



# Changing the face of surgery

Our strategy 2021–26



Royal College  
of Surgeons  
of England

ADVANCING SURGICAL CARE



Our new building and headquarters is a blend of the old and the new, creating a special atmosphere combining the history and future of surgery which will affect us. Now, having designed, created and built our new beautiful home, it will take our people to make our vision a reality.



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## Foreword

**The face of surgery is changing.** Technological and scientific advances make new, more complex and targeted treatments possible, but also increase the need for skilled workforce, and equipment.

Surgery helps people to get back to work, and to live longer and more independent lives. It covers many specialist areas from heart to hand surgery, from intestinal to dental surgery. Surgeons are highly trained, highly skilled individuals but surgery is a team game – it relies on the help and skill of many other professionals. The surgical profession is also increasingly diverse, in ethnicity, in gender, in sexual orientation – all sharing one aim: to do their very best for the patient.

As we address the greatest challenge that surgery has faced in a generation, we will support our members and patients both in the UK and effect fundamental change as global citizens.

The COVID pandemic has wreaked havoc on people's lives and leaves behind it the greatest challenge that surgery has faced in a generation. Over five million people across the UK are waiting for treatment, with maximum waiting times growing beyond a year. Professional training has been greatly disrupted, bringing uncertainty for the next generation of surgeons as well as the patients they will treat. And health inequalities are widening, affecting some of our most deprived communities.

As well as addressing our challenges at home, we must continue to play our part as global citizens, not just by facilitating safe surgery in developing countries, but also by helping to tackle global problems such as climate change.



Embracing difference can inspire all of us to grow, and will ensure that our College remains at the forefront of patient care for generations to come.

This strategy aims to refresh the place of The Royal College of Surgeons of England in the post-COVID world, in the context of the NHS, the independent sector and global health, but most importantly in the interests of surgeons, surgical teams and their patients.

It sets out what we will do to support our members, the wider surgical and dental workforce, patients, the NHS and policy makers to recover from the impact of the pandemic on services, training, standards of care, safety and waiting times, across all the regions of England, the devolved nations of the UK and beyond.


It also sets out how we will explore the opportunities of the digital age, and address the challenges of professional specialisation,

changing workforce expectations, and a growing demand for surgical interventions, at a time of constrained healthcare resource.

We have a particular focus on promoting diversity, inclusion and fairness in our College and right across the surgical and dental profession. We believe that embracing difference is not just the right thing to do, it can inspire all of us to grow, and it will ensure that our profession and our College remain at the forefront of patient care for generations to come.

RCS President, Professor Neil Mortensen





Our new building is a modern, welcoming space where all of our members can train, meet or network, regardless of where they live and work.

## About us

The Royal College of Surgeons of England is one of the best-known professional membership organisations in the world, with a name and reputation that speak for excellence in the UK and across the globe. We provide education, assessment and development to nearly 30,000 surgeons, dental surgeons and members of the wider surgical and dental teams at all stages of their career; we set professional standards, facilitate research and champion world-class surgical outcomes for patients. In July 2021, we opened the doors to our new building as a modern space that also respects our heritage, a welcoming place for all our members to train, meet or network, wherever they live and work.



## Our vision

We want to see excellent surgical care for everyone

## Our mission

We will achieve our vision by enabling all our members, in all their diversity, to deliver excellence in everything they do

## Our values

Collaboration. Respect. Excellence.



## Our values explained

We will deliver our values through our behaviours and attitudes which impact directly on the care delivered to patients and how we work together.

### Collaboration

We embrace our collective responsibilities, working collaboratively and as one College.

#### Behaviours

- We work together, using our collective expertise and experience to effect positive change.
- We are open, honest and transparent, straightforward in our language and actions, acting with sincerity and delivering on our commitments.
- We take our responsibilities to each other, to patient care and to the environment seriously and we act with this in mind across our work.

#### Why?

Working collaboratively creates an environment that is conducive to improved productivity, trust and relationships. Teams that have the biggest impact are those where members take responsibility, celebrate success when things go well and take ownership when they don't.



## Respect

We value every person we come into contact with at the College as an individual, we respect their aspirations and commitments in life, and seek to understand and meet their physical and wellbeing needs.

### Behaviours

- We treat everyone we meet with kindness and integrity, and we seek to promote these behaviours in others.
- We actively seek a range of views and experiences across our work, and we listen to everyone, and make everyone feel a valued part of the team.

### Why?

Knowledge multiplies among people who are able to learn from their differences. Evidence suggests that diverse organisations perform better and innovate quicker.

## Excellence

We aspire to excellence and success. We share learning from our experiences, apply feedback into practice, and commit to continual improvement.

### Behaviours

- We work hard to be the best at what we do, recognising and celebrating effort and achievement, and reflecting on our work, so that we can learn and improve.
- We value and invest in research, education and training to drive excellence and put improvements in surgical practice, dentistry and patient care at the heart of our work.
- We always seek to learn and discover more, valuing knowledge and scientific evidence, and basing our decisions on insights, fact and experience.

### Why?

Transparency and agile working drives excellence and improvement. Motivated by the desire to serve and to be the best in our field, we will deliver on our commitments through rapid testing, innovation and future-focused leadership.





## Strategic Aims

# We will achieve our mission by:

- **Leading our profession:** by being the pre-eminent voice of surgery, and championing excellent surgical care by engaging the profession, policy makers, patients and the public.
- **Improving practice:** by continually improving the standards, safety and implementation of surgical care, and by developing the workforce across the UK.
- **Engaging our members:** by inspiring, supporting, educating and representing the professional interests of a growing, diverse membership.
- **Embracing diversity:** by building an inclusive profession where everyone's contribution is recognised and all feel welcome, demonstrating our commitment to fairness, gender equality and anti-racism.
- **Transforming our College:** by building a sustainable, diverse, digital, forward-looking organisation, which plays its part in the world and is accountable for everything it does.



## Strategic Aim: Leading the profession

### We will:

- Build on our position as the leading voice for the surgical profession in the UK, further strengthening our role as a thought-leader and commentator on building surgical capacity and advancing surgical care globally.
- Address the impact of COVID on elective surgery through our 'New Deal' for surgery, lobbying for increased investment in surgical infrastructure and staff to make surgical and dental services more sustainable, restoring timely access to surgery, and bringing UK surgical outcomes up to the level of the best in the world.
- Mitigate the impact of the COVID pandemic on surgical training and assessment by working closely with statutory and regulatory bodies and supporting our membership in their role in the training challenge.
- Play our part in addressing health inequalities by improving access to surgery and dentistry for all patients, through our work in media and public affairs.
- Strengthen our networks across all the regions of England, along with our work in the devolved nations, advocating on their behalf to policy makers and politicians in the national and devolved governments.
- Campaign for improved regulation and oversight of novel surgical procedures, products and services, to improve patient outcomes and drive ever safer surgery.
- Challenge the debilitating effect of racism and discrimination experienced by our colleagues, work to improve inclusivity and accessibility and encourage and support all members of the surgical and dental team, irrespective of their background, gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation.
- Advocate on behalf of working parents in surgery, driving diversity and flexibility within the profession, generally and across College roles.
- Support, develop and implement initiatives aimed at contributing towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the Lancet Commission's Global Surgery 2030 goals.



## Strategic Aim: Improving Practice

### We will:

- Champion excellence in surgery and define how surgical care teams can achieve this by setting standards and providing advice on good practice.
- Lead innovation and change in our pioneering work on the Future of Surgery, using advances in science and technology to drive improvements to surgical training, education and practice, and patient outcomes.
- Develop the highest quality learning programme in collaboration with leading national and international partners, piloting innovation in technology and practice in our new Professional Surgical Centre, and rolling it out nationally and internationally to improve accessibility and enhance the relevance and impact of the learning experience for the surgical workforce as a whole.
- Facilitate research, enable world-leading surgical trials, and undertake high quality surgical audits to create knowledge and promote evidence-based practice.
- Help local surgical care teams and their hospitals manage emerging problems by providing expert advice, and individual and team practice review.
- Promote the development of the surgical team through our learning and quality improvement programmes.
- Embrace, support, develop and respect all members of the surgical team, whatever their background or training route into surgery.



## Strategic Aim: Engaging our membership

### We will:

- Inspire current and potential members by changing how surgery is perceived, widening access, and supporting people to achieve and sustain all that a fulfilling career in surgery has to offer.
- Regularly seek the views of our members and advocate on their behalf about issues that they have told us are important to them and to surgery.
- Grow our membership in the UK and across the world, creating an accessible, inclusive, integrated and connected surgical community.
- Work more closely with our members across all regions and devolved nations to ensure that they have a stronger voice in what we do and how we do it.
- Provide a compelling and personalised range of services tailored to every stage of their surgical career.
- Provide mentorship and support at key points in the career pathway, especially for newly appointed consultants and SAS surgeons.
- Be open, transparent and competitive in our membership subscriptions, and accountable to our members in the UK and across the world for what we do with the fees they pay to us.
- Use digital technologies intelligently, and designed around member needs, to enable and enhance membership experience.
- Ensure surgical professionals in training benefit from the highest quality assessment framework, informed by the relevant curricular outcomes, developed in line with best practice and delivered using the latest innovations in technology, in the UK and internationally.
- Ensure that the College is welcoming and supportive to surgical and dental practitioners from all backgrounds and cultures.



## Strategic Aim: Embracing diversity

### We will:

- Deliver the recommendations set out in the independent review on diversity and inclusion, and commit to the reform targets.
- Welcome and promote greater diversity in the College, its Council, Committees, examiner panels, faculty, and other structures and roles by making selection criteria clearer and processes more transparent.
- Drive forward change to challenge and counteract the obstacles that deter diverse groups from accessing, developing and advancing into leadership roles in surgery through our regional and careers outreach and initiatives such as the Emerging Leaders programme.
- Encourage a sense of belonging among all our members by reinforcing consistent messages about the importance of making the College and surgical environments more welcoming to members from diverse backgrounds.
- Change the face of surgery to reflect the diversity of the wider medical profession and the society in which we live by supporting public learning, engagement and understanding of surgery, its contemporary practice and historical development and inspiring and encouraging future generations from diverse backgrounds to take up careers in the profession.
- Collect robust data and analyse information to determine progress and inform future work on diversity and inclusion.



## Strategic Aim: Transforming our College

### We will:

- Make our new building a welcoming professional home for all members, wherever they are based in the UK or overseas; a place where they feel they belong and are welcome, irrespective of background, and can come to learn, work, relax and meet friends and colleagues.
- Promote diversity clearly in our building, in the portraiture and publications, in the invitations to launches and gatherings and in websites and digital services.
- Become a digital-first organisation by putting all our members at the heart of our digital strategy, creating a new College website and improved digital systems, allowing quick and easy access to all College information and knowledge services.
- Reflect our growing presence throughout all regions and devolved nations in the governance of the College.
- Champion ethical practices and sustainability across all areas of our business and ensure they underpin our working relationships with those with whom we collaborate, both in the UK and globally.
- Further improve the engagement and morale of our staff, and support and develop them to reach their potential.
- Deliver best practice to enable our people to realise their potential, whilst embracing work-life balance and creating a strong, diverse culture.
- Create a positive experience at every point across the College.

# The Royal College of Surgeons of England Strategy 2021–26



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**Our mission** We will achieve our vision by supporting all our members, in all their diversity, to deliver excellence in everything they do



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## Collaboration

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## Strategic Aims We will achieve our mission by:



**1. Leading our profession:** by being the pre-eminent voice of surgery, championing excellent surgical care by engaging the profession, policy makers, patients and the public



**2. Improving practice:** by continually improving the practice, standards and safety of surgical care, and by developing the workforce across the UK



**3. Engaging our members:** by inspiring, supporting, educating and representing the professional interests of a growing, diverse membership



**4. Embracing diversity:** by championing the diversity in our profession, treating everyone with respect and compassion, and demonstrating our commitment to fairness, gender equality and anti-racism



**5. Transforming our College:** by building a sustainable, diverse, digital, forward-looking organisation, which plays its part in the world and is accountable for everything it does



It's a fact that diverse organisations perform better and innovate quicker. Knowledge multiplies among people who are able to learn from their differences. That's why we're putting diversity and inclusion at the heart of the College's future. Embracing difference isn't just the right thing to do. It can inspire all of us to grow. And it will ensure our profession remains at the forefront of patient care for generations to come.

For more information about our College and our 2021–26 strategy, please visit [rcseng.ac.uk](https://rcseng.ac.uk)



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