



**The Association for  
Clinical Biochemistry &  
Laboratory Medicine**



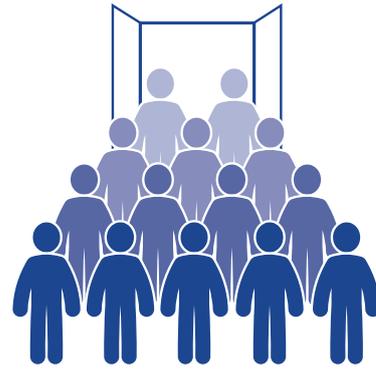
# Annual Report

Year Ending 31 December 2021



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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

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# About the ACB

## Who we are

The Association for Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine (ACB) works internationally to promote the highest standards in laboratory testing and patient care.

We welcome medics and Clinical Scientists from all major UK healthcare laboratories and individuals from academia and the commercial world involved in healthcare and Laboratory Medicine as members. The Federation of Clinical Scientists enables us to provide Trade Union support for Clinical Scientists and doctors if they choose to join our union. Membership is open to all health professionals with an interest in Laboratory Medicine. We have fruitful links with the Clinical Diagnostics industry through our Corporate Members and industry partnerships programme.

The ACB was formed in 1953, when the application of chemical principles to the study of human disease – a concept with a long scientific pedigree – started to gain status in scientific medicine's armoury. We contributed to the development of Clinical Biochemistry as an established clinical and scientific discipline, and continue this support via the personal contributions of our members, and through collective contributions to the establishment of high standards of education, training, and practice.

The ACB has seen many extraordinarily rapid, fundamental, and widespread changes in all areas of laboratory medicine, particularly in Clinical Biochemistry, in its lifetime. New technologies have led to profound changes in the way laboratories work, while clinical needs have altered, and new methods of treatment requiring close biochemical monitoring have become commonplace.

Countries worldwide have witnessed major changes in healthcare delivery methods, and in the UK multiple NHS restructuring exercises have affected all who work in the organisation. All areas of medicine have been under increasing financial pressures to improve cost effectiveness, with Clinical Biochemistry often regarded as a soft target for cost-cutting. Inevitably, the ACB has been deeply involved in and affected by these changes.

## What we do

We promote Laboratory Medicine to the wider community. Our Members are involved with all aspects of patient pathways, from testing patient samples in a laboratory through to interpreting results, assisting with patient care, and monitoring.

Our activities are co-ordinated by a dedicated team at our headquarters in central London, supported by full-time practising Clinical Scientists across the UK. These activities include:

- Scientific Meetings
- Training Courses
- Management and Leadership Courses
- National Audits
- Networking events
- Scientific Publishing
- Research Grants

# 2021 at a Glance

## Expanding knowledge

**127**  
resources  
uploaded  
to ACB  
website



**1.3 million**  
downloads  
of the  
*Annals*



**1,561**  
event attendees

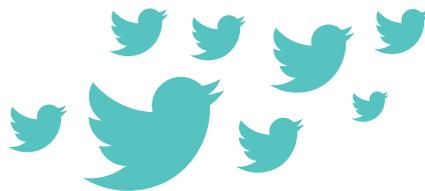


## Growing digitally

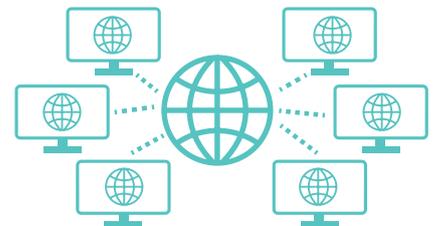
**32%**  
increase  
in Twitter followers



**21,000**  
Twitter  
impressions



**3.7 million**  
visits to  
LabTestsOnline



## Impacting the community

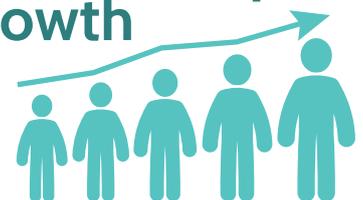
**2.6**  
tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>  
emissions  
avoided by  
sustainable  
refurbishment



**16**  
grants,  
prizes  
& awards



**4.6%**  
membership  
growth



(excluding retired membership)

# President's Foreword

My term as ACB President began in June 2021, when I took over from Neil Anderson. As much as his presidency would be characterised by the COVID-19 pandemic, so my term for the rest of that year would continue in the same vein, albeit in a different phase. Keeping one eye on the continuing pandemic has been balanced with returning to business as usual, while planning how to support recovery and focus on some major new milestones and projects for the ACB in 2022.

In recent years the ACB has become more aligned with Laboratory Medicine in general. The growing need for a professional group to represent both science and medicine across the many laboratory disciplines, plus increased interest and, indeed, membership from outside of Clinical Biochemistry, have made us reassess our future direction, identity, and scope to acknowledge this broader role.

Discussion around this will lead to a rebranding exercise in 2022 to relaunch the ACB in its new form – fit for the future, for its members, for modern healthcare and the vital role that Laboratory services play.

In parallel, the ACB has also been transforming its meetings and conferences offerings. A successful first UKMedLab Scientific Meeting was held virtually in 2021 and we are now planning UKMedLab 22, this time a return to a face-to-face conference for the first time in almost three years. In addition, more regional scientific meetings will be held virtually, meaning our entire membership can tune in.

We also intend to develop our own bespoke online learning academy and open portals to internationally available content from Europe and North America. Continuing education and training material for members is of much value and delivering this virtually is now becoming possible.

In 2021, we learned that the parent ownership of Lab Tests Online UK (LTO-UK) had changed hands and that we now had to look for an alternative future for this valuable and essential patient-focused resource. Since then, the ACB has been working with the LTO Board on strategy and, hopefully by the end of 2022, we will be able to announce a new direction for this resource. We are looking to get it funded from within the UK and expanded to cater for a wider patient and healthcare professional audience.

The importance of Laboratory Medicine in Healthcare cannot be understated. As we encounter the huge challenges that pandemic recovery brings – backlogs, staff shortages and economic meltdown – healthcare delivery needs to be more focused and efficient.

Lab tests play a crucial role in most patient pathways and, if used properly, can help to ensure that resources work optimally.



President  
Dr Bernie Croal

*"A rebranding exercise in 2022 will relaunch the ACB in its new form – fit for the future, for its members, for modern healthcare and the vital role that laboratory services play."*

Our emerging 'Build Back with Labs' resource on our website will hopefully act as a central repository in 2022 that allows us to share ideas, innovations, lobbying statements, business cases, and demand optimisation strategies to ensure Laboratory services remain present and potent in driving optimal patient care, despite the challenges.

The strength of the ACB lies in its staff and its members. Engaging, contributing, and working together for mutual benefit are so important for our professional lives, our services and, ultimately, for patients. So, a huge thank you to everyone for continuing to support the ACB during a very difficult 2021 and we look forward to a rebuild in 2022 of not just healthcare but also our Association itself, so that we can in future deliver better science, better diagnostics, and better healthcare.

The ACB, by its Members, for its Members, for the benefit of all.



*"Our 'Build Back with Labs' resource will allow us to share ideas, innovations and business cases and demand optimisation strategies to ensure laboratory services remain present and potent in driving optimal patient care."*

**Build** with  
**Back Labs**

# Chief Executive Officer's Report

As you read this, we are more than halfway through 2022 and very much focused on delivering this year's plans. It's important, though, to reflect on our achievements in 2021.

In 2020, we laid out a five-year road map for the future. The following year, we ramped up our efforts to professionalise the organisation, grow our impact and strengthen our voice as a leading advocate for Laboratory Medicine.

Building on the work of 2020, we continued to upgrade our systems and improve our operational capabilities with further investment in our digital capabilities. This development supported the successful delivery of our first online national scientific meeting, a new more accessible membership system and a full programme of online meetings and webinars involving members across the UK. We also started work on an online learning resource and a mentoring platform to roll out this year.

The digitisation programme has enabled us to review our staff strategy, moving away from general administrative roles and creating specialist functional roles. These support our purpose and strategy, offering development and progression opportunities to staff team members. A new Remunerations Committee is now in place to oversee conditions for staff development and benefits.

A reformed Nominations Committee is ensuring open, transparent, and inclusive recruitment processes for officer roles and nominations for awards and honours. This May, we were delighted that nominated ACB Members Neil Anderson, Elaine Cloutman-Green, Catherine Moore, and Martin Myers were recognised in The Pathologist Power List for their contributions to Pathology. The new open recruitment process for the next President Elect was a crucial part of the work of the Committee.

In terms of our public-facing advocacy for Laboratory Medicine we kicked off an innovation programme with key stakeholders, including the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) and the Royal College of Pathology (RCPATH), to create a vision for the future of Lab Tests Online as a fully-integrated digital platform for patients and healthcare professionals. With development support from IBMS, RCPATH and ACB, this work will continue through 2022.

We launched our strategic industry partnership programme with Abbott in 2021. This is an innovative approach to working with



Chief Executive Officer  
Jane Pritchard

*“In 2021, we ramped up our efforts to professionalise the organisation, grow our impact and strengthen our voice as a leading advocate for Laboratory Medicine.”*

industry which creates joint activities that celebrate, advocate, and support the profession. Abbott has taken an enlightened and pioneering approach to this opportunity which we will replicate with further industry partners with a stake in Laboratory Medicine.

In terms of achievements this year, we have grown membership by 4.6%, increased attendance at our national meeting for the first time in many years, agreed the sale of our fourth-floor conference suite (increasing our reserves by almost £1m), diversified our income streams with industry partnerships and agreed training funding from HEE. And, as the 'icing on the cake', in December we were presented with an award for 'Best Digital Transformation' – a testament to the hard work, dedication and expertise of the ACB staff team.

In closing, I want to thank Neil Anderson – who demitted his post as President in June – for his support and encouragement since I joined ACB in late 2019, and to welcome Bernie Croal who took over from Neil at the same time. I also want to thank Mike Bosomworth who will be standing down as Finance Director at this year's AGM after five years' dedicated service.

On a personal note, it is a pleasure to work with the members and officers of ACB who give so much of their time for the furtherment of the profession. I look forward to working closely with you to continue our progress towards being the leading voice for Laboratory Medicine.



Joe Piteed

*“As the ‘icing on the cake’, we were presented with an award for ‘Best Digital Transformation’ – a testament to the hard work, dedication and expertise of the ACB staff team.”*

# Education, Training and Workforce Committee

*Supports the promotion and delivery of training for Scientists and Medics in pathology throughout their careers. Provides co-ordinated training course programmes, and develops resources to support training. A regional tutor network supports Trainees, ensuring that they are prepared for examinations and future roles. Monitors and contributes to manpower planning for the profession.*



Director  
Hazel Borthwick

## Professional training programmes

We've been working with Health Education England to develop bespoke interactive laboratory medicine education that can be accessed by members training towards FRCPath. To date, we've planned 10 modules that we think are not easily taught in textbooks or that consist of subject matter which people need further information on. The platform will host webinars, presentations, and simulations to work alongside to. The results of a pilot, focusing on materials to support laboratory method evaluation, will determine the next stage. The aim is not just to support Trainees but also the whole profession with CPD.

The website's online educational content continues to be reviewed while 'Cases for thought', which provide real-life clinical scenarios that Trainees can talk through with their supervisors, has received good feedback to date. Work continues to ensure that Trainees can quickly access any other educational resources online.

Virtual Committee meetings have fostered raised attendances while enabling us to raise important issues. These include gaining greater representation for Trainees and putting forward more ideas for discussion and implementation. Online offerings replaced two residential courses but these are now back on the agenda for 2023.

## Focus on pathology

Our team is working, alongside other national groups, to review the pathology workforce, analyse what's needed to build the profession, and how to future-proof it over the next 15 years. This is key because pathology will only attract funding if it has a high enough profile, and without that funding we can't deliver high quality training and workforce requirements.

*“Pathology will only attract funding if it has a high enough profile, and without that funding we can't deliver high quality training”*

## Looking forward to 2022-23

- Support the launch of the ACB mentoring platform.
- Laboratory learning academy launch.
- Represent ACB members at national workforce meetings.

# Scientific Committee

*Responds on behalf of the ACB on all scientific matters of relevance to the practice of Clinical Biochemistry.*

The major achievement last year was to transform the Scientific Scholarships into a more open, inclusive and better directed Research and Innovation Grant that would boost R&I within the ACB. It is accessible online to make the process easier, and it's anonymised to avoid unconscious biases.

A look at the data had revealed that, although there were fewer male ACB members, they were getting more scholarship money than females. We wanted to address that by going anonymous, but found that – even so – the result was the same.

Over the past year we have been happy to fund three high calibre applications. These were:

- Chris Harrington (£7,440) – *A new assay for the improved diagnosis and monitoring of Wilson's Disease in UK Specialist Trace Element Laboratories.*
- Greg Toulson (£8,820) – *Untargeted metabolomics as a diagnostic test for inherited metabolic disease, a feasibility study to translate a research tool into an NHS clinical laboratory.*
- Edmund Wilkes (£6,375) – *Development of a modernised hCG immunoassay platform for the UK national gestational trophoblastic disease screening service.*

The move to awarding research grants has also involved change in how we monitor results. For the successful candidates, we track progress, asking for six-monthly reports, and for them to acknowledge us in everything they do.

As a Committee, we're involved in many innovative practices at an NHS England level. This means speaking to NICE guidance authors, and looking to implement actions out of NICE guidance. We're also in a joint taskforce involved with all things related to the UK Kidney Association, whose working method makes it quite innovative. We're working on what's known as the Kidney Risk Failure Equation (KRFE), a formula that will probably go into all laboratory systems, to ensure effectiveness, and also on toxicology best practice guidance.

Finally, I'd like to thank Dr Owen Driscoll, a valuable member of the Committee, who stepped down this year. He will be sorely missed.



Director  
Alexandra Yates

*“We’ve transformed the Scientific Scholarships into a more open, inclusive and better directed Research and Innovation Grant”*

## Looking forward to 2022-23

- Enhance and promote knowledge base in AMALCS (Analyte Monographs alongside the National Laboratory Medicine Catalogue).
- Strengthen our links with the UK Kidney Association (UKKA) around Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) NICE guidance.
- Produce more NICE guidance summaries.
- Return to in person meetings where possible.

# Publications and Communications Committee

*Oversees all communication from the ACB to its membership and the public.*

The ACB's revamped online presence has won the Digital Transformation Award for our new website, membership and finance system. Our previous website was outdated, the internet connection unreliable, and staff were having to deal with antiquated and often frustrating admin and paper-based finance systems.

Since the relaunch, we have witnessed a 4.6% membership growth in 2021, and an organisational culture change.

The Award judges praised the ACB for replacing four disconnected systems with user-friendly, future-proofed features on one ReadyMembership platform. We can now manage all our online membership activities from one place. Key features have been the members' portal, events functionality including vimeo streams and livechat, plus the science knowledge hub.

In 2021, attendance of the ACB's (now online) annual conference has increased by 30% and the number of overseas members has expanded by 18%. Where subscription invoices used to take three weeks to be sent out in their entirety, they are now sent overnight. The Continuing Professional Development (CPD) repository is now easily accessible online by members who previously might have been hampered by the many systems operated by the different NHS Trusts. Above all, the changes have enabled the team at ACB to work more effectively and given them greater job satisfaction, saving 10,420 hours of administration time.

The platform has not only made the organisation more efficient, broken down internal silos and supported more collaborative working with the staff team and officers of the Association. It is now also an attractive calling-card for new members whose professional lives are being made easier by new online tools and services.

The Award Judges said of the ACB entry: "This is an example of a well-designed plan which, having clearly identified the weaknesses in the previous system, subsequently focused on delivering to that plan and to a very high standard."



Director  
Kam Chatha

*"This is an example of a well-designed plan which, having clearly identified the weaknesses in the previous system, subsequently focused on delivering to that plan and to a very high standard."*

The primary role of Lab Tests Online-UK (LTO-UK) is to help patients and the public, including healthcare professionals, understand the many clinical laboratory tests that are used in the diagnosis, monitoring, and treatment of disease. In 2021, the website exceeded 3.7 million visits.

The largest source of referrals to the LTO-UK website continues to be from search engines; followed by personal health records on GP systems; NHS.UK; Patients Know Best; and NHS Inform Scotland among others. The LTO-UK team run and promote the website, keep content up to date and generate new content. We continue to promote the website at various patient and healthcare worker centred conferences, where we can connect with patient advocate charities and professionals in patient facing roles, respectively.

As the NHS progresses its digital healthcare strategy and patients have digital access to their test results, trusted information and guidance for patients and healthcare professionals are becoming ever more critical.

LTO-UK has no commercial allegiances and support is generously provided by the ACB, the Institute of Biomedical Science and the Royal College of Pathologists. We thank Dr Danielle Freedman, Chair of Lab Test Online-UK Board, for her continued strong leadership.

### ***Annals of Clinical Biochemistry: ACB's official journal***

The *Annals* has had a good year. An impact factor (IF) of 2.057 in 2020, its highest since 2015, was followed by a million-plus full-text downloads in 2021, underlining the journal's robustness.

It has contributed to the academic publishing sector's response to the pandemic and continues to fast-track COVID-19-related papers, even if these have tailed off. The first Best Practice articles (a new category) have been published alongside high-quality review articles commissioned by the Clinical Sciences Reviews Committee. @AnnClinBiochem now has over 800 followers, with access to tweeted articles free for two weeks.

We welcome Dr Paul Hamilton and Dr Kate Shipman as the Associate Editors on the editorial team alongside Dr Mayur Patel as the Best Practice articles Editor and Prof Ana-Maria Simundic and Dr Joanne Sheldon to the Editorial Board. We thank Dr Angeles Almeida, Dr Julian Barth, Dr Stephen Holding, Dr Brian Keevil, Dr Darren Ready, and Dr Gill Rumsby who have stood down from the Editorial Board, for their contribution over many years. We also thank Dr Maurice O'Kane, who has stepped down as joint Editor-in-Chief, for his enormous contribution to the journal over many years. Happily, he has agreed to join the Editorial Board.

Finally, a huge thanks to our deeply committed and dedicated editorial team who have individually and collectively helped to minimise the pandemic's impact on the journal's quality and output.

## Find us on Twitter



ACB:

@TheACBNews

Annals of Clinical  
Biochemistry:

@AnnClinBiochem

Lab Tests Online-UK:

@LabTestsUK



## Looking forward to 2022-23

- Develop Lab Tests Online into a government standard digital platform.
- Ensure platform has interoperability with the NHS.
- Rebrand Lab Tests Online.
- Build a sustainable business model.

# Conferences and Events Committee

*Organises the ACB's National Conference, UKMedLab, and events which combine input on the future of science, strategy and innovation in a programme that supports learning and debate around the important issues of the day and debates future developments that will impact on members and the broader clinical medicine community.*

The first UKMedLab Conference was held in 2021 over five days, amalgamating the postponed national conference that was set to be held in Belfast in 2020 and the FiLM meeting originally planned for January 2021. The speakers rose to the challenge of presenting online, supported by Ashfield Event Experiences. Topics covered included training, leadership and management and science and education. Total registrations for the meeting totalled an impressive 409 delegates, with 173 registering for the Training Day, up on previous years.

The Conference now sees the ACB office taking over the front end of the process – the scheduling, venue and day-to-day organisation – leaving the Committee free to focus on content, awards and speakers. We've welcomed input from the Scientific Committee, the Education, Training and Workforce Committee, and from members representing the regions.



Director  
Sarah Robinson

*"Registrations at the first UKMedLab Conference, amalgamating the postponed national conference, totalled an impressive 409 delegates"*

## Awards

Plenary Awards presented at UKMedLab were:

- **Transatlantic Award**

Dr David Grenache, President of the American Association for Clinical Chemistry (AACC) on direct-to-consumer genetic testing, highlighting the huge advances in technology – and also the pitfalls.

- **Flynn Award**

Professor Ana-Maria Simundic, President of the European Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (EFLM), on how best to monitor the pre-analytical phase and how such factors can affect our results.

- **Foundation Award**

Professor Julian Barth, Ex ACB President, spoke on the much-misunderstood concept of 'normality' in Laboratory Medicine.



## Looking forward to 2022-23

- Keep attendances up at next UKMedLab and ensure Awards are aligned to the changing face of service delivery.
- Ensure that the new Impact Award allows us to celebrate the achievements of members in all disciplines and at all stages of their careers.
- Submit a successful bid for Euro MedLab '25.
- Working more closely with the regions to ensure we can support and align local events.

## Awards



Other Awards presented at UKMedLab included:

- **ACB Medal Award**

First: Dr Jenny Nobes (Dundee) on *'Enhanced liver fibrosis (ELF™) scoring: a solution to reducing indeterminate fibrosis diagnoses in the intelligent liver function test (iLFT) pathway?'*

Runner up: Rachel Griffiths for *'Automation of the thiopurine S-methyltransferase (TPMT) phenotyping assay using the Biomek NXP and Biomek i5 automated liquid handling workstations'*.

The interactive clinical cases: First: Darmiga Thayabaran's case titled *'After the laughter'* and Second - Niamh Horton for her case *'Sometimes it is a zebra'*.

- **Poster Award 2020**

First: Chris Hughes with *'Urinary sodium to chloride ratio: A useful test for investigating hypokalaemia'*.

Runner up: Diya Patel with *'The Significance of a high ALP in pregnancy'*.

- **Audit Award 2020**

First: Adrian Heald with *'Recalibration of thinking about adrenocortical function assessment: How the 'random' cortisol relates to the Short Synacthen Test Verdict'*.

Runner up: Jennifer Nobes with *'Intelligent Liver Function Testing (iLFT): an update from 18 months of active use'*.

- **Poster Award 2021**

Corey Pritchard with *'A case study of siblings with Autoimmune Polyendocrinopathy Syndrome Type 1'*.

- **Audit Award 2021**

Winner, Sally Hanton with *'An audit of follow-up of small bands detected on serum protein electrophoresis'*.

Runner up: Jennifer Simpson with *'Audit of Ethylene Glycol and Methanol testing over a 5-year period'*.

# Microbiology Professional Committee

*Represents the interests of Microbiologists within the ACB and national professional bodies.*

This year we put on, as we did last year, a series of online lectures and tutorials for Trainees whose training was affected by the pandemic. We continue to support the Scientist Training Programme (STP) and the Higher Specialist Scientist Training (HSST) and, as subject matter experts for microbiology, liaise with the National School of Healthcare Science on the curriculum and exit examinations.

We are in the process of reviewing the STP curriculum, and aim to have this ready to go for the intake of STPs for September '23.

We hosted two sessions at the Federation of Infection Societies annual meeting (FIS 2021), which was a blended conference hosted in Manchester but also attracted online attendees. Both sessions were very successful and well attended (upwards of 500 people in total), and we received good feedback. We've already had confirmation that we'll be hosting two sessions again at this autumn's meeting, FIS 2022.

Additional funding for STPs from Health Education England (HEE) means that there are now a lot more in training posts and, hopefully, more qualified Clinical Scientists to come at the end, with more Consulting Clinical Scientists even further down the pipeline. Yet while we welcome a huge influx of STPs in training, we need to ensure that there's career progress available for them because if we're training more people we need somewhere for them to go.

We have started to increase our public voice as experts in Laboratory Medicine and infection levels, by continuing to contribute sporadically – via the Science Media Centre – to media calls for expert comment on behalf of the ACB, more towards written media than TV and radio. This should gain greater impetus in the coming year.

Finally, we should note that this year was tinged with sadness by the sudden passing in early 2022 of a friend and colleague, Dr Moira Kay, a driving force and ever-present member of the Association for Clinical Microbiology (ACM) and then the Microbiology Professional Committee of the ACB for 20 years, many of these as Secretary. She is sorely missed.



Chair  
Dr Rob Shorten

*“While we welcome a huge influx of STPs in training, we need to ensure that there's career progress available for them because if we're training more people we need somewhere for them to go.”*

## Looking forward to 2022-23

- Participate in FIS 2022.
- Complete STP curriculum update.
- Launch the HEE-funded Whole Genome Sequencing in Infection course in collaboration with the Great Ormond Street Learning Academy.

@TheACBNews using #ACBMicro

# Immunology Professional Committee

*Represents the interests of Immunologists within the ACB and national professional bodies. The Immunology Professional Committee (IPC) represents the Immunology Professional Group (IPG) within the ACB.*

In Spring 2021 we held an STP training day, where all our Trainee Clinical Scientists gave talks to their peers and training officers in the morning, which we then discussed. In the afternoon each trainee was paired with two senior scientists from different centres for a mentoring session. It went so well that we are working on another, plus one for those training towards being a Consultant Clinical Scientist.

Some of the training for the immunologists has now reverted to face to face, which is good, because the cohort that is about to do their exams had never met. Their training has been quite diverse – and different – from those that have gone before.

Immunologists are a relatively small community, and mainly women, although the retired cohort is nearly all male.

We've continued our work with medical colleagues and the Royal College of Pathologists and seen an increased number of FRCPath examiners, with scientists among them. Indeed, one of the lead examiners is a scientist, so things have improved but we need to make sure it stays at the right level and keep encouraging people to get involved with examining as well.

The IPC has launched the IAC, a new exam for Trainees which replaces the OSFE. A lot of work has gone into that and a new group of assessors are about to do their first assessment. The groundwork was done in 2021, and it came about because of COVID-19.

The National School of Healthcare Science is fully in favour, not least because of its low cost.

The FRCPath continues to be online, and we await what the Royal College of Pathologists' plan is for its exams in the future.

Over the past year the IPC has seen a lot of change in personnel for various reasons: illness, retirement and moves abroad. This has made for less activity than normal, but the hope is that normal service will now be resumed.



Chair  
Dr Elizabeth Bateman

*“The STP training day proved so successful that we are working on another, plus one for those training towards being a Consultant Clinical Scientist.”*

## Looking forward to 2022-23

- Improve the support offered to post-registration Trainees, including HSSTs.
- Increase engagement with the rest of the immunology community.
- Contribute to 'Build Back With Labs' and Audit Group initiatives.

# Around the UK and Ireland

*The ACB Regional Committees serve local Members through scientific and training meetings, bursaries and awards. They are vital in keeping the ACB's membership thriving by providing a unique opportunity to network and develop their skills.*

## North West

Chair:  
Dr Shirley Bowles



- Laura Walker, who works with Alder Hey Children's Hospital, won the Ian Ward Members' Papers Competition for her presentation 'Development and Validation of an LCQ TOF MS assay for qualitative screening of antihypertensive drugs to neurine.' The competition attracted seven high quality presentations of either method development or case presentations. Held in July on Zoom it proved the only, albeit well-attended, Scientific Meeting of 2021.
- 25-30 attendees at each of the monthly, virtual format, FRCPath regional teaching sessions.

### Looking forward to 2022-23

- Schedule two Scientific Meetings, as in previous years.
- Recruit new ACB NW Committee Members.
- Improve engagement with regional members.
- Reinstate regular audit meetings.

## Northern Ireland

Chair:  
Dr Jennifer Cundick



- Regional Tutor holds weekly FRCPath tutorials.
- Members challenged by two largescale initiatives: the Northern Ireland Pathology Information Management Systems (NIPIMS) Programme and the Automated Laboratory Management System (ALMS) Project.
- A previously Belfast-centred fortnightly Clinical Biochemistry discussion group has been rolled out to the whole region.
- The Regional Committee is now attracting applications from a greater diversity of incumbents.

### Looking forward to 2022-23

- Regional bursary for attendance at educational meetings, and Quality Improvement/Public Engagement award to be re-advertised in 2022.
- Introduce prizes to increase future professionals' engagement with laboratory medicine speciality.
- Planning a scientific meeting for Autumn 2022.

## Republic of Ireland

Chair:  
Dr Jennifer Brady



- Ruth Cullen, Mater Hospital, submitted the winning presentation at the ACB 2021 Scientific Meeting with 'GGT as a differentiator of hepatic or bone source of raised ALP'.
- Virtual monthly teaching sessions to support Trainees preparing for FRCPath, with ten attendees, organised with the Association of Clinical Biochemists (ACBI).
- We thank Michael Ryan for his work as Trainee rep and welcome Barbara MacNamara who takes over in the role.
- Scientific Meeting held in January 2021 with over 70 participants.

### Looking forward to 2022-23

- Hold a Scientific Meeting in January 2023.
- Complete the regional audit.
- Continue to support Trainees with FRCPath preparation.

## Scotland

Chair:  
Rebecca  
Pattenden



- The 2021 Autumn Scientific Meeting was well-attended but the Spring 2022 one had to be rescheduled due to COVID-19.
- Kirsten Grant won the John King Members' Paper Award.
- Trainees are supported by regional tutor and Trainee reps, Scotland-wide tutorials plus a WhatsApp group for regular contact.
- Current STPs (and all ACB Scotland members) can apply for ACB Scotland Bursary, of up to £500, to help them attend a conference/course relevant to their field of work.
- The Committee undertook an EDI audit in 2021. In terms of ethnicity and sexual orientation we compare well with our population, a ratio of 2/3 female to 1/3 male and considerably worse in the youngest age group (only 1 in 10 are male).

### Looking forward to 2022-23

- Resume in person meetings.
- Engage with other disciplines to encourage wider representation on Committee.
- Encourage STP take up advantage of funding opportunities.

## South West and Wessex

Chair:  
Roanna  
George



- Scientific Event held in October with 66 attendees.
- WhatsApp Group set up for regional Trainees.
- We thank Paul Thomas, who has stood down as Regional Tutor and Workforce Adviser, for his input to the South West and Wessex ACB council over the years.

### Looking forward to 2022-23

- Re-focus a regional audit group.
- Reinvigorate Scientific Meetings.
- Continue to build on networking in the region.

## Southern

Chair:  
Dr Robyn  
Shea



- Two virtual Committee Meetings held on Teams.
- Monthly Tutorials held by five regional tutors, with additional support and annual reviews for Trainees.
- We'd like to thank Sophie Hepburn (FCS rep); Laura Briggs (trainee rep London – though will be standing for ordinary member London); Terence Hunter (Immunology); Kat Morris (Newsletter) and Sally Kerr (co-opted to cover Kat Morris's maternity leave), who are standing down from the Committee for all their hard work.

### Looking forward to 2022-23

- Award Bill Richmond Prize.
- Fill the Federation of Clinical Scientists (FCS) rep position.
- Hold three Scientific Meetings.
- Achieve more on the EDI front.
- Further integrate EDI into our activities.

## Trent, Northern & Yorkshire

Chair:  
John  
Shepherd



- Two Committee Meetings held in 2021/2022.
- FRCPath tutorials held weekly.
- Two Scientific Meetings have been oversubscribed, one about lipids and cholesterol, and the other the various diagnostics of liver disease.
- 67 ACB members in training/ non-consultant grades.
- Trainee representatives represent 24 ACB Member Trainees in Trent, and 45 in Northern and Yorkshire.
- We thank Shirley Spoors, who is standing down as FCS rep, for her considerable input.

## Wales

Chair:  
Dr Susan  
Prosser



- Scientific Meetings on transgender medicine, (20 people in room/100-plus online) and the delayed one on 'Genomics in Healthcare' (30/40).
- All-Wales Computer under way.
- Weekly tutorial sessions for 16 FRCPath Trainees.
- We thank Jon Flowerday for his work as Treasurer, and welcome Brian Tennant, who takes over, and all those with new roles on the Committee.

## West Midlands

Chair:  
Pervaz  
Mohammed



- Regional Committee rejuvenated.
- ACB national strategy carried out in West Midlands.
- Held all three planned meetings, including hybrid Joint Scientific Meeting with SAS Trace Elements Group in November which attracted sponsorship and reached capacity on and offline.
- Two Group Audit meetings held with a view to extending them regionally.
- Emma Braybrook won the Trainee Scientific Competition for the Gaddy Medal for her paper on *'The impact SARS-CoV-2 B.1.1.7 on circulating biomarkers in hospitalised patients during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK'*.

### Looking forward to 2022-23

- Two Scientific Meetings in 2022-23.
- Explore expansion of weekly virtual event piloted for FRCPath.
- Re-start joint BSC ACP clinical immunology training days.
- Hold Geoffrey Walker Award.
- Refresh Committee membership.
- Investigate hybrid meetings.

### Looking forward to 2022-23

- One big Scientific Hybrid Meeting in 2022-23 targeted beyond Wales's borders.
- Participate in 'Build Back With Labs'.
- Consolidate trainee network.
- Review regional rules under ACB umbrella.
- Seek genetics/microbiology and haematology Clinical Scientist representatives.

### Looking forward to 2022-23

- Create networking platform to meet as a region (face to face and mini group).
- Hold three events: AGM plus collaborative Joint Scientific Meeting, Trainee Scientific Competition for Robert Gaddy Poster Medal in Regional Meeting, and another regional meeting.
- Focus Scientific Meeting on a particular area of biochemistry.

# Federation of Clinical Scientists

*Certificated Trade Union, with full national recognition and negotiating rights, which represents the interests of Clinical Scientists in the NHS and other related areas. ACB Members can opt-in to become Federation of Clinical Scientists (FCS) member.*

The past year has seen continued online training for FCS representatives, with 'Sickness, Absence and Equality' session in October 2021, a 'Retire and Return' session in March 2022, and another on 'Performance Management' in May 2022. The hope was to return to face-to-face meetings this year, but that has not happened to date, and the likelihood is that they will be hybrid instead.

## Pensions

FCS is a member of both statutory boards advising the Secretary of State on the NHS Pension Scheme. The 'Scheme Advisory Board' (SAB) gives advice on changes to the scheme and the 'Pension Board' scrutinises the quality of the scheme administration. The SAB has been particularly busy this year with the two big issues of:

- The McCloud discrimination remedy.
- Member contributions.

The legislation for the first stage of the McCloud remedy is now in place. Several changes, which will involve increased contributions for some, have been proposed to member contributions. These were due to be implemented from April but, in recognition that the 2022 pay award will not be enacted until the Pay Review Body process is completed, will not happen now until October 2022.

## Trade Union discussions

The FCS switched to virtual meetings in 2020 and has been carrying out training via video link and processing much more data since then. We have been supporting the ACB and consulting on pertinent issues with committees including the Social Partnership forum. NHS England's updated guidance to managers regarding handling staff suffering from long COVID-19 has been circulated to members.

We are contributing to the ACB's Membership Review and are also in discussion about FCS-only membership. We thank Paul Cawood for his contribution on his retirement and welcome the CSP's Iain Croker who takes over from Emma Lenahan.



Director of Regulatory Affairs and FCS Chair  
**Dr Emma Lewis**



Deputy Director and FCS Secretary  
**Lisa Garrison**

## Looking forward to 2022-23

- Implement hybrid training, with a view to returning to in person sessions.
- Hold three hybrid Executive Committee and three National Committee Meetings, with a view to returning to in person.

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

*The ACB's policy on EDI, adopted at its 2020 AGM, is now being bedded in throughout the organisation.*

The policy has been welcomed across the regions, underlining one of the main findings from the ACB's membership survey: that the Association engenders a sense of community, and we'd like to ensure that feeling of belonging extends to all our members.

There have been various highlights throughout the year. One is the work with the Nominations Committee, set up about 18 months ago. This has started at the top, with nominations for the next President. The identification of the nominee is now an open and transparent application process, where we invite applications from members. It has provided bullet points for next year, as we roll out the process with all the other executive officers when they come up for renewal. We hope that this will encourage members at an earlier career stage to get involved with and start contributing to ACB sooner.



ACB Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion  
Dr Rachel Wilmot

*“We wanted our leadership, Council Members and Executive to reflect the ACB's membership and I am extremely pleased to say that it now does.”*

## Creating social impact

As we've restructured the ACB, physically and organisationally, we've also born in mind our commitment to inclusivity. So, when we decided to refurbish the 3rd Floor of Tooley Street – which is now ready to welcome members back in September – we contracted the team at **Bounce Back** (pictured) to undertake the work.

Bounce Back is a Charity and a Social Enterprise focused on the training and employment of people in, and leaving, prison. They work inside and out of prisons to train ex-offenders in painting and decorating with a firm belief that everyone has the ability to change and deserves an opportunity to do so.

We often just think about the impact on the lives of the individuals and their friends and families, but the ability to cut re-offending has a major economic impact, too. Re-offending (and the national rate is 50%) costs the UK £15bn a year. Lack of paid employment is a major contributor to this situation, but with Bounce Back the rate is 12% – so it's a formula that works.

Last, but not least, the quality and finish of the work the team produced is excellent, their pricing is competitive, and they were a pleasure to work with.



Another highlight was to revisit benchmarking with the Science Council. In 2017 we participated in what was essentially ground level bench-marking, starting to build an action plan to identify areas that we really wanted to concentrate on, with governance and leadership featuring high on the list.

We wanted our leadership, council members and executive to reflect ACB's membership and I am extremely pleased to say that it now does. Our council is currently made up of a slightly higher percentage of females than males. The ethnic diversity of our leadership is slightly above that of our membership. So, again we've made great progress there.

Data from the membership survey now includes EDI questions and the ACB website automatically collects relevant information from new members. The ACB office reports regularly to Council on the data. Yet, although the headline figures reveal no surprises in terms of ethnicity, we know they don't reveal the whole picture and that more work is needed here.

Two other changes that we've made in the past year are in the blinding of our grant applications, which appears to have resulted in a greater variety of applicants, and the launch of the Impact Award. This, we hoped, would appeal to early consultants, or those about to take that step into consultant post, and can be presented by an individual or by a team.

And finally, I'd like to welcome new national Council Member, Dilini Peiris, who has expressed a real interest in EDI, and does a lot of work on it within her own Trust.

## Looking forward to 2022-23

- Roll the work of the Nominations Committee out to other areas.
- Ensure EDI informs the ACB rebranding exercise, and the Articles of Association.
- Promote greater engagement with ACB regions.
- Publicise grants and bursaries.

# Finance Director's Report

Full details of the Association's accounts are presented in the Annual Report and are available on our website.

Very briefly, I must report an operating loss of £84,836 (against a projected loss of £53,000) for the year 2021. This is largely due to continued modernisation of office systems and the additional costs incurred because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these challenges, however, this is a significant improvement on an operating loss of £120,356 in 2020.

On a positive note we moved our investment with HSBC to a more sustainable portfolio which released approximately £70,000. This, coupled with a review of our tax calculations, means that overall the ACB recorded a profit of £40,577 for 2021.

Overall, the ACB remains in a healthy financial position. Early in 2022 I finally succeeded in recovering approximately £100,000 from Lombard International. This process reinforced the need, in the opinion of our CEO and me, to look at our investments as a whole.

In 2021, the Council decided to sell the 4th floor conference suite. The space has not been used for some time and refurbishments to the 3rd floor have enabled us to provide adequate office and meeting space for our needs. Proceeds from the sale, which is expected to complete in the Summer of 2022, will add approximately £950,000 to our reserves.

We have started to develop a reserves and investment strategy, plus embark on a rationalisation of our investments to funds that support our aspirations to be an ESG (ethical, social and governance) investor.

We continue to diversify and grow our income streams through membership growth, industry partnerships, increasing the reach and scale of UKMedLab and our scientific journal.

I will be completing my five-year tenure as Finance Director at this year's AGM, and I wish my successor all the best for the future. Our finances and our management are in a far better place than they were a little over five years ago and I know that my successor will inherit a sound financial and management base.

I would like to pay tribute to the staff at Tooley Street, especially Mike Lester and Cheryl Taylor, both of whom have worked diligently through some difficult times over the past few years. I am sure that, with Jane Pritchard as Chief Executive, both the staff and the ACB are well supported and fit for the future.

I wish the organisation, its staff and myriad volunteers on Council, Executive and in the regions who give freely of their time the very best for the future.



Director  
Dr Mike Bosomworth

*"Proceeds from the sale of the 4th floor conference suite will add approximately £950,000 to our reserves."*

## Looking forward to 2022-23

- Develop a reserves and investment strategy.
- Take holistic look at investments.
- Diversify and grow income streams.

# Stakeholders and Partners

## Strategic industry partner

- Abbott Diagnostics

## Corporate Members

- Abbott Diagnostics
- Advanced Instruments Limited
- Alpha Laboratories Ltd
- A. Menarini Diagnostics Ltd
- Beckman Coulter UK Ltd
- Becton Dickinson Ltd
- BHR Pharmaceuticals Ltd
- Biohit Healthcare Ltd
- BioServ UK Ltd
- CliniSys Solutions Ltd
- Diasorin Ltd
- Horiba Medical-UK
- Nova Biomedical UK
- Ortho Clinical Diagnostics
- Pathway Diagnostics Ltd
- R-Biopharm Rhone Ltd
- Randox Laboratories Ltd
- Roche Diagnostics Ltd

- Schebo Biotech UK Ltd
- Sebia UK Ltd
- Siemens Healthineers
- Sekisui Diagnostics (UK) Ltd
- The Binding Site Group Ltd
- Tosoh Bioscience Ltd
- Waters Ltd

## External memberships and partnerships

- Academy for Healthcare Science (AHCS)
- American Association for Clinical Chemistry (AACC)
- European Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (EFLM)
- Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS)
- International Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine (IFCC)
- National School of Healthcare Science (NSHCS)
- Royal College of Pathologists (RCPATH)
- Science Council

# Membership Awards 2021

In 2021 the Membership Award winners were as follows:

Nominated by	Nominee	Award
West Midlands	Professor Jonathan Berg	Emeritus
Scotland	Dr Paul Cawood	Fellow
Southern Region	Dr Frances Boa	Fellow
Southern Region	Edward Kearney	Fellow
Southern Region	Dr Joanna Sheldon	Fellow
Scotland	Frank Finlay	Honorary

## President's Shield

The President's Shield is awarded for outstanding contribution to the Association. In 2021, for long service and dedicated commitment over many years, it was awarded to:

- Cheryl Taylor, Operations Manager at ACB
- Mike Lester, Membership Manager at ACB





## The Association for Clinical Biochemistry & Laboratory Medicine

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Edited by Louella Miles

Design and infographics by John Williams

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