

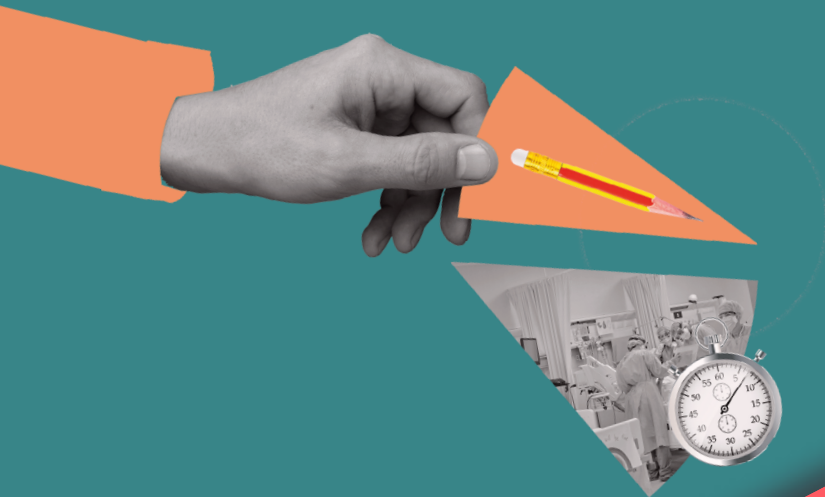


Royal College  
of Physicians

# RCP Chief Registrar Programme

To develop chief registrars with the skills to  
lead and transform healthcare of the future

Guidance for resident doctors



“ The Chief Registrar Programme has provided me with valuable experience in managing team dynamics, organisational culture and quality improvement that I will carry forward for the rest of my career.’

Lucy Owen, chief registrar 2023/24

# RCP Chief Registrar Programme

**Mission:** To continually improve the standard of patient care by providing high-quality and innovation-driven leadership development for resident doctors who are committed to quality improvement.

Chief registrars are senior resident doctors and aspiring leaders who care deeply about improving the NHS and delivering better outcomes for patients, services and resident doctors. At a time when the NHS faces ever-increasing pressures, the skills and motivation to lead change and engage others in continuous improvement are crucial for senior clinical leaders.

With 40–50% protected time, and support from the RCP's development programme, chief registrars have the opportunity to develop their skills in leadership, management and quality improvement (QI) and test their learning in a supported environment.

## The role at a glance

- > Open to all physician and non-physician specialties
- > Locally employed resident doctors must be a minimum of ST4 level or equivalent
- > Posts must be for a minimum of 12 months
- > Chief registrars in training must have 40–50% of their time protected for chief registrar activities
- > The role may be carried out in programme or out of programme (training or experience).

**'The training days have given me time and tools to reflect on my skills and personality, and understand how I can use these to be more effective in my role.'**

Susannah Long, chief registrar 2023/24



**'The programme provided a useful skillset to approach service improvement and understand the intricacies of NHS management.'**

Karuniyan Vipulendran,  
chief registrar 2023/24

## What do chief registrars do?

Chief registrars have lots of autonomy to shape their role and focus on the most important local challenges. Chief registrars might work on:

- > **Service improvement:** Developing new services, redesigning pathways and introducing changes using QI methodology to improve outcomes for patients, teams and services
- > **Engagement and morale:** Providing a 'bridge' between resident doctors, senior clinical leaders and management, ensuring that resident doctors feel valued and supported, and that their voice is heard at the highest level
- > **Education and training:** Improving access to education and training opportunities, offering non-clinical training, mentoring other resident doctors in QI and supporting them to develop their own initiatives
- > **Workforce:** Improving resident doctors' working conditions, introducing new posts, and coordinating workforce deployment
- > **Sustainability:** Improving efficiency, reducing waste and modifying processes to prevent duplication and unnecessary activities.

Read the chief registrar yearbook for more information about the kinds of projects chief registrars undertake. Available to download from [www.rcp.ac.uk/improving-care/resources/rcp-chief-registrar-alumni](http://www.rcp.ac.uk/improving-care/resources/rcp-chief-registrar-alumni)

# Benefits for resident doctors

- > **Flexible training:** With 40–50% protected time for leadership and management development, chief registrars continue in clinical practice but have time and flexibility to focus on non-clinical personal and professional development – great preparation for life as a consultant.
- > **Learning from experience:** Chief registrars gain knowledge and skills that are invaluable for future consultant and senior leadership positions, and are able to put these into practice on the hospital shop floor.
- > **Mentoring and support:** Mentorship from a local senior clinical leader and support from the RCP and peers ensures chief registrars have ready access to advice and guidance that helps them navigate complex NHS systems and achieve success in their projects.
- > **Networking:** Chief registrars are the senior clinical leaders of the future. The close relationships and strong alumni community built through the RCP development programme represents a valuable source of support and contacts as leadership careers develop, not to mention the opportunities to meet national NHS and RCP leaders.
- > **Leadership profile:** A visible role as a local leader ensures that chief registrars are recognised for their skills and abilities, have a platform to influence change, and gain insight into leadership and management processes within their organisation.



**'The programme has been hugely beneficial to me both personally and professionally. Being able to look introspectively to understand and reflect on what drives me has been invaluable for my development.'**

Victoria Tay,  
chief registrar 2023/24

## RCP development programme

**Chief registrars benefit from a bespoke leadership development programme delivered by the RCP.**

- > Five 2-day modules delivered between September 2025 – June 2026.
- > Modules cover topics such as leadership, change management, team culture and development, QI methodology and navigating the NHS.
- > Action learning sets for peer support.
- > Mentorship from a local senior clinical leader.
- > Support from the RCP and peers in the chief registrar alumni network.
- > Speaking, networking and poster presentation opportunities.

**'The training provided me with the tools and framework to not only design but implement sustainable change within a complex healthcare system.'**

Rasha Ibrahim, chief registrar 2023/24

# Frequently asked questions

## **Do I have to come out of programme to be a chief registrar?**

It should be possible to undertake the role as an in-programme or out-of-programme training opportunity dependent on local organisational needs and individual training preferences. Talk to your directors of medical education and your training programme director about the options available.

## **I want to apply. Who do I need to inform?**

Recruitment is carried out locally by the recruiting organisation. You should discuss making an application with your educational supervisor and training programme and gain permission to apply before making an application.

Please note that out-of-programme requests must be agreed with your HEE regional dean and training programme director / head of school. Candidates seeking to undertake the role out of programme will need to notify the Joint Royal Colleges of Physicians Training Board (JRCPTB) with at least 3 months' notice.

## **Where can I find out about chief registrar vacancies?**

NHS organisations will express an interest to the RCP to indicate their intentions to recruit a chief registrar.

Contact the RCP via [chiefregistrar@rcp.ac.uk](mailto:chiefregistrar@rcp.ac.uk) for up-to-date information about specific organisations you are interested in.

Recruiting organisations will also advertise their posts locally and some may also choose to advertise their chief registrar posts on NHS Jobs, as well as RCP college tutors and directors of medical education (DMEs) being able to advise on vacancies.

You can also contact your DME to see whether your trust has a chief registrar. You could work with your trust or health board to create the chief registrar post. The RCP can help with this process.

## **Do chief registrars need to be in training?**

No, the 2025–26 Chief Registrar Programme is now open to resident doctors ST4+ or equivalent, including those who do not hold a national training number.

## **My organisation doesn't have a chief registrar yet. How can I help them get on board?**

The RCP can provide you with a business case and evidence of impact from an independent evaluation to take to senior clinical leaders within the organisation to encourage recruitment.

## **How much does it cost?**

The cost of the RCP Chief Registrar Programme is £4,219 (VAT exempt). Recruiting organisations are expected to cover the cost of the post and the place on the RCP Chief Registrar Programme as well as the travel and accommodation related to the development programme. Recruiting organisations are advised that reimbursement arrangements should be agreed locally.

## **Where will the training take place?**

We will deliver the programme through a combination of face-to-face and online learning.

Locations for these modules will be confirmed once we have an idea of where our chief registrars will be based. Updates will follow.

## **What do I get at the end of my time in post as chief registrar?**

Chief registrars will receive a certificate of completion from the RCP and are in a good position to apply for associate fellowship of the Faculty of Medical Leadership and Management.

There are also opportunities for chief registrars to get involved with wider RCP work.

“ The programme has taught me more about the leadership structure of the NHS and the different motivators for change. It also taught me how to identify who the stakeholders are and how to get a project to progress, as well as how to make changes and sustain them.’

Maria Ioanna Kiliaris, chief registrar 2023/24

Check out our website for stories from past RCP chief registrars:  
[www.rcp.ac.uk/events-and-education/education-and-learning/clinicians-as-leaders/chief-registrar-programme](http://www.rcp.ac.uk/events-and-education/education-and-learning/clinicians-as-leaders/chief-registrar-programme)

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