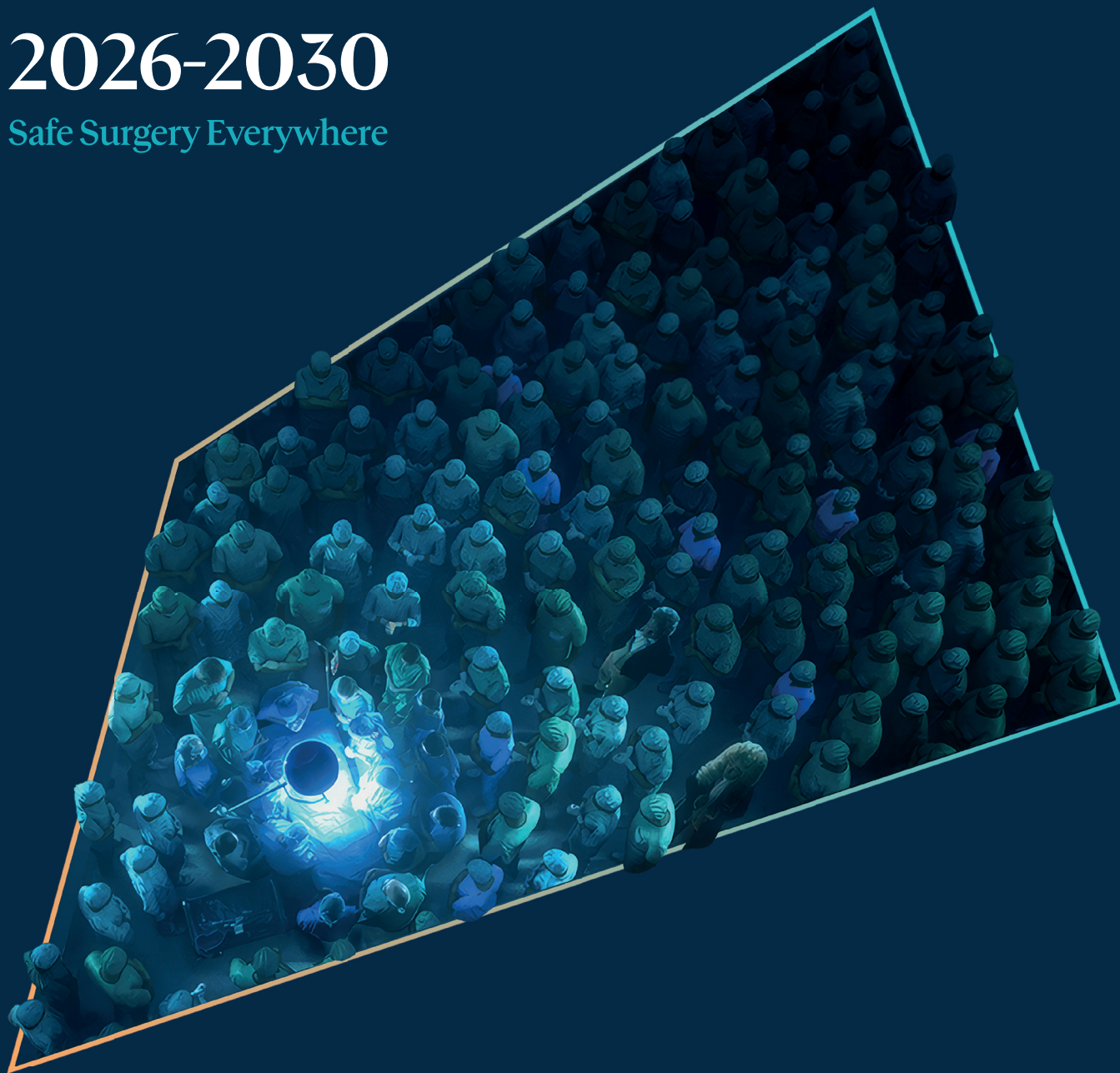


# Our Strategy

## 2026-2030

Safe Surgery Everywhere



# A word from our President and Chief Executive



**Professor Clare-Ellen McNaught**

President of The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh



**Mark Egan**

CEO of The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh

For over 520 years, The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh has stood at the forefront of surgical practice. During this time, surgery has undergone seismic shifts, from Joseph Lister's pioneering work in antiseptic surgery to complex open surgery and the laparoscopic era. Today, we face another moment of transformation, as advances in robotics and AI promise to enhance surgical outcomes and redefine the surgeon's role.

As healthcare evolves, the College must adapt to maintain our commitment to excellence in surgery and dental care. Our "Safe Surgery Everywhere" strategy is a bold initiative addressing the educational and professional needs of the next generation of surgeons and dentists, while keeping patient safety at the heart of everything we do.

Over the next five years, College activity will focus on three areas. In the UK, we will champion dental and surgical standards, supporting members through an enhanced network of regional advisors. Recognising that patient safety transcends borders, we will cultivate global collaborations that enable knowledge sharing and support for members wherever they reside. We will also redefine our educational portfolio to reflect the learning needs of the future workforce.

This strategy will equip future surgeons and dentists with the skills to address today's challenges and meet tomorrow's demands. As we embark on this journey, we draw inspiration from Lister's legacy and recognise that innovation brings a responsibility to prioritise patient safety and surgical integrity. Together, we can make safer surgery a reality for all.

I am delighted to present the College strategy for 2026–2030 and to lead the work to deliver it. The College has a pivotal role to play in achieving its vision of safe surgery everywhere, focused on its core strengths: setting standards which apply globally and in a variety of contexts; designing and delivering world-class methods of assessment against those standards; educating the next generation of surgeons and dental surgeons; and creating a global community of medical professionals who share best practice and experience, drawing on the lessons of the past and looking ahead to the possibilities of the future.

This strategy gives us clarity about how we will deliver our mission, with three strategic priorities and three enablers. It will enable the College to operate as one, focused on those priorities and the initiatives which underpin them.

For a strategy to be effective it needs to drive change. That's what I will focus on: working with our staff teams and clinician volunteers to turn the strategy into projects which make a difference – strengthening our College, adding value for our members across the world, and helping achieve safer surgery everywhere.

# Strategy on a Page

## PURPOSE

Since 1505, to uphold and advance the standards of surgery and dentistry, for the benefit of all.

## VISION

Safe Surgery Everywhere

## MISSION

To support and sustain a global community of surgeons and dental surgeons, advancing education, training and practice, so that patients everywhere receive safer, better care.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### PRIORITY 1

#### UK Surgical and Dental Excellence

Embed our regional presence across the UK; lead national advocacy; champion professional standards and heritage.

### PRIORITY 2

#### Global Surgical Impact through Inclusive partnerships

Build quality international partnerships; expand Global CARE; meet the needs of international members; enable two-way knowledge exchange.

### PRIORITY 3

#### Future-focused Education and training

Evolve our education offer; expand access across the UK and globally; future-proof for AI, robotics, and evolving practice.

**BY 2030:** Measurable membership growth, stronger regional presence, and evidence of advocacy impact.

**BY 2030:** Partnership framework embedded; increasing reach of Global CARE with measurable impacts; international member propositions defined, driving growth and engagement.

**BY 2030:** Education portfolio refreshed; digital and regional delivery expanded; participation growth evidenced.

## ENABLERS

### ENABLER 1

#### People, Purpose, Impact

Invest in staff and volunteers; support clinical workforce wellbeing; foster inclusive leadership; deepen member engagement.

### ENABLER 2

#### Organisational resilience: Operating as One

Align governance; use data for insight; build financial resilience; deliver a sustainable, future-ready estate.

### ENABLER 3

#### Digital Ecosystem

Overhaul core systems; build a member-facing digital offer; enable digital education delivery; strengthen data and insight capability.

**BY 2030:** Measurable improvements in wellbeing, development, engagement, and inclusion in staff and volunteers; engagement with resources to support clinical workforce wellbeing.

**BY 2030:** Baselines set; financial plan in place; Phase 1 of estate strategy delivered.

**BY 2030:** Core systems overhauled; digital strategy embedded; member digital offer live.

# RCSED Strategy

2026 to 2030

By 2030, we will be recognised for our leadership across the UK, for education that prepares surgeons and dental surgeons for the future, and for international work built on purposeful, high-quality partnerships.

Drawing on five centuries of practice, we will embed the College more deeply across the UK, supporting professionals where they work and creating a stronger, more connected community. From this base, we will share expertise globally through education, collaboration and mutual learning.

For our members we will be a professional home, providing belonging, career-long support, development, and recognition at every stage.

For the profession we will provide leadership in education, training, assessment, accreditation, and standards, shaping the future of practice across the UK and beyond.

For patients we commit to a sustained focus on safety, equity, and quality of care, driven through our standards, education, and partnerships.

For our people we will embed a culture of collaboration and shared purpose, where expertise is valued and impact is clear.

To achieve this ambition, our strategy focuses on three priorities:

## P1

UK Surgical and  
Dental Excellence

## P2

Global Surgical Impact  
Through Inclusive  
Partnerships

## P3

Future Focused  
Education and  
Training

Supported by three enablers:

## E1

People, Purpose,  
Impact

## E2

Organisational  
Resilience:  
Operating as One

## E3

Digital Ecosystem



P1

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

# UK Surgical and Dental Excellence, Regionally Anchored and Nationally Connected

**Goal:** We will deliver UK surgical and dental excellence by embedding the College across the UK, combining regional leadership and support for members with a strong national voice that champions standards, education, and the future of the profession.

**KEY ACTION**

**Embed and Scale our UK presence:**

Build a strong, visible RCSEd presence across the UK through locally anchored leadership, regional engagement, and strategic partnerships. We will support our members through every stage of their professional journey.

**Advocacy with Authority**

Act as the trusted national voice for surgery and dental surgery, influencing government, regulators, and system leaders. Use data, professional insight, and standards-based evidence to advocate for patients, the workforce, and the future of surgical and dental care.

**Enhance Visibility, Standards, and Influence:**

Promote the full breadth of the College's work, with clear emphasis on standards, assessment, accreditation, and professional leadership. Ensure our excellence is visible, understood, and valued by members, partners, and policymakers.

**Our Heritage, Our Future**

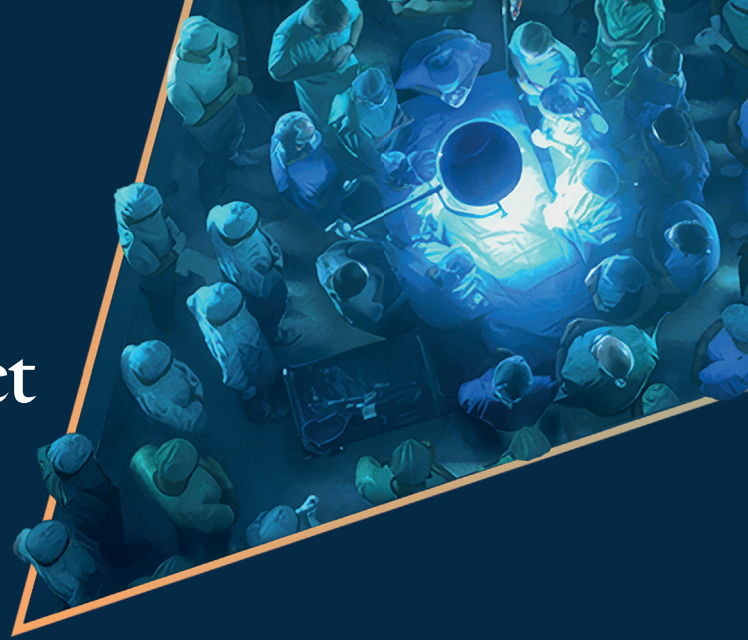
Demonstrate how centuries of practice drive expertise and excellence. Through research and engagement with the heritage collections, we will inform inclusive excellence today and inspire the profession's future.

**By 2030 MEASURE OF SUCCESS**

We will demonstrate measurable growth in UK membership, education participation and national advocacy, as well as increased onsite and online engagement with our diverse heritage programmes.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY

# Global Surgical Impact Through Inclusive Partnerships



**Goal:** RCSEd's global partnerships will raise standards of surgical and dental care through collaborative, standards-based professional development and shared learning, with measurable improvements in training quality, system capability, and patient safety.

## KEY ACTION

### Targeted Global Impact

Focus our efforts where they can most effectively improve patient safety and quality of care, prioritising areas of greatest need and opportunity for impact.

### Structured Partnership Pathway

Establish a clear and flexible partnership framework, shaped by local context and anchored in shared professional standards, that sets expectations for quality, governance, and assurance and enables sustainable collaboration.

### Knowledge Exchange and Shared Learning

Build inclusive systems for two-way knowledge exchange where expertise flows in all directions, strengthening teams, informing practice, and contributing to safer care for patients.

### Core International Partnerships

Develop and sustain long-term partnerships with international Colleges, institutions, and health systems that strengthen professional capability through shared approaches to development, assessment, accreditation, and leadership.

### Scale Global CARE

Expand Global CARE to widen access to safe surgical and dental care across a range of settings. Secure long-term funding to support continuity, learning, and system strengthening.

### Measuring and Demonstrating Value

Agree proportionate measures of success with partners, recognising contextual variation. Track improvements in professional capability, service delivery, and patient safety. Share learning openly to build trust and accountability.

## By 2030 MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Our global partnerships will drive measurable improvements in patient safety, professional development, and access to surgical and dental care, powered by trusted partnerships, shared accountability, and sustainable investment.



P3

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY

# Future-Focused Education and Training

**Goal:** We will deliver high-quality, accessible, and forward-looking education and training that equips surgical and dental professionals with the skills they need today and tomorrow. Education is not simply what we do most: it is what our members value most and what most directly shapes patient outcomes. We will reinvent and future-proof our offer, across the UK and internationally.

### KEY ACTION

#### **Evolve and Future-Proof Our Educational Offer**

Develop an education and assessment portfolio that responds to the changing landscape of surgical and dental practice, including simulation, robotics, AI-assisted techniques, and evolving workforce models. We will equip our members with the skills they need for excellence as surgical and dental practice evolves.

#### **Education as a Global Offer**

Align our education and training work with Priority 2 by developing the international dimension of our educational offer, including credentialling pathways, partnerships with international institutions, and programmes designed for global delivery. Education is both a membership benefit and a vehicle for global impact.

#### **Make RCSEd Education Accessible Across the UK**

Deliver education and assessment through expanded physical and digital infrastructure, reducing barriers of geography, career stage, and background, so access is not contingent on proximity to Edinburgh.

#### **Uphold Rigorous Quality Assurance**

Maintain and strengthen the standards underpinning all RCSEd education and assessment. Our examinations and qualifications are trusted globally because of the rigour behind them. We will sustain that rigour as we expand and innovate.

### By 2030 **MEASURE OF SUCCESS**

Measurable growth in education participation across the UK and internationally. A refreshed, future-proofed portfolio that reflects changing practice. Expanded digital and regional delivery reducing access barriers, and clear evidence that RCSEd education is recognised as the standard of excellence.

**E1****ENABLER**

# People, Purpose, Impact

**Goal:** We will build and foster a people-centred culture that unites volunteers, staff, and members behind shared purpose, strengthens workforce wellbeing, and ensures diverse talent flourishes across our profession.

**KEY ACTION****Invest in our Volunteers and Staff**

Value and develop our volunteers and staff as a high-performing, motivated team. Through meaningful support for wellbeing, professional development, and a culture that recognises and respects expertise at every level, our people will be equipped to deliver the College's strategy with confidence and resilience.

**Support Clinical Workforce Wellbeing**

Address the pressures facing surgical and dental professionals, recognising wellbeing, retention, and development as integral to excellence and patient safety.

**Ensure Inclusive Clinical Leadership**

Broaden and diversify pathways into College clinician leadership, recognising expertise across career stages, roles, and settings so that all voices help shape standards, education, and policy.

**Increase Positive Member Engagement**

Foster a trusted professional home, delivering excellent services and support that members rely on throughout their careers.

**By 2030 MEASURE OF SUCCESS**

We will demonstrate measurable improvements in workforce development, wellbeing, engagement, and inclusion, evidenced through annual people and member insight on experience and belonging, and engagement with the resources we provide to support clinician workforce wellbeing.

E2

ENABLER

# Organisational Resilience: Operating as One



**Goal:** We will operate as one College, with strong governance, financial resilience, and a focus on data to deliver positive impact efficiently and sustainably.

## KEY ACTION

### Align Governance and Operations

Embed governance reforms that support clear accountability, effective decision making, and strategic alignment across committees, boards, faculties, staff, and volunteers.

### Fund Our Future

Build long-term financial resilience through disciplined financial management, diversified income, philanthropy, and responsible commercial growth.

### Forge Strategic Partnerships

Work with members, professional bodies, patient communities, universities, government, and industry to amplify our resources and influence and create new opportunities.

### Build a Sustainable College

Build a future-ready estate and operating model that enables long-term excellence, strengthening environmental performance, professional resilience, and organisational sustainability.

### Use Data for Insight and Impact

Leverage data to measure outcomes, drive accountability, and guide evidence-based decisions that improve College performance.

## By 2030 MEASURE OF SUCCESS

RCSEd will be financially resilient and delivering the first phase of a long-term strategy for a sustainable, future ready estate.

**E3****ENABLER**

# Digital Ecosystem

**Goal:** We will build a modern, connected, and member-focused digital ecosystem that serves a global profession, supports excellent education and engagement, and enables the College to operate securely and efficiently.

## KEY ACTION

### **Evolve and Modernise Our Core Systems**

Enhance the digital infrastructure that underpins College operations, including membership, education, assessment, and communications platforms. The current state is acknowledged as requiring significant remediation; this strategy commits to funding and delivering that work as a priority.

### **Enable Digital Delivery of Education**

Develop the digital infrastructure that supports Priority 3, including platforms for online learning, remote assessment, and digital CPD. Expand our capacity to deliver high-quality education to members wherever they are.

### **Ensure Security, Compliance, and Sustainability:**

Maintain robust cybersecurity, data protection compliance, and system resilience. As a global organisation holding member and patient-relevant data, our digital infrastructure must be trustworthy and well-governed.

### **Build a Member-Facing Digital Offer**

Develop digital tools, platforms, and experiences that members value and use: for learning, connection, assessment, and engagement with the College. Our digital offer should feel as good as the in-person experience we provide at Surgeons' Hall.

### **Strengthen Data and Insight Capability**

Build data infrastructure that supports evidence-based decision-making across the College, ensuring systems are joined up, data is clean, and insight is available to those who need it.

## **By 2030 MEASURE OF SUCCESS**

Core systems overhauled and fit for purpose, with an agreed digital roadmap for future innovation. A modern member-facing digital offer launched and evidenced through member satisfaction data. Digital education infrastructure expanded, supporting measurable growth in online participation. Data and insight capability established as a College-wide function.

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## OUR MISSION

# Safe Surgery Everywhere

A leading surgical college, at the cutting edge since 1505, supporting and sustaining a global community so that patients everywhere receive safer, better care.

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## GET INVOLVED

### Be part of Safe Surgery Everywhere.

Read our delivery plan, partner with us, and follow our progress.

[rcsed.ac.uk/strategy](https://rcsed.ac.uk/strategy) →