

The Royal Society of Medicine

Strategy 2021–2026

Better healthcare for better lives.



Transforming the
Royal Society of Medicine
for the next century

A note.

From the President and Chief Executive

The working lives and expectations of healthcare professionals and teams have changed beyond recognition since the Royal Society of Medicine (RSM) was established in 1805. Today there are new global issues to manage, including the effect of climate change on health – one of the greatest tests of all time. Health inequalities need to be tackled – in the UK and across the world. Diverse voices need to be heard – in healthcare and beyond.

The day-to-day reality for many healthcare professionals is one of enormous challenge. There is more pressure than ever in terms of workloads and increased demands with limited resources. Combined with the move to multidisciplinary teams, the roles of individuals are changing. All of this has impacted on the type of training and time now required for professionals to keep abreast of the latest developments.

The disruption to education and training caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has crystallised the need for change in how healthcare professionals continue their learning and professional development. And the exceptional challenges of the pandemic have revealed an unprecedented thirst for medical and scientific knowledge in the UK and across the globe.

But what has not changed is the role of the RSM. For 200 years, we have been bringing people together and sharing learning. We must now do so with renewed energy and in a way that addresses the needs and challenges of the current and future healthcare workforce, whilst all the while taking advantage of technology.

We stand at the cusp of a new era of healthcare education. Novel and exciting ways of bringing continuous learning to this and the next generation of healthcare professionals are now emerging. And as a multidisciplinary royal society with an international reach, we are in a unique position to forge ahead and reinforce our position as a beacon of inspiring learning initiatives across every discipline of medicine.

In our 2021–2026 strategy, we share our plans for transforming every aspect of our work and membership offering to enable us to deliver our vision.

Our strategy describes how we will develop high-quality, relevant education programmes that offer participants the chance to learn from, and engage with, the best and brightest minds in medicine and healthcare. It sets out how we will become an easily accessible, leading digital medical library for researchers and those who want to stay ahead.

It explains how our education events will offer new opportunities for multidisciplinary learning by connecting with, talking to, and learning from, and with, others. This will be done in attractive in-person and online spaces fit for this modern age. And it shows how the breadth of knowledge brought to our education will support innovators developing the medical products and services of tomorrow.

Continuing learning for healthcare professionals is transformational. It leads to better healthcare and in turn creates better lives. This is our vision as we take steps towards the next century.

With this new strategy, we are preparing to play a transformative role in supporting and inspiring healthcare professionals to embrace opportunities and tackle the challenges we face now – and into the future.

Professor Roger Kirby
President

Michele Acton
Chief Executive

Key facts

Royal patron:
Her Majesty The Queen

Established:
1805

Learning resources:
400,000 volumes
5,500 e-journals
2,500 e-books
40,000 old and rare books
3,000 works of art

Number of specialty areas:
55

Number of members:
c19,100

Number of registered delegates in 2020/2021:
152,000

The Society today.

We are a registered charity and membership organisation providing medical education to healthcare professionals. Our 19,000 members are the lifeblood of the organisation, bringing an immense breadth of healthcare expertise and knowledge.

Our members can be found in 102 countries across the world, enriching our education offering with valuable international insights and contacts. Diverse contributions to our work also come from other medical experts, leading researchers, universities and specialist colleges, together with charities and healthcare and commercial organisations.

Given our ability to draw on expertise across specialties, professions and from other institutions, we hold a unique place in the medical education landscape which sets us apart from all other healthcare organisations.

Education programmes

The RSM comprises 55 specialist sections and societies, covering every major branch of medicine. These are run by highly valued volunteer members who are largely responsible for developing and delivering our specialist education programme, along with our staff.

As well as specialist learning, we deliver general programmes of relevance to all healthcare professionals and those interested in medicine. These have recently included a successful series on COVID-19 and others on health and climate change, with yet more topical events planned for the future.

Programmes designed to enhance professional development and leadership skills are also offered, together with opportunities to hear thought leaders in medicine, research and science, as well as other walks of life, talk about their work.

Education delivery

Until April 2020, our education programme was delivered almost entirely in person at the RSM's home, 1 Wimpole Street, in London. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, all education between April 2020 to the end of June 2021 was delivered online.

Online education has continued, and we are now moving towards delivering programmes simultaneously in person and online.

Learning resources

Our Library is one of the largest and most up-to-date medical libraries in Europe and offers extensive research and learning resources to our members.

The Library reading rooms and work spaces are located at our headquarters in London where specialist librarians offer a wide range of services including document delivery, literature searches and information skills workshops and tutorials.

Most of these services were provided to members digitally during the pandemic, whilst access continued to the Library's digital collections including e-books, e-journals and medical databases.

The Library also hosts regular exhibitions featuring archive material from the rich heritage collections we hold.

Club and event services

The Club facilities at 1 Wimpole Street offer members invaluable opportunities to network and socialise in an attractive environment. There is a restaurant, bar and hotel, and members and clients can make use of several rooms available for private dining and special events.

As part of our education offering, we provide the full complement of event management, catering and AV services. These services, together with the auditoria and meeting rooms, are also available to external clients, with our central and prestigious location drawing conference organisers from all over the world.

Governance

We are governed by a Royal Charter, By-Laws and Regulations. Her Majesty The Queen is our Royal Patron. The governing body, the RSM Council, has members comprising ten elected Fellows and up to three who are appointed. The President of the Society acts as the Chair of Council and a range of Council Committees, comprising Council members and co-opted members, support the work of Council. In addition, each of the 55 sections and societies has a volunteer President and Council.

Our strategy at a glance.

When original and enquiring minds come together, great things can be achieved

We have a long and illustrious history spanning more than 200 years. This strategy sets out our renewed vision for a transformed and modernised RSM that can flourish for the next century.

It comes at a crucial time.

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the vital role we play in convening healthcare professionals and providing education, as well as being a trusted and sought-after medical voice in the UK and across the globe.

This five-year strategy centres around our vision of better healthcare for better lives. It embraces the work of our section volunteers, staff and members, and sets out a framework in which we can thrive and which can build the resilience we need to face our future challenges.

The strategy clearly articulates how we will achieve our strategic goal to be the leading provider of continuing learning to healthcare professionals through four pillars: Education, Learning Resources, Networks and Innovation Support.

It provides a framework in which all key decisions will be made about our activities and is underpinned by a sustainable financial model.

Our new strategy is clear about the RSM's purpose.

When original and enquiring minds come together, great things can be achieved. We have always been a place where ideas are sparked and innovation is nurtured. In 1968 Patrick Steptoe and John Edwards met for the first time at the RSM. That meeting proved to be the catalyst for a medical breakthrough which saw the birth of Louise Brown in 1978, the first of millions of babies born through in vitro fertilisation.

With our new strategy, we will incubate ideas, connect, educate and share learning with healthcare professionals as a trusted, credible source of evidence-based knowledge, insights and understanding.

We look forward to a revitalised and sustainable future in which the RSM is in an unassailable position to deliver another 100 years of success.

Vision

Better healthcare for better lives

Mission

To share learning and support innovation

Strategic goal

To be the leading provider of continuing learning to healthcare professionals

Key pillars

Education: Delivering multidisciplinary specialist and general education as well as professional development

Learning Resources: Providing excellent healthcare resources

Networks: Connecting those involved in and interested in healthcare

Innovation Support: Leveraging expertise from across the RSM to help and inspire innovators

Key pillars and our goals.

Being a member of the RSM isn't just about connecting with medics. You get the opportunity to collaborate with veterinary and dentistry colleagues as well as allied health professionals across the different medical specialties. Working with these colleagues to run cross-section events is something that's going to be very important to me as I take over as President of the Trainees Section.

Dr Bernard Ho, Locum consultant in dermatology and lymphoedema and President, RSM Trainees Section

Pillar 1

Education.

Our specialty education programmes, general events and professional development initiatives will better equip healthcare professionals.

To help us deliver the Education pillar of the strategy, we have set seven goals.

Whilst President of the RSM's Intellectual Disability Section, I have been able to work with colleagues to test out a number of newer developments, from the use of virtual platforms to the increased participation and visibility of patients and service users at the heart of our programmes.

Professor Regi Alexander, Consultant psychiatrist and President, RSM Intellectual Disability Section

Goal 1: Deliver high-quality, relevant education that supports healthcare professionals at all stages of their careers

For the RSM to be at the forefront of medical education, our programmes will be:

High quality: We have developed new quality assurance measures and recently started awarding our own Continuing Professional Development (CPD) credits. A dedicated CPD Committee has been established to oversee and support the Dean of Education in awarding these. This new development will enhance the quality assurance processes of our education programme and further enable the sharing of good practice.

Relevant: We will ensure that annual programme planning takes into account current topics and themes, and addresses the needs of a wide range of healthcare professionals.

Accessible: With healthcare professionals working in multidisciplinary teams, our programmes will be open to, relevant and able to support, the broader healthcare sector.

Targeted at all stages of careers: We will deliver programmes that not only address the needs of senior healthcare professionals but also specifically target those embarking on or at the early stages of their careers.

Goal 2: Focus on multidisciplinary learning

We stand apart from other organisations in that we are truly a multidisciplinary society. The RSM has 55 sections and societies, covering a wide range of specialties. Whilst historically doctor-focused, we are actively working to strengthen our approach to multi-professional support.

We will actively promote joint-specialty programmes and ensure that speakers at events come from a range of professions and patient communities.

Goal 3: Deliver a broad mix of specialist and general education as well as professional development programmes

We have deep experience in delivering specialist education programmes through our sections. With the success of a number of online series produced during the pandemic, it has become clear there is also significant interest in general education programmes.

We will continue to produce specialist programmes supported by general education programmes. In addition, we will create a range of professional development programmes and roll these out further.

Goal 4: Ensure the RSM is at the forefront of experiential education delivery, both for in-person and digital learning

Education programmes have moved away from a single lecturer imparting knowledge from the front of a room or by means of a lengthy speech or webinar. Engaging delegates before, during and after an education programme can improve the overall educational experience.

Our recent experience throughout the pandemic has provided a clear demonstration of the need for interaction and we will continue to embed experiential learning in our education programmes.

Goal 5: Enhance learning through networking opportunities and access to broader resources

An essential part of our education is the broader learning that comes from activity beyond an event, be it in person or online. By introducing new people to the RSM, being proactive in establishing networking events and supporting programmes with resources, we will enhance learning for everyone.

To meet this goal, we will:

- Develop regular proactive networking elements for our education programmes whether in person or online
- Actively seek to partner with external organisations. These may be other societies or professional bodies or patient groups, all of which can enhance the sharing of knowledge
- Support education events with a Library enhancement package of online resources that complement the event topic

Goal 6: Significantly increase reach by ensuring our education programmes are accessible across the UK and the rest of the world

We will capitalise on our switch to online programmes and look to increase our reach across the UK and world for both live events and subsequent viewing.

Goal 7: Embed inclusion and diversity across education at the RSM

Sharing knowledge is at the heart of the RSM. We will ensure the range of speakers that are given a platform to share their knowledge represents the diversity of healthcare professionals in the UK and internationally.

For me, the RSM has really been a beacon of educational excellence and it's been crucial to my own professional development since I qualified as a doctor.

Mr Akib Khan, Trauma and orthopaedic specialty registrar and Council member, RSM Orthopaedic Section Council

As an educationalist, the multi-professional, collaborative network of learning at the RSM is hugely important, connecting us with other disciplines, nationally and internationally, and giving real dynamism to our nephrology programmes as a result.

Dr Allyson Egan, Consultant in nephrology and past President of the RSM Nephrology Section

We will provide outstanding resources for individual and group learning as part of our education offering. To help deliver the Learning Resources pillar of the strategy, we have set seven goals.

Goal 1: Become a leading digital library for researchers

We will be at the forefront of digital provision of learning resources. Through an enhanced digital library, we will provide tools for researchers to easily access and exploit the available content and provide improved online support for those accessing learning resources.

Goal 2: Ensure print and digital content meets the needs of members

We will adopt a digital first and demand-driven model that will ensure the needs of our members are a priority.

Goal 3: Increase the provision of knowledge services to members

We will support members' learning through the provision of appropriate resources and expertise. This will include the delivery of CPD-accredited information skills training through online webinars, and the provision of research support services.

Goal 4: Increase support for education programmes

We will enhance our education programmes by enabling delegates to have access to broader resources. In addition, we will embed these resources into CPD-accredited events.

Goal 5: Preserve and promote the heritage assets of the RSM

We have an extensive collection of heritage assets. We will preserve these and promote the collections to members and interested parties through exhibitions and other initiatives. Heritage assets of international importance will be digitised.

Goal 6: Deliver excellent customer services and support to members

We will deliver excellent services and support to members through improved enquiry handling and by promoting the services, collections, expertise, document delivery and heritage assets.

Goal 7: Develop commercial opportunities

We will maximise commercial opportunities, including document delivery services and digital rights management.

Pillar 2

Learning Resources.

Pillar 3

Networks.

We will facilitate both formal and informal learning networks by convening networking opportunities so that members and other healthcare professionals can engage with those in similar and related fields or other areas of interest. To help us deliver the Networks pillar of the strategy, we have set four goals.

Goal 1: Increase the number of education events which have a networking element

Networking has always been part of in-person learning at the RSM and we will embed this within our online learning programmes.

Goal 2: Develop a range of proactive networking initiatives that support multidisciplinary learning

The RSM is well placed to bring together people from across healthcare and beyond. We will establish new and interactive engaging event formats that will enable the sharing of learning and knowledge.

As well as encouraging me to connect with like-minded and driven people, the RSM has helped guide me on different career options, including holding some brilliant psychiatry meetings for students. It's a specialty I'll definitely be interested in once I've qualified.

Lois Zac-Williams,
Final-year medical student and Council member, RSM Student Section

Goal 3: Support members to engage with each other through a community networking platform

By introducing dynamic and interactive ways for our members to engage with each other, we will provide powerful opportunities for learning and networking. This will further underscore our role as a leading convener in healthcare education.

Goal 4: Support the exchange of two-way information between healthcare professionals and those making and influencing health policy

We are in a unique position to sit at the nexus between healthcare professionals and policymakers and influencers.

Through our extensive and long-established networks of leaders and experts, we will convene and inform discussions on the most challenging health issues of our time. This expertise, combined with our apolitical and neutral stance, means that we are already recognised as a trusted platform.

Being involved with the RSM as an invited speaker, and also through listening to conversations hosted by the Society featuring high-profile people in the world of healthcare, has helped with my own professional development as a charity leader and registered nurse.

The location is amazing and it's a great place to meet with colleagues or relax in a safe and friendly environment.

Professor Greta Westwood,
Chief Executive Officer, Florence Nightingale Foundation

I have been immensely proud to see the RSM spread its wings and deliver outstanding medical education to a greatly expanded audience using virtual media. Our mission now is to build on this success and proceed boldly forth into the future.

Professor Roger Kirby,
President of the RSM

The tremendous breadth and depth of knowledge that is brought to our education programmes is invaluable in supporting innovators.

Pillar 4

Innovation Support.

The RSM played a big role in assisting an august body of physicians and scientists to assess our data. I have been, and remain, grateful to the Society for its open-minded values and the support it has provided me.

Dr Geoffrey W Guy,
Founder GW Pharmaceuticals and
Chairman of The Guy Foundation

Goal 1: Scale up our current activities so that we can support many more innovators

We will build on our programme of innovation events to showcase new developments to members and non-members. This will also provide opportunities to match innovators with potential funders.

Goal 2: Develop a comprehensive and enhanced approach to Innovation Support over the course of the strategy

We envisage this will encompass using our networks to support individual innovators with “super user” expertise and developing an expert panel that will be used to help innovators move towards first-round funding regarding products/services where there is a clinical need.

Continuing learning for healthcare professionals is transformational. It leads to better healthcare and in turn creates better lives. This is our vision as we take steps towards the next century.

Delivering our strategy.

Membership

Our members make the RSM the vibrant, high-quality organisation that it is today – they are crucial to our future.

Whilst members will value different aspects of their membership, we will deliver:

- Demonstrably high-quality, relevant and accessible education programmes
- Easily accessible and extensive on-site and online resources including skilled staff input
- An attractive environment in which to network, socialise, work or spend the night
- Access and introductions to different healthcare professionals in a safe space
- Valuable benefits for all categories of membership

Property

Our London headquarters is in a fantastic central location and an asset for the RSM, and those who work, visit and stay here.

Our goal is to enhance our premises to better meet the needs of members, staff and visitors so that it offers:

- Modern facilities and spaces for learning that support the Education pillar
- A variety of spaces for individual and group learning as part of the Learning Resources pillar
- An attractive environment for networking and socialising that supports the Networks and Innovation Support pillars
- An appealing office that enables staff to undertake agile work with different spaces for a range of meetings, interactions and quiet working
- High-quality, fit-for-purpose, integrated event spaces that are appealing to members and external clients

Technology

Technology will underpin each of the four pillars and play a fundamental role in delivering our strategy. It will support:

- An agile workplace strategy throughout our premises, supporting those who work from home or remotely
- On-site education spaces, meeting rooms and broadcast facilities
- Remote access to live, interactive streaming and videoconferencing capabilities
- Enhanced recording and post-production capability
- An improved online presence and more effective and integrated technology platforms

People

Our staff make an enormous contribution to the success of the RSM. We will ensure we have the right people, structures, incentives and culture in place to deliver our strategy. To help achieve this, we will:

- Create a sustainable, high-performing culture and environment that focuses on agreed strategic priorities
- Attract and retain a diverse and skilled group of staff and volunteers, embedding continuous learning and agility in all that we do
- Inspire a customer-centric delivery ethos
- Empower and support staff to innovate, take risks and deliver outstanding performance

Capabilities

Delivering our strategy will require the development of new processes and capabilities. Our staff will be supported to deliver these goals which are designed to enhance the experience that members, visitors and other stakeholders have when engaging with us. We will:

- Capture and share powerful data and insights that demonstrate our impact
- Create seamless customer journeys and develop relationship management skills
- Develop a robust Intellectual Property model and commercialise it
- Improve internal data capture and analysis to support evidence-based decision-making
- Anticipate and respond to external trends through horizon scanning and insight
- Build internal knowledge management systems enhancing organisational resilience
- Build skills and capacity to convene healthcare professionals, innovators and policymakers

Environmental sustainability

The RSM is committed to environmental sustainability and tackling climate change. We will:

- Understand environmental issues and share this information
- Develop innovative and flexible solutions to bring about change
- Source products and services which are produced and distributed in a responsible fashion
- Recognise that managed social responsibility is essential to our future
- Invest our funds in a responsible manner
- Encourage all suppliers and partners to share our aims
- Monitor and measure progress



The ROYAL
SOCIETY *of*
MEDICINE

Patron HM The Queen

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