

Strategy 2017–20



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About the College

The Royal College of Radiologists (RCR) is the leading UK professional membership body that seeks to improve medical practice in the specialties of clinical oncology and clinical radiology for the benefit of patients, their carers and the wider public. The College collaborates with many other bodies and individuals across the UK and internationally. The College is a charity registered with the Charity Commission.

This document sets out the strategic objectives of the RCR for the next three years, from January 2017.

Context for this Strategy

This Strategy has been formulated against a background of complex external developments.

- The RCR's medical specialties of clinical oncology and clinical radiology and the quality and safety of services for patients are under unprecedented pressure. There are far too few trainees to provide the doctors we need. The workforces are overstretched giving rise to serious and embedded morale issues.
- The NHS is facing severe financial challenges, readily apparent before implementation of plans for seven-day services. The Government's commitment to patients to deliver a full range of services seven days a week in the English NHS is unachievable. This demands an informed national debate with patients and the public about the services they need and what they are prepared to pay.
- NHS resourcing issues also fuel the debate about value for money and cost effectiveness – especially in relation to outcomes.
- The prolonged and bitter dispute over junior doctors' contracts will have a long-term impact and could adversely affect the consultant contract negotiations. No workforce will operate at its best in such conditions.
- There are major ambitions for earlier diagnosis and improved treatment expressed in the English and Scottish cancer strategies.^{1,2} With our specialties being at the heart of such plans, we know how far away the Governments are from achieving those ambitions.
- The plans to provide integrated care and population-based NHS and social care services must be right for patients. There are major risks with the implementation of these plans, including destabilisation of crucial services and severe under-resourcing of the new models of care.
- Patient demand for and expectations of personalised medicine add new pressures to already overstretched services.
- The promised 'digital revolution' in services for patients could start to reshape how healthcare services are accessed and delivered. It could raise further patients' expectations of an NHS which is instantly and constantly accessible and available.
- Our specialties rely on high-end technologies which are constantly evolving and can offer better diagnosis and treatment. Keeping up with the pace of change presents major challenges to NHS services. This threatens the quality of care that British patients will experience such that we will lag further behind comparable countries.
- The next few years will witness how Brexit plays out and whether this might in turn see further devolution within, or fragmentation of, the UK. There are many unknowns especially around what this might mean for services to patients and for the medical research capability of the UK.

The RCR must continue to lead, educate and support within this environment and also address its own challenges over the next three years.

- How medical royal colleges are valued can vary with the political landscape and the issues at stake. Some issues present us with opportunities but many more give rise to threats.
- As a charity predominantly funded by income from our membership, we are politically and financially independent of government. We have to manage our resources carefully, focusing on activities that make a real difference to the care of patients and to the working lives of our membership.
- We must work harder to attract our Fellows and members to engage with us, while being sensitive to their growing workplace pressures.
- Our 2016 membership survey produced positive headline results. It indicated that professional resources are one of the main reasons for Fellows and members remaining part of the College. Delivery of better value through our learning programmes – especially digitally-based learning – which will also benefit our overseas members (almost a quarter of our membership) needs to be a key focus.
- Many people are unaware that clinical radiology is essential to the whole of medical and surgical healthcare and that clinical oncology underpins the entire cancer pathway. In many ways, the RCR is the ‘cancer College’. We must work harder at communicating the indispensable value of our disciplines to other clinicians, to patients and the general public and to government.

1

Increasing and supporting the workforce in clinical radiology and clinical oncology for the benefit of patients

2

Ensuring the continuing quality of training and practice in both specialties and improving service delivery

3

Increasing awareness of the value of the specialties for the benefit of patients

4

Improving the value of College membership through life-long professional learning and engagement for the benefit of patients

5

Developing research and technologies for our two specialties

Objectives

The objectives over the period of the Strategy to deliver on the five themes are:

1

Increasing and supporting the workforce in clinical radiology and clinical oncology for the benefit of patients

1.1

Strongly continuing to lobby to increase the numbers in training.

1.2

Exploring alternative funding and support for postgraduate training programmes.

2.1

Ensuring national bodies are aware of the dangers to patient care and treatment targets of failing to maintain quality.

2.2

Conducting a thorough review of the training curricula for both specialties.

2.3

Improving access to FRCR examinations for overseas candidates.

2.4

Focusing professional guidance on where we can make a difference: maintaining and improving the quality of practice.

2

Ensuring the continuing quality of training and practice in both specialties and improving service delivery

3

**Increasing awareness
of the value of the
specialties for the
benefit of patients**

3.1

**Redoubling efforts to
improve public and patient
understanding of the work
of the specialties.**

3.2

**Making use of the skills
and experience of College
lay members to promote
the specialties and the
College's work.**

4

Improving the value of College membership through life-long professional learning and engagement for the benefit of patients

4.1

Providing professional learning in formats and locations that ensure the widest accessibility and offer value for money.

4.2

Providing a high-quality and sustainable annual, major educational event.

4.3

Delivering targeted, meaningful value to all Fellows and members at all stages in their careers.

4.4

Attracting and retaining younger Fellows and members to work with the College.

5

Developing research and technologies for our two specialties

5.1

Supporting research in our specialties to help shape future diagnosis and treatment techniques and to increase the academic standing of the specialties.

5.2

Working with industry to ensure that our specialties profit from the best new technology to benefit patients and that this technology is rapidly adopted into clinical practice.

Delivering the Strategy

Each Faculty will produce an Annual Plan with a maximum of three priorities to support each objective in the Strategy. Progress towards achieving the priorities, and therefore the strategic objectives, will be reported on in each College Annual Review.

References


1. Independent Cancer Taskforce. *Achieving world-class cancer outcomes. A strategy for England 2015–2020*. London: Cancer Taskforce, 2015.
2. The Scottish Government. *Beating cancer: ambition and action*. Edinburgh: The Scottish Government, 2016.

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