social Care Service Renewal Framework highlights the importance of embedding health research and innovation throughout the NHS. Supporting research and innovation professionals, and working in collaboration with the academic and life sciences sector are fundamental to transforming the NHS in Scotland.¹³

In the UK, there is an established research infrastructure, anchored by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), the UK's largest funder for health and care research;¹⁴ NIHR School for Primary Care Research (SPCR), which aims to strengthen the primary care evidence-base and build capacity in primary care with its training programme;¹⁵ NIHR Research Delivery Network (RDN), which provides significant funding to care settings including general practices to undertake research across England. In addition, the Society for Academic Primary Care (SAPC) is a well-established network supported by the Heads of Departments group (HoDs), providing representation from all departments of academic primary care across the UK and Ireland, and the Heads of Teaching group (HoTs), which oversees the strategic delivery of undergraduate primary care education in UK medical schools.¹⁶

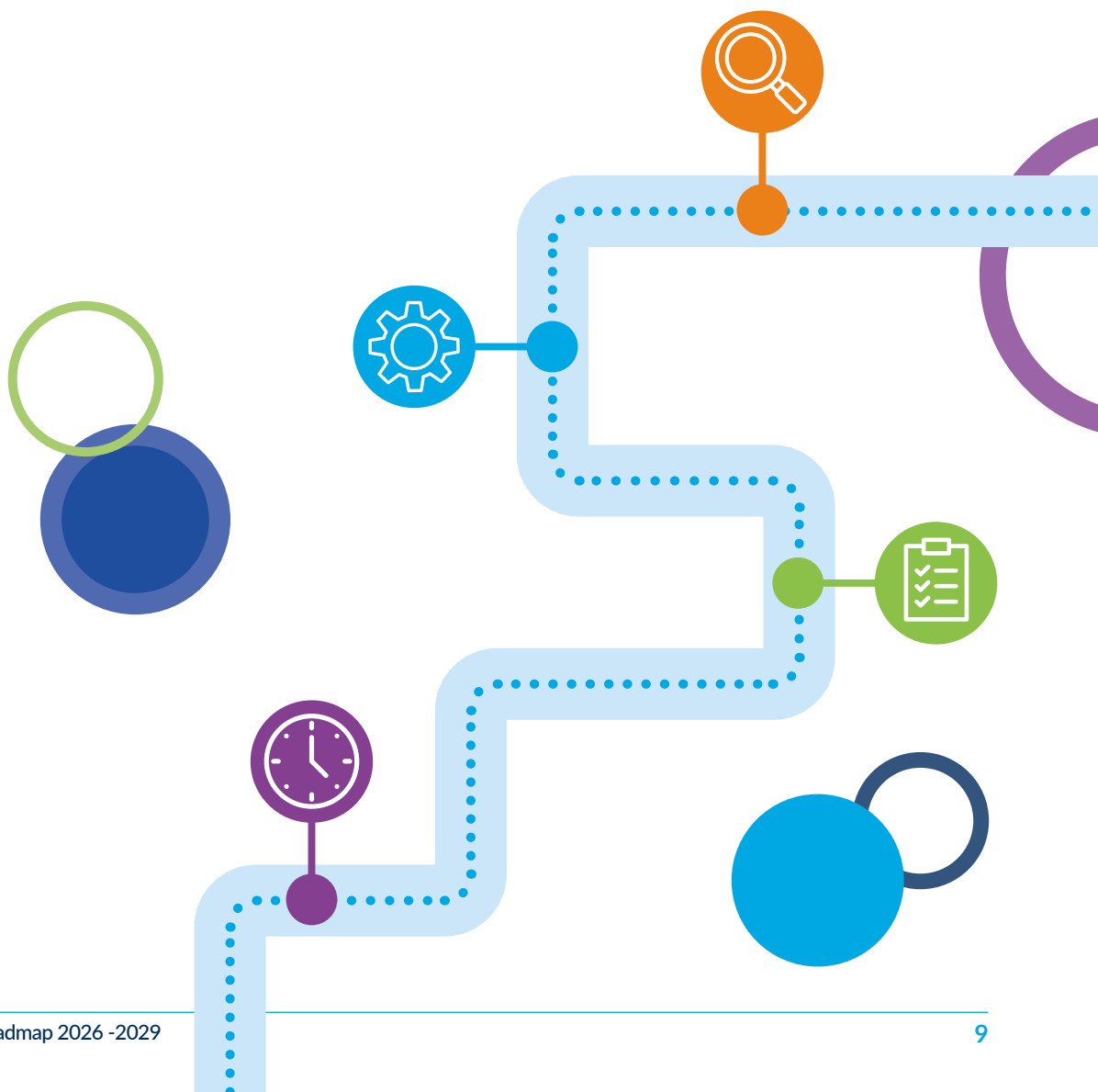
The Northern Ireland Clinical Research Network (NICRN) is part of a UK-wide initiative with key aims to promote primary care research and increase clinical trials in primary care within Northern Ireland.¹⁷ Primary Care Research Northern Ireland (PCRNI)¹⁸ is an initiative that was set up as part of the UK CRDC Network¹⁹ and aims to support research delivery in Northern Ireland general practice/ primary care. In addition, iREACH Health aims to transform the clinical research landscape in Northern Ireland through creating a research positive ecosystem which enhances trial set up and delivery across the region. It will also help develop a sustainable workforce by providing training and career pathways for aspiring clinical academics and health care professionals.²⁰



In Scotland, NHS Research Scotland (NRS) Primary Care Network was established as a framework to coordinate national research activity in primary care. Its aim is to increase the number of research studies, both academic and commercial, that are relevant to primary care settings.²¹ The Scottish School of Primary Care comprises nine Scottish universities with significant primary care research output, such as evaluating general practice initiatives including new models of care.²² The Centre for Evidence and Values based at the University of St Andrews aims to improve decisions in healthcare through research, supporting policy makers and events.²³

Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) has developed a draft five-year research and innovation strategy for healthcare science professionals in Wales.²⁴ The strategy outlines its vision for increasing research and innovation across all healthcare science professionals, aligned with the priorities detailed in Welsh Government's 'A Healthier Wales' and 'Healthcare Science in NHS Wales – Looking Forward Framework'. This strategy is also closely linked to the 'Research Matters' and 'Making Research Careers Work' plans published by Health and Care Research Wales (HCRW), a networked organisation, supported by Welsh Government.²⁵

Despite the existence of established research infrastructure, research practice support is disproportionately distributed across the UK, resulting in significant disparities in capacity, funding and infrastructure. Research infrastructure in devolved nations is often smaller and less resourced. For example, data suggests inequalities of provision of nationally funded clinical academic training awards for healthcare professionals, with Scotland investing less than one-sixth of that spent by England per capita and under half of that spent by Wales or Northern Ireland. There are also differences in the number of clinical academic research training posts available per year, differing governance processes (which can delay research) and disparity in data infrastructure between the four nations.²⁶



About the RCGP Research Roadmap

The RCGP is uniquely placed to support research in general practice as the professional membership body for GPs across the UK. This roadmap sits under a key theme in the RCGP Strategy 2026-29 – which is to [shape the future of general practice](#) – and aligns with one of the five priorities, to [support sustainable and rewarding GP careers](#). It builds on our existing RCGP research programmes including the [Scientific Foundation Board \(SFB\)](#), [Research Engagement Hub](#), [Research Ready](#), the [GP with Extended Roles \(GPwER\) Framework](#) in research delivery, the [Research and Surveillance Centre \(RSC\)](#), [British Journal of General Practice \(BJGP\)](#) and [BJGP Open](#).

We acknowledge the significant contributions made by other key stakeholders, and this roadmap intends to celebrate and build upon the existing strengths of academic primary care and research delivery. RCGP is committed to working in partnership with our general practice academic community, research funders, universities, DHSC and others across the UK in delivering this roadmap. We hope this document will help us all contribute to achieving these goals and objectives.

Strategic outcomes

By 2029, the RCGP aims to support:

- GPs across all stages of careers to feel part of a stronger research community that enables them to deliver, engage with and embed learnings from research.
- A profession with strengthened skills and confidence in using and generating evidence.
- The development of further robust evidence and research to shape policy, practice and education relating to general practice.
- A more visible, sustainable and diverse clinical academic workforce in general practice.
- The growth of more sustainable, ethical and equitable research delivery across the UK.

Objective 1:

Embed research culture and capabilities across the profession and routine practice

A strong research culture is needed to underpin both clinical academic careers and high-quality research delivery in general practice. There are a range of complex factors that affect culture, but key enablers can support curiosity, critical thinking and reflective practice, enabling GPs and practice teams to engage confidently with evidence and to generate meaningful questions arising from everyday clinical care.

The importance of research skills is already embedded within the RCGP curriculum, which emphasises the ability of GPs to interpret, apply and contribute to evidence as a core professional competency. This roadmap builds on that foundation by strengthening the visibility, accessibility and practical application of research skills throughout a GP's career, from training through to senior practice and leadership roles.

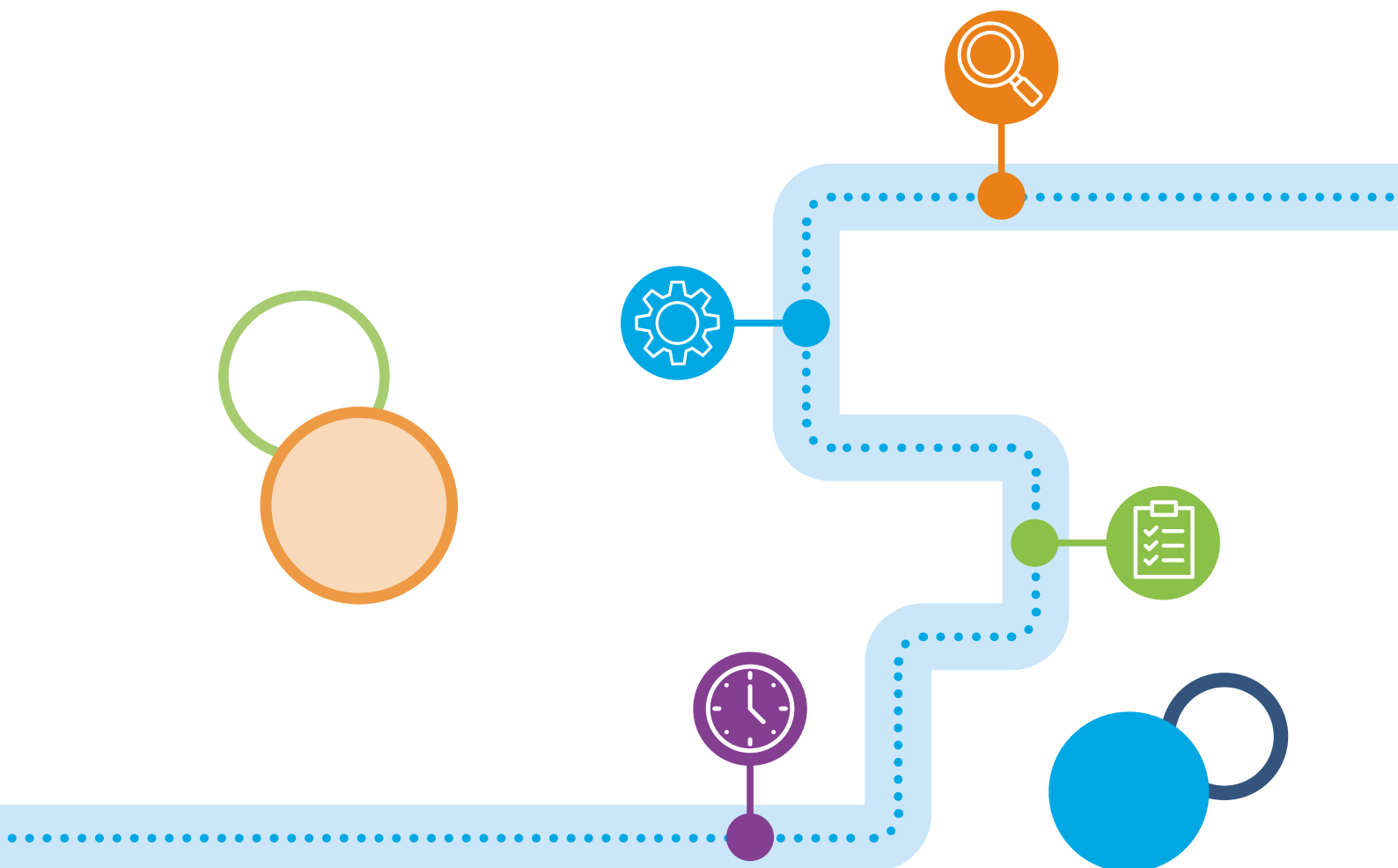
We will:

- **Encourage whole-practice approaches to research**, recognising the role of multidisciplinary teams in evidence-informed care, quality improvement and research participation. We will promote the message that research is for everyone in general practice and that research can be a collective activity, normalising research as core to professional identity.
- **Expand and further develop the RCGP Research Engagement Hub** as a central, accessible source of information, inspiration and signposting, supporting diverse forms of engagement with research, from evidence-informed clinical practice to academic leadership and research delivery roles.
- **Champion research literacy and critical engagement with evidence as core professional skills for all GPs and support continued development and application of research skills**, reinforcing evidence-informed decision-making in high-quality general practice. We will ensure our [CPD resources](#) actively enhance research literacy and critical appraisal skills, supporting GPs to interpret research findings with confidence.
- **Support the development of research communities and networks**, including the development of a RCGP Research Special Interest Group (SIG), to facilitate peer support and shared learning across career stages, disciplines and practice settings. We will develop our support for early career researchers, fostering a research culture at an early stage in their GP career. We will also work with stakeholders to support relevant initiatives, such as SAPC's professional network, which aims to connect with academics from a wide range of clinical and methodological backgrounds and the BJGP Research & Publishing Conference.
- **Support general practice to adopt evidence-based improvements**, through the development of case studies and relevant guidance, and GP Quality Clusters in Scotland, which consists of a professional grouping of general practices to drive peer-led quality improvement and service development.²⁷

- **Promote data quality in clinical records through the Research and Surveillance Centre (RSC) programme.** High-quality health records are essential to inform research and surveillance, and for good clinical care - “coding is caring”. We will work with UKHSA and Oxford University to promote data quality in health records among RSC and prospective RSC practices. We will also work with other health research organisations to promote best practice in coding of health records.
- **Encourage research culture as a contributor to workforce resilience,** highlighting how research capability supports professional confidence, transferable skills, portfolio careers and long-term retention within general practice.

What we would like to see:

- Increased confidence among GPs and practice teams in engaging with research and applying evidence in clinical decision-making.
- Greater visibility and uptake of CPD resources that strengthen critical appraisal skills, including consideration of bias and conflicts of interest. Stronger peer networks and communities supporting research-active and research-curious GPs across all career stages.



Objective 2:

Strengthen the evidence-base for our discipline and maximise the impact, visibility and influence of general practice research

There is currently a lack of robust data and evidence to answer a range of key policy and clinical questions relating to general practice. Research that is vigorous, visible, trusted and applied, helps to strengthen professional identity, informs high-quality care, and ensures that general practice perspectives shape policy, education and system design. Maximising the impact and visibility of general practice research is essential to demonstrating its value to patients, professionals and the wider health system. It is also worth noting the importance of enabling frontline clinicians, patients and underrepresented communities to shape research priorities, ensuring research continues to address real-world need.

We will:

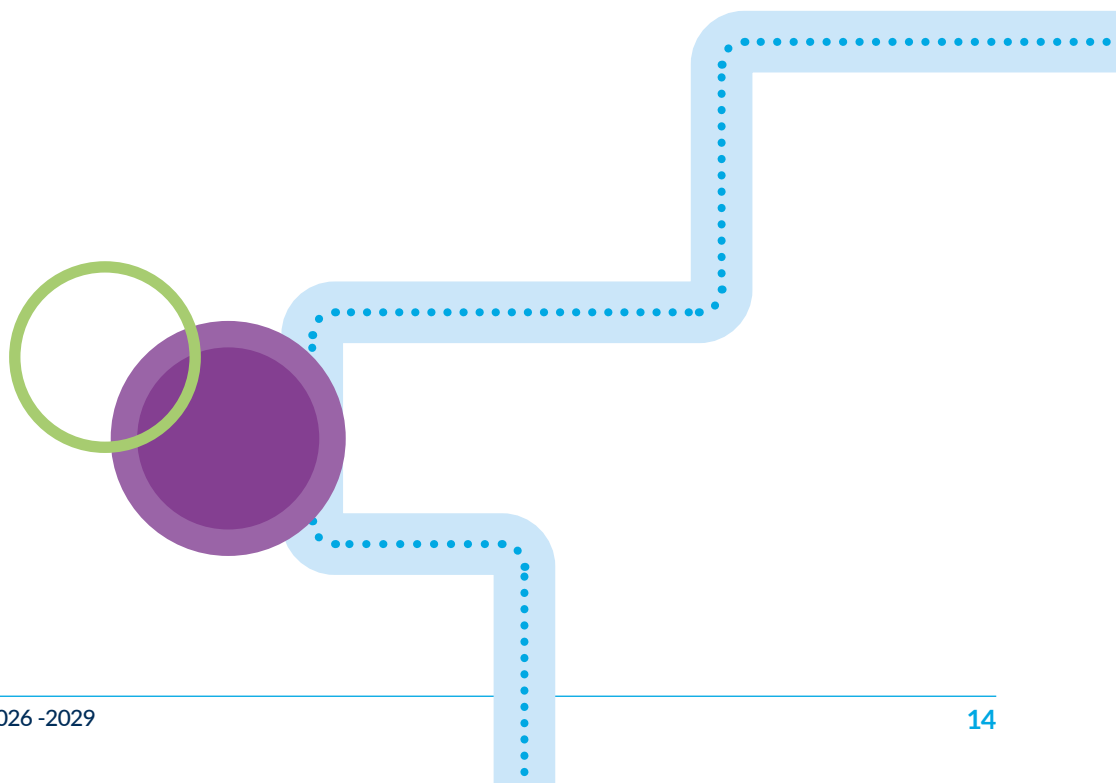
- **Celebrate and showcase excellence in general practice research**, recognising achievement and innovation through RCGP [awards](#), such as [Research Paper of the Year](#) and [RCGP/ SAPC Outstanding Early Career Researcher](#), and through dissemination in publications including the [British Journal of General Practice \(BJGP\)](#), as well as relevant RCGP events and conferences (e.g. RCGP annual conference, BJGP Research & Publishing Conference). By doing so, we will reinforce general practice as a research-active and intellectually vibrant discipline.
- **Promote diverse and meaningful forms of research impact beyond academic publications**, including dissemination of key findings through short videos, podcasts and blog posts, knowledge mobilisation into clinical practice, engagement with patients and communities, and systematic sharing of findings with participating practices and wider professional audiences. We will prioritise accessibility, relevance and real-world applicability of research findings.
- **Strengthen our ability to deliver and utilise robust research to inform our policy, influencing and educational activities**, through continuing to generate, commission and synthesise research, undertaking analysis of existing national workforce and health datasets. We will support academic research projects that align with RCGP strategic priority areas and work in collaboration with think tanks and other relevant organisations.
- **Support practices to deliver effective disease surveillance via the [Research and Surveillance Centre \(RSC\)](#) to shape the UK Health Security Agency's (UKHSA) strategic goal to protect the nation's health from current and future health security threats**. We will continue to promote the value and outputs of the RSC, building on its role as the primary source of disease surveillance since 1957. We will work with UKHSA and Oxford University to determine the long-term future and role of the RSC.
- **Explore the feasibility of utilising RSC data for RCGP policy and clinical research purposes, as well as considering alternative sources of GP data**. We will also look at how the network could potentially support further research that improves care in general practice.
- **Ensure research funded through the [Scientific Foundation Board \(SFB\)](#) continues to address key challenges in general practice**, including workforce sustainability, workload pressures and health inequalities, aligning with RCGP Council priorities and focusing on making a meaningful difference to patients and clinical practice.

- **Revamp the RCGP key statistics and insights webpage** to make it a more accessible and useful resource for GP members, researchers, policymakers and the wider primary care community. We will ensure the webpage covers UK wide data, where available.
- **Promote the importance of creating inclusive research environments**, by working with frontline clinicians, patients and communities to shape key research questions that address real-world problems and diverse population needs. We will seek to embed this principle into our research activities where appropriate.

By strengthening the evidence-base and increasing the visibility and application of research, the RCGP will ensure that general practice perspectives are influential in national and system-level decision-making, and that research meaningfully contributes to improving care, reducing inequalities, and maximising social, environmental and financial value.

What we would like to see:

- Increased visibility of GP-led research nationally and internationally, including through publications, awards and policy engagement.
- Clearer evidence of research influencing clinical guidance, service design, education and professional standards relating to general practice.
- Greater influence of policy and practice impacting UK general practice, utilising high-quality data and evidence.
- Greater influence of general practice research in national policy debates and system reform.



Objective 3:

Build and sustain clinical academic careers in general practice

Clinical academic careers are essential to the intellectual leadership, credibility and long-term sustainability of general practice. Academic GPs generate evidence that improves patient care, educate and inspire the future workforce, shape policy, and ensure that general practice perspectives are represented in national and international research agendas. A thriving and expanded clinical academic workforce is therefore central to the future of the GP profession and the health system and to improving the health of our population.

We will:

- **Champion clinical academic general practice as a valued and visible career pathway**, by working with the Society for Academic Primary Care (SAPC), the NIHR Academy, NIHR SPCR and DHSC to promote the contribution of academic GPs to patient care, education, research and system leadership across all career stages.
- **Promote clearer and more accessible research career pathways for GPs**, including early exposure during training, transitional opportunities between clinical and academic roles, and flexible models that support portfolio careers combining research, education and clinical practice.
- **Support high-quality academic research through the RCGP Scientific Foundation Board (SFB)**, building on its long-standing role in funding primary care research through Annual Research Grants and Practitioner's Allowance Grants. These schemes will continue to provide protected time and resources for GPs to develop research skills and lead studies that address priorities for general practice and patient care.
- **Promote mentorship and leadership development for academic GPs**, working with universities, funders and professional networks to strengthen peer support, role modelling and progression into senior academic and leadership positions.
- **Champion the expansion of the GP clinical academic workforce across the UK**, working with NIHR and Devolved Nations counterparts (e.g. NHS Research Scotland). We will advocate for sustainable funding models and protected time to enable GPs to combine clinical practice with academic roles without detriment to patient care, professional wellbeing or career progression. We will also advocate for a range of clinical academic training opportunities across the GP career span in the devolved nations, with the aim of bringing parity in the provision of clinical academic training opportunities and associated investment.

By investing in clinical academic careers, the RCGP will help retain experienced clinicians, nurture the next generation of academic leaders, and ensure that research and education in general practice remain grounded in real-world patient care.

What we would like to see:

- Increased number and diversity of GPs in clinical academic roles across the UK.
- Improved retention of experienced GPs through sustainable academic and portfolio careers.
- Clearer, more visible pathways into and through academic general practice.

Objective 4:

Support and expand high-quality multidisciplinary research delivery in general practice

Research delivery is a core contribution of general practice to the wider research ecosystem and an essential route through which patients and communities benefit directly from research. When delivered well, research activity in general practice generates evidence that is relevant to real-world care, strengthens professional capability, and supports improvement across the health system.

The RCGP will support research delivery that is ethical, proportionate and aligned with high-quality patient care, recognising the diversity of practice contexts, populations and capacity across the UK. This objective is underpinned by a commitment to ensuring that participation in research enhances, rather than detracts from, the delivery of high-quality care and sustainability both in terms of the general practice workforce and the environmental impacts of the work that we do.

High-quality research delivery contributes to workforce sustainability by attracting external investment, strengthening practice resilience, supporting portfolio careers, and reinforcing general practice as a learning, research-active discipline.

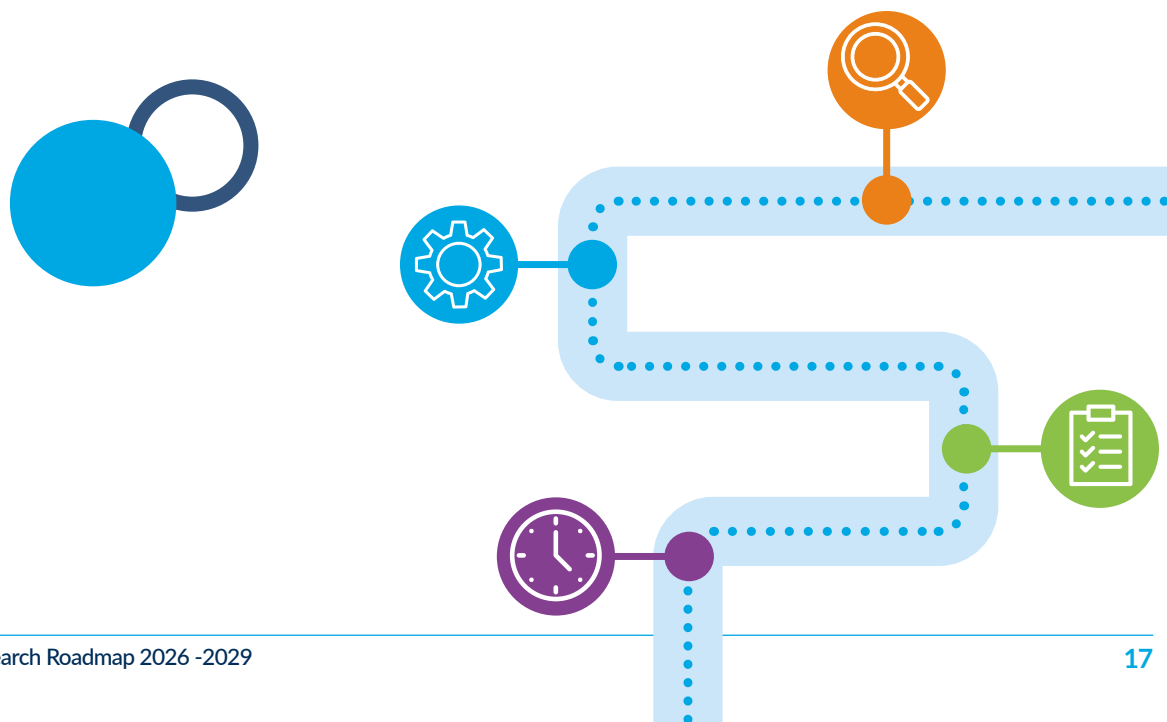
We will:

- **Champion the role of general practice in research delivery**, recognising the expertise required to deliver studies in complex, community-based clinical settings.
- **Support and promote GP with Extended Role (GPwER) positions in research delivery**, recognising these roles as an important component of portfolio careers that combine clinical practice, research and leadership.
- **Promote flexible and proportionate models of research participation**, with the aim of enabling practices to engage in research delivery at a level that reflects their capacity, population needs and workforce configuration.
- **Support GP practices to be research active**,²⁸ embedding research into routine systems and workflows and supporting multidisciplinary team involvement, through:
 - refreshing and further developing our [Research Ready](#) programme.
 - working with relevant governmental bodies to support general practice to improve infrastructure and capacity to enable research delivery (e.g. funding employment of a research nurse or pharmacist to manage research) and deliver research across community models of care (e.g. neighbourhood health services in England).
- **Work in partnership with NIHR, Research Delivery Networks (RDNs), and devolved-nation research infrastructures** to advocate for funding, infrastructure and delivery models that reflect the realities of general practice and minimise unnecessary burden on practices.

- **Strengthen communication and coordination of research opportunities**, including refreshing the RCGP Research Newsletter and working closely with partners such as SAPC, NIHR and School for Primary Care Research (SPCR), Health and Care Research Wales, NHS Research Scotland (NRS), Northern Ireland Clinical Research Network (NICRN), Primary Care Research Northern Ireland, the Primary Care Academic Collaborative (PACT) to strengthen communication and coordination as well as dissemination of relevant studies, resources, grant funding and training opportunities across RCGP networks.
- **Encourage practices to promote their research involvement to patients and enhance patient awareness of research opportunities**, through supporting initiatives such as NIHR Be Part of Research.²⁹
- **Promote equitable access to research delivery opportunities**, encouraging participation from practices serving diverse and under-served populations, and supporting research that reflects the breadth of communities cared for in general practice.³⁰ This would build upon the excellent research being designed and delivered by Deep End Practices across the country.
- **Support the growth in membership of the Research and Surveillance Centre (RSC)**, and scope opportunities for further research engagement opportunities for GP practices across the UK.

What we would like to see:

- An increased proportion of general practices able to participate in research delivery across the UK.
- Increased visibility to patients about GP practice involvement in research and related participation opportunities.
- Improved equity of research participation across regions, practice types and populations.
- Research delivery models that are more supportive, proportionate and aligned with patient care in general practice.
- Greater recognition of research delivery as a valued component of professional and practice development in general practice.



Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion

The RCGP is committed to embedding equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) across all its research activities. Inclusive research is essential to improving patient outcomes, strengthening general practice, and reducing health inequalities.

Through the [Scientific Foundation Board \(SFB\)](#), the College will promote equitable access to research funding and support research that reflects the diversity of populations, communities and professionals served by general practice. SFB membership will remain diverse, spanning all four UK nations and including academic GPs at different career stages and meaningful Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE). Transparent and fair grant review processes will be maintained.

The College will encourage research focused on marginalised and under-studied populations and promote inclusive research design, including meaningful PPIE and equitable participation. Funding opportunities and application guidance will be widely promoted and accessible, supporting diversity among applicants by geography and background.

EDI principles will be integrated across RCGP research programmes, including [Research Ready](#) and the Research Engagement Hub. The College will disseminate research findings that inform effective interventions, support their implementation in practice, and ensure that research evidence, including UK-wide data where appropriate, informs policy and advocacy to address health inequalities.

Conclusion and implementation

This Research Roadmap has set out our vision and key objectives to further strengthen research and research culture in and for general practice, in line with our wider RCGP Strategic Plan.

The RCGP will deliver this Research Roadmap in collaboration with our stakeholders and relevant teams within the College. Progress of key activities and impact will be reviewed regularly.

Acknowledgements

The Royal College of General Practitioners would like to sincerely thank our colleagues, external stakeholders, and the primary care academic community who contributed to the development of this Research Roadmap. Their collective expertise, insight and commitment have been invaluable in shaping a shared vision for strengthening research and academic general practice across the UK.

RCGP Research Roadmap working group:

- Professor Victoria Tzortziou-Brown, RCGP President
- Dr Rosa Lau, Head of Research and Innovation
- Danielle Fisher, Assistant Director of Policy, Research and Campaigns
- Dr Nicholas Thomas, Clinical Lead for Research
- Dr Munro Stewart, Vice President Policy

List of contributors:

- Professor Helen Atherton (Professor of Primary Care Research, University of Southampton; RCGP Scientific Foundation Board Deputy Chair)
- Professor Carolyn Chew-Graham (Professor of General Practice Research, Keele University; Chair, RCGP Research Paper of the Year panel)
- Professor Simon de Lusignan (Professor of Primary Care and Clinical Informatics, University of Oxford; Director, Oxford-RCGP Research and Surveillance Centre)
- Dr Molly Dineen (National RCGP GP Registrar Co-Chair)
- Professor Philip Evans (National Associate Director of Health and Care Research, NIHR Research Delivery Network)
- Professor Trish Greenhalgh (Professor of Primary Care Health Sciences, University of Oxford)
- Professor Amanda Howe (Honorary Professor of Primary Care, University of East Anglia; Past President, RCGP)
- Dr Lily Lamb (RCGP Representative, Northeast England Faculty)
- Dr Euan Lawson (Editor BJGP)
- Professor Christian Mallen (Director, NIHR School for Primary Care Research)
- Emeritus Professor Stewart Mercer (Emeritus Professor of Primary Care and Multimorbidity, University of Edinburgh)
- Professor Sophie Park (Professor of Primary Care and Clinical Education, University of Oxford; RCGP Scientific Foundation Board Chair)
- Professor Mahendra Patel (Director, Centre for Research Equity, University of Oxford)
- Professor Lindsey Pope (Professor of Medical Education in General Practice and Primary Care, University of Glasgow)
- Professor Joanne Reeve (Professor of Primary Care Research, University of Hull)
- Dr Eduard Shantsila (Head of Department of Primary Care and Mental Health, University of Liverpool; Chair of Head of Departments, Society for Academic Primary Care)
- Professor Frank Sullivan (Professor of Primary Care Medicine, University of St Andrews)

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30 Euston Square, London NW1 2FB

020 3188 7400 | policy@rcgp.org.uk | www.rcgp.org.uk