



Royal College of
General Practitioners

RCGP Strategic Plan 2026-2029





Introduction

As the Royal College of General Practitioners approaches its 75th anniversary, we celebrate a rich history of advancing high standards of patient care in general practice. At the same time, we recognise that the world around us is changing rapidly. Rising demand, increasing complexity, workforce pressures, digital and technological advances, and changing patient expectations are reshaping not just how care is delivered, but also the role of the general practitioner.

The need for expert, person-centred, relationship-based general practice has never been greater. General practice remains fundamental to improving the health of individuals and communities and to the sustainability of the wider healthcare system. This three-year Strategic Plan recognises our unique opportunity to take the lead in shaping the future of the profession to meet these needs, driven by our charitable purpose: **to encourage, foster and maintain the highest possible standards in general medical practice.**

As the trusted professional home for GPs, we develop, connect, represent and support our members throughout their careers. We are proud to work across all four Nations of the United Kingdom (UK) and internationally to set and maintain high standards, supporting our members and contributing to the future of high-quality general practice.

Our strategic priorities have been developed through extensive engagement with members and informed by the expertise of our colleagues, the experiences of patients and the insights of partners across health and care. Our work is organised across four areas of focus:

Strengthen our Membership reflects our commitment to supporting, connecting and growing a diverse and engaged membership community.

Shape the Future brings together the College's policy, influencing and thought leadership work, helping to ensure that general practice plays its full role in the future of healthcare.

Develop the Profession focuses on advancing education, standards, leadership, and lifelong learning, equipping GPs with the knowledge, skills and professional capabilities needed to thrive throughout their careers.

Transform our Organisation recognises that to deliver for our members and patients, we must continue to evolve ourselves by building a modern, inclusive and resilient College with the people, culture, systems and infrastructure needed to maximise our impact.

This Plan is our renewed commitment to work together to support GPs, strengthen general practice and help shape a healthier future for the patients and communities we serve.



Professor Victoria Tzortziou Brown
President of RCGP Council



Professor Mike Holmes
Chair of Trustees



Mark Thomas
Chief Executive

About the College

We are the professional membership body for GPs in the United Kingdom, dedicated to promoting and maintaining the highest possible standards in general medical practice. We support GPs throughout every stage of their career – from medical students considering general practice, through training and qualification, to established practice and retirement – providing a professional home at every step of the journey.

Since our foundation in 1952, we have grown to become the largest medical Royal College in the UK, representing approximately 55,000 members. Through a network of over 30 regional faculties, our reach extends across all four Nations of the UK and internationally.

General practice is the front door of the NHS. In England alone, general practice teams delivered around 376 million appointments in 2025, illustrating the scale, importance, and impact of the profession we represent.

Our size and global reach position us uniquely to improve patient care by setting clinical standards, shaping health policy, and advancing the profession so that GPs can continue to develop and thrive.

We design and oversee the Membership of the Royal College of General Practitioners (MRCGP) exam, the essential qualification for general practice in the UK, ensuring that new GPs meet consistently high standards of knowledge, skill, and professionalism.

As a clinically-led organisation, we work collaboratively with a wide range of partners – including other professional and representative bodies, government and health sector organisations, and patient groups – to deliver our purpose. We draw on research, innovation, and the expertise of our members to influence and support the future of general practice.

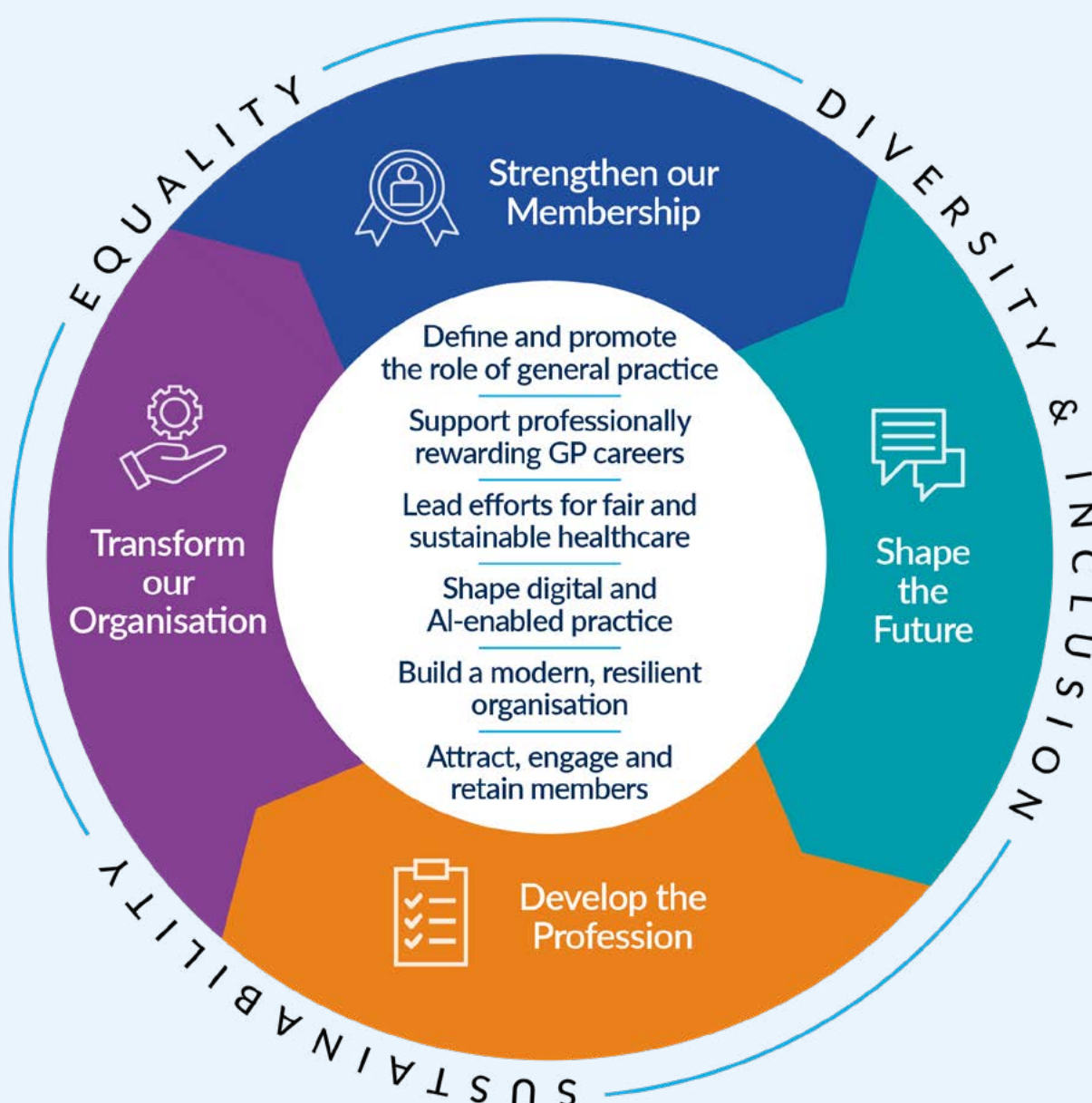
We are proud to be the professional home for GPs and a leading voice for general practice at the heart of the health system.



Our Strategy

“ Our mission is to encourage, foster and maintain the highest possible standards of patient care in general practice, across the UK and worldwide. ”

Areas of Focus & Strategic Priorities



Our Values

Compassion • Inclusivity • Sustainability • Accountability • Integrity

Our Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

Excellence in general practice for every patient.



Mission

Our charitable purpose underpins our mission: to encourage, foster and maintain the highest possible standards of patient care in general practice, across the UK and worldwide. To realise this, we:

- Set the standards for general practice for excellent patient care.
- Educate GPs and support them throughout their professional lives.
- Lead the profession and demonstrate the value of general practice.



Values

Everything we do is in service of our mission and purpose. How we do this is guided by our values:

Compassion - We have compassion for our patients, the populations we serve, our members, our colleagues, and ourselves.

Inclusivity - We value diversity as part of our communities and treat each individual with equal respect.

Sustainability - We look to the future and care about the long-term wellbeing of our members and colleagues, our profession, our patients, and the world around us.

Accountability - We take responsibility for the results of our actions and continuously strive to be the best that we can be.

Integrity - We are honest, open-minded, ethical, evidence based and fair.



Our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



We are committed to fostering an inclusive organisation where everyone feels represented, and their voices are heard, valued, and respected.

We will achieve this by tackling discrimination, strengthening inclusive leadership and learning, increasing transparency, and building awareness and understanding.

We will further embed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion across our strategic objectives and operations, ensuring meaningful and impactful outcomes for our members and colleagues.

Our commitment to environmental sustainability



We are committed to embedding environmental sustainability at the core of our Strategic Plan, ensuring our work aligns with the College's Environmental Sustainability Policy.

We recognise that human health is inextricably linked to planetary health and health equity, which underpin high-quality patient care.

We will build on existing progress, including influencing policy and supporting members, deepen integration across our work and expand into areas such as preparedness and climate adaptation.

Our Priorities

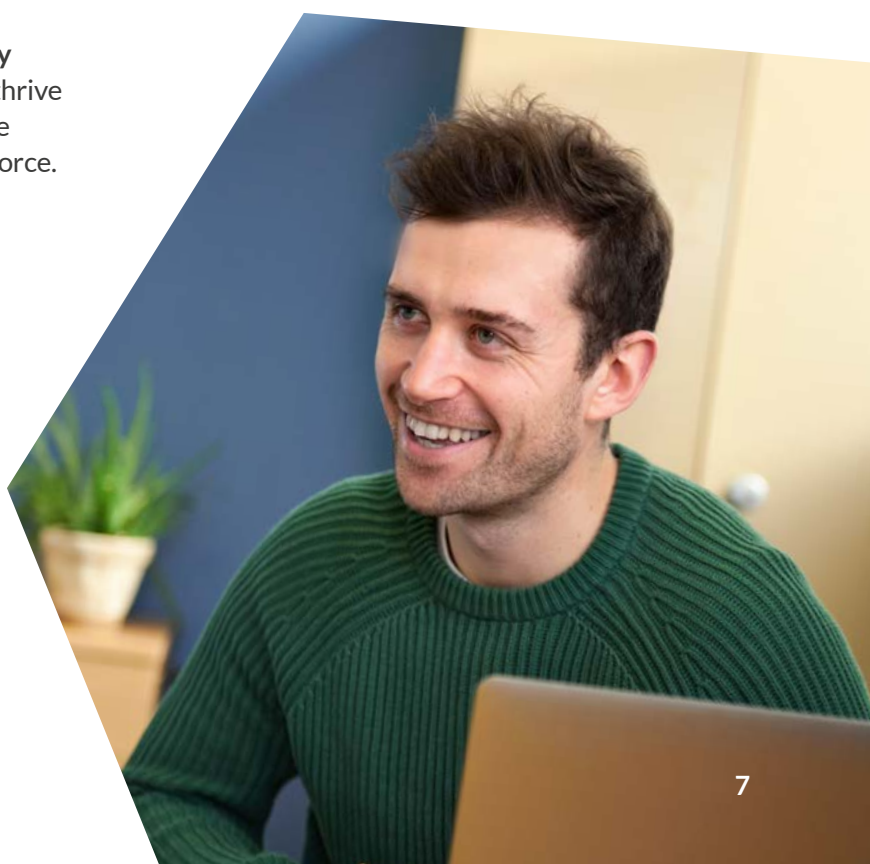
General practice is at the heart of a sustainable healthcare system, but the challenges facing the profession are increasingly complex and interconnected. Addressing them will require coordinated action across education, research, policy, service delivery and professional leadership.

Our strategy is underpinned by six mutually reinforcing strategic priorities that, together, reflect where the College can make the greatest difference. They inform the activity we will deliver collaboratively across the College, bringing together the expertise of our members, colleagues, Faculties, and Council, and working in partnership with patients, the public, policymakers, healthcare organisations, educators, researchers and international partners.

Our six strategic priorities are:

- **Lead and influence how roles of GPs and general practice are defined within the evolving health system** to ensure the unique contribution of GPs remains central to the future of healthcare.
- **Support sustainable and professionally rewarding GP careers** by helping GPs thrive through every stage and influencing the conditions needed for a resilient workforce.
- **Promote fair and sustainable healthcare**, influencing action to embed equity, evidence-based prevention and sustainability in general practice.
- **Shape smarter digitally and AI-enabled general practice, with improved data and security** so that innovation supports professional judgement, strengthens patient care and reduces unnecessary workload.
- **Build a modern, resilient organisation** with the people, culture, capability and place needed to maximise our impact for members, patients and communities.
- **Attract, engage and retain members** to strengthen the College as the trusted professional home for GPs and foster an engaged, diverse and connected membership community.

The following sections of the Plan describe how these six priorities are to be delivered through our four areas of focus, supported by clear objectives and actions that will guide the College's work over the next three years.





Strengthen our Membership

Our mission depends on a strong and diverse membership community that represents the entire GP workforce.

The stronger our membership, the stronger our ability to improve outcomes for patients.

We aim to:

- Attract new members in the UK and internationally with a compelling and inclusive membership offer.
- Engage members across all groups and locations in their professional home through connection, development and celebration.
- Retain members at every career stage through personalised support and meaningful recognition.



How we will achieve this:

- We will run data-driven campaigns to grow membership in priority and under-represented areas.
- We will explore different membership models to ensure we offer the best value to existing and new members, including enhancing our offer to International members.
- We will introduce a consistent, College-wide metric to measure how members are engaging with and benefiting from the College.
- We will embed equality, diversity and inclusion across all membership activities.
- We will strengthen how our faculties work to build a more inclusive, collaborative local GP network.
- We will increase opportunities for members to participate in Special Interest Groups and member-led communities.
- We will improve access to our member and fellow ceremonies across the UK, celebrating pride, belonging and tenure.
- We will diversify our fellowship programme through clearer pathways and better processes.
- We will strengthen our communications and engagement with International and Overseas members.

Shape the Future

Our members enable the College to be the voice of GPs, advocating for general practice and driving positive change.

We use member insight and research, and our work with partners, to shape policy, develop guidance and provide practical support to improve patient care and promote the profession. We also support research and innovation to shape future models of care.

We aim to:

- Lead and influence how the roles of GPs and general practice are defined, recognised and supported across evolving policy and healthcare systems.
- Influence national action to ensure more GPs feel their careers are professionally rewarding and sustainable.
- Become a leading voice shaping the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), digital tools and data across general practice.
- Influence action to embed equity and sustainability within policy making and planning for general practice.
- Develop our research and innovation activity, ensuring it enables GPs to continuously improve patient care.

How we will achieve this:

- We will shape, promote and support the GP role in neighbourhood and community models of care.
- We will make the case for investment in general practice, including equitable funding for underserved communities, and for an increased GP workforce.
- We will promote continuity of care as a defining feature of high-quality general practice, support reform of the primary-secondary care interface and work to secure a better model of general practice regulation.
- We will convene expertise to shape standards and guidance in the adoption of AI and other digital tools and the use of data in general practice.
- We will promote the role of general practice in evidence-based prevention and advocate for investment in environmentally sustainable general practice infrastructure.
- We will implement the College's new Research Roadmap and determine a new approach to supporting innovation in general practice through member, stakeholder and expert engagement.
- We will leverage the reach and reputation of the British Journal of General Practice to strengthen connections between research and practice.
- We will use our international partnerships to support knowledge exchange and learning and ensure the College's policy work is informed by international evidence, best practice, and emerging global trends.



Develop the Profession

As the environment in which GPs practise continues to evolve, we help ensure they are continually equipped and supported to provide the best possible patient care.

We do this by setting high standards and providing the guidance, assessment, learning, and leadership development that supports GPs throughout their careers.

We aim to:

- Define and enable high standards in GP registration, accreditation, and training through guidance and professional leadership.
- Ensure MRCGP assessments remain valid, robust and responsive to the evolving needs of general practice.
- Shape a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) offer that supports and adapts to career-long learning.
- Grow leadership capability across general practice so members can drive change and innovation in patient care, and act as effective system leaders.



How we will achieve this:

- We will evaluate the coverage of digital and Artificial Intelligence in our curriculum to ensure it reflects the priorities and developments in the delivery of modern care.
- We will deliver a modern and accessible Training Portfolio that is built around the needs of members.
- We will deliver a sustainable, high-quality examination service that provides a consistent candidate experience.
- We will further strengthen fairness, equity and inclusivity in our assessments.
- We will deliver a new CPD system and offer that supports personalised learning journeys.
- We will create a coherent leadership career pathway that is underpinned by leadership standards.
- We will expand access to mentoring, coaching and peer networks.

Transform our Organisation

To fulfil our mission, we put the right people in the right roles, focused on what matters most.

We work as one organisation - aligned, collaborative and driven by an inclusive culture, with the systems and processes to succeed. By bringing together our people, place and digital capability, we deliver stronger performance and greater impact for members, patients and society.

We aim to:

- Build a sustainable, inclusive and high-performing organisation where each colleague feels supported.
- Transform the digital experience for our members and colleagues with modern systems.
- Modernise and streamline our processes and capabilities for more effective working and decision making.
- Ensure our current and future estate is sustainable, efficient and supports modern ways of working.

How we will achieve this:

- We will develop an inclusive, values-driven culture, supported by a refreshed behavioural framework.
- We will strengthen workforce planning to ensure we have the skills and knowledge needed to deliver the organisation's ambitions.
- We will build organisational capability by addressing skills gaps in key areas, including Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital.
- We will streamline business processes and upgrade or replace key systems that support us in our work, including enhancing them with AI.
- We will grow our data capability to enable evidence-based decision making, supported by strong data governance.
- We will develop our strategic planning capacity, bringing together strategy, business planning, financial forecasting, performance and risk.
- We will increase the reach and impact of communications through a single, coordinated approach to marketing and digital engagement.
- We will create a new headquarters that reflects the ambition and future of the College.



Our Reach



RCGP Cymru Wales represents a network of over 2,000 GP members organised across three regional faculties. It plays a major role in highlighting system pressures and influencing improvement.

Key activities over this period include:

- Influencing Welsh health policy by engaging with the new Welsh Government and providing leadership and insight from general practice.
- Continuing the RCGP Wales Leaders for the Future programme, developing GP leaders and strengthening the College's network and influence.
- Strengthening member development and engagement through a CPD and wellbeing programme that responds to members' needs.



RCGP Scotland represents around 5,000 GP members across five regional faculties. General practice delivers approximately 90% of patient contact in the NHS, and the College in Scotland plays a key role in highlighting the challenges facing the profession.

Key activities over this period include:

- Driving coordinated advocacy by engaging policymakers, shaping government policy, and empowering GPs to strengthen general practice and improve outcomes in Scotland.
- Strengthening member connection, representation, and development by building an inclusive, engaged community with strong local leadership, lifelong support, and high-quality learning across Scotland.
- Sustaining RCGP Scotland's funded projects to secure long-term impact for general practice and improved patient outcomes.



RCGP Northern Ireland represents over 1,400 GP members, accounting for 75-80% of the GP workforce in Northern Ireland. With a large proportion of the GP workforce in its membership, it has a central leadership and advocacy role in responding to significant workforce and demand pressures in Northern Ireland's primary care system.

Key activities over this period include:

- Launching the GP Manifesto in Northern Ireland and political engagement.
- Supporting existing and reaching new students at Queens University Belfast and Ulster University.
- Facilitating professional development events, including those focused on women's health, rural health, and climate and sustainability.



Our international work aims to improve global primary care and support family medicine worldwide. There are over 3,500 International and Overseas members from across more than 80 countries who are supported by dedicated networks, assessment and training programmes.

Key activities over this period include:

- Engaging with the World Health Organisation (WHO), the World Organisation of Family Doctors (WONCA) and the European Union of General Practitioners (UEMO) to influence global policy.
- Maintaining robust quality standards of the MRCGP[INT] Accreditation Programme which generates eligible candidates for RCGP International membership.
- Improving communications and engagement with International and Overseas members.

Measuring our Success

We will measure our success by how well we deliver our priorities, through our strategic objectives, fulfil our charitable purpose and provide value to our members.

We will track progress across key areas, including member experience, how effectively we support the development of the profession, our influence on national policy, and how effectively we run the College. This includes how supported and engaged our colleagues feel, as they are essential to delivering our work.

We will use a combination of performance data, key indicators and feedback from members, colleagues and stakeholders to understand what is working well and where we need to improve. We will review this regularly and adapt our approach where needed.

We are committed to being transparent about our progress. We will report regularly to Council, the Trustee Board, and our members.

As the College operates in all four Nations of the UK, we will monitor performance at a Nation level as appropriate.





Published July 2026

The Royal College of General Practitioners is a network of over 55,000 family doctors working to improve care for patients. We work to encourage and maintain the highest standards of general medical practice and act as the voice of GPs on education, training, research and clinical standards.



Royal College of
General Practitioners

Royal College of General Practitioners

30 Euston Square, London NW1 2FB

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