



Talking therapies added to online support for doctors

Financial support also available to help doctors access therapy

Thanks to your kind donations, we are able to give financial support to hundreds of doctors, medical students and their family members every year. But as a supporter, you are also helping us broaden the scope of the help we can offer.

For example, your support has now enabled us to partner with Rightsteps, workplace mental health specialists, to add a range of talking therapies for doctors to our online wellbeing resources.

Rightsteps' specialist team of in-house therapists offer a variety of confidential therapeutic approaches for doctors, including Integrative Therapy, Person-Centred Therapy, and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, available via telephone or video sessions.

Doctors can complete a confidential self-referral form to arrange a 45-minute consultation, enabling Rightsteps' specialist team of therapists to understand the appropriate type of support to offer.

The RMBF can also provide financial help to access this service for those facing hardship.

One individual supported by Rightsteps said: "My therapist was calm and comforting during our

sessions. She explained all the techniques thoroughly and helped me to adopt a different way of thinking about stress and anxiety."

Our Rightsteps online wellbeing resource also offers self-guided support on a range of wellbeing issues including anxiety, work stress, addiction, sleep, and more. The platform has helped over 1,100 visitors since its launch in 2020.

Visit rmbf.org/talking-therapies to find out more, and see Page 3 of this issue for a rundown of our other online support - from money advice to wellbeing webinars.

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CEO Update

Steve Crone

A very Happy New Year to all our supporters, and many good wishes for the year ahead.

I should start with some personal news, which is that I will be retiring this summer, after some 15 years as Chief Executive.

It has been a real privilege to lead the RMBF in that time, and though it is the right time, it was a difficult decision for many reasons.

Changes and challenges

Over those 15 years, I am very proud to have seen the charity's reach and impact grow significantly. The time has also held many changes and challenges for the medical profession, including the Covid pandemic, the most difficult time for doctors in recent history. I'm proud that we were able to continue providing support throughout that time, when it was needed more than ever.

We've also adapted our support to the evolving needs of the profession, without losing sight of our core work – helping those in financial need. We began helping medical students shortly after I joined, which has led to over 170 talented students qualifying as doctors when they otherwise might well not have done. We have developed a wide range of wellbeing support for doctors, publicly advocated for better working conditions and mental health support, and undertaken a landmark research project into the levels of unmet need in the profession. All while providing vital financial support to thousands of medical colleagues and family members in great need during my time here.

All in all, it has been a truly rewarding and enjoyable time. But I must underline that the RMBF's work is made possible by a large and dedicated community, working hard for the charity across the UK.

A fantastic community

I'm very lucky to have worked with many outstanding Presidents, Chairs, Treasurers and Trustees in my time here. We have benefited greatly from their guidance and experience, and their understanding of the challenges doctors face in changing times.

A huge thank you to the staff team in Wimbledon. To a person, they are extremely talented, diligent, and above all supportive – of those we help, and also of each other. I will certainly miss seeing those friendly faces every week, and the positive atmosphere in the office. A special thank you to Nick Frank, our Head of Finance & IT, and Kate Bresler-Jones, Head of Volunteering, and who will also be retiring in the spring. Both have worked for the RMBF for many years with great dedication and professionalism, and I wish them all the very best.

And enormous thanks, most of all, to you: our volunteers and supporters. You are the reason the RMBF is able to make such a difference in people's lives – by being so generous with your time, your donations, and your enthusiasm. You have enabled us not only to support hundreds of people every year, but also to improve the help we offer, and to plan for the future, knowing that we can rely on your steadfast support. It's been a real privilege to meet and talk to so many of you during my tenure. Thank you so much.

Why we do it

For me, it always comes back to hearing how the RMBF has changed the course of a life. We hear stories from doctors who have faced unimaginable

misfortune, trying to navigate near-impossible situations.

But we also get to hear how those stories can change, with the RMBF's support. Doctors who get the breathing space to recover from serious injury before returning to work, or to adjust to an ongoing health condition. Medical students who aren't forced to leave their studies when a mental health crisis throws them off track. Bereaved families who, in a time of grief and upheaval, know they don't have to worry about the rent and bills.

At meetings of the Grants & Awards committee, our Casework team shares updates from those we have helped before. To hear from someone who was previously struggling that they have now started their first job in medicine, or had their first day back at work – it is so rewarding. And so many add the same sentiment: "I would never have made it without the RMBF".

Knowing that we can make such a difference, for so many, has been hugely important to me.

Looking ahead

I am pleased to say that recruitment for the next CEO is already underway, with plenty of time to ensure a smooth transition.

I won't be a stranger – the RMBF means a great deal to me, and I will be keeping in touch and closely following the charity's progress when I leave. In the meantime, there is of course plenty of important work to be done over the coming months!

Sincerest thanks and best wishes,

Steve

Online support: wellbeing, money advice, and more

For nearly 190 years, the RMBF has provided a financial safety net for the medical profession, enabling doctors to support themselves and their families in crisis.

But thanks to you, we can offer more than just financial help - we can support doctors to survive, thrive, and enjoy their careers.

If doctors and medical students can easily access wellbeing resources – from talking therapies and expert articles, to top tips and personal money advice – then they can be better-prepared when life throws a curveball, and may avoid reaching that point of crisis.

Our website is frequently updated with new content – here's an overview of what's new, plus some key resources that it's useful to know about.

Foundation Year 1 advice

Stepping up into FY1 can be a hugely exciting time – but it also presents many challenges.

You'll be taking on your first placements, learning many new systems and routines, and starting to think about specialties and career paths. It's important to keep your cool, and lay the right foundations for a successful and fulfilling working life.

On our Advice Hub, we've got two new resources for FY1 doctors. Dr Megan Niven, a resident doctor and RMBF volunteer, has used her own recent experience to provide 10 crucial **top tips for new doctors**. From ePortfolios and documentation, to planning your leave and making friends, these are excellent bite-sized tips for a successful transition.

We've also released a **free video webinar**, *Surviving and Flourishing During your Foundation Year*, created by Consultant OH Physician and RMBF volunteer, Dr Harj Kaul. Drawing upon 20 years' experience of supporting medical colleagues, Harj sets out a simple framework that can help you maintain a work-life balance, nurture your interests, and ultimately make the most of your life as a doctor.



Returning to medicine

Most doctors choose the profession for the same reason: they want to help people.

That can make it doubly frustrating when illness or injury prevents a doctor from working. Thankfully, the RMBF's financial support helps many doctors every year return to doing what they love.

Still, getting back on the horse can often cause some anxieties. That's why it's useful to understand your rights and responsibilities when returning to work in the NHS. On our Advice Hub now, Ms Linda Ware from Medical Defence Shield has created a straightforward and comprehensive guide to navigating the return process. It covers what is expected of both employer and employee, sets out statutory rights, and discusses ways to make the transition easier.

Another useful resource is our publication *Returning to Medicine: A Vital Signs Guide*. This guide looks more deeply into the emotional and mental health aspects of returning to practice.

Wellbeing on the go: podcast

Podcasts can be a great tool for busy doctors, making it easy to pick up information on the go.

The new RMBF *Here for Doctors* podcast will bring you insightful and informative interviews with experienced doctors, as well as audio versions of our Advice Hub content. Subscribe to get new episodes every month!

Find all resources here:
rmbf.org/winter-2026

 **RMBF Webinar**

**Surviving and
Flourishing
During Your
Foundation Year**
Professor Harj Kaul



BeccaFest: celebrating the life of a remarkable doctor

A year after Dr Rebecca Brown passed away, her family and friends came together for a day filled with joy, music, laughter, and generosity

On a sunny Saturday in September, hundreds of partygoers of all ages filled the gardens of a craft brewery just outside Welwyn Garden City. Food stalls did a roaring trade, while local bands and DJs got the crowd dancing, and families played together.

This was more than just a summer fete, however. It was a day to remember and celebrate Dr Rebecca Brown – a dedicated, inspirational and much-loved doctor, who sadly passed away from ovarian cancer aged 30.

“Becca’s smile, laugh and love for life was infectious,” her father Martin tells us. “She had the kind of smile that could light up an entire room, and she carried that brightness with her wherever she went.”

After graduating with a First in Biomedical Sciences from Liverpool University, Becca moved on to study medicine at Bart’s in London, having dreamed

of becoming a doctor from a very young age. In 2022, Becca achieved that lifelong ambition, and qualified as a medical doctor. On the warmest day ever recorded in London, the family proudly watched her graduate at St Paul’s Cathedral.

“To see her qualify as a doctor, after years of hard work and dedication, was one of the proudest moments of our lives,” says Martin. “And we know it was for her, too.”

Becca moved to Poole with her partner Henry, and there she started her F1. She loved living in Poole, where she could follow her dreams of practising medicine while enjoying her days off on the beach.

In June 2023, Becca had surgery to remove a 14cm ovarian cyst and one of her ovaries. In February 2024, Becca was diagnosed with Stage 4b ovarian cancer. She courageously battled eight rounds of chemotherapy and numerous



procedures without any complaint. She was admitted to hospital in August 2024, and sadly passed away a month later.

Becca’s family and friends are left with immense pride and many happy memories, but a loss like this cannot help but have a deep impact, Martin tells us.

“A year on, we cannot escape the reality that Becca’s life was cut far, far too short, and that is difficult to come to terms with. She was in the middle of her F2 at Poole Hospital, and we have heard from colleagues that she changed so many lives in the short time she worked there. We believe she could have done so much good in this world.”

The Brown family decided that one way to honour Becca’s legacy would be to support the profession that meant so very much to her. Donations for the RMBF were collected at her funeral last year, and soon plans were in place for a further celebration to mark the anniversary – BeccaFest.





After much preparation, organisation and decoration, Becca's friends and family were ready for the big day. On 13 September, guests gathered at the 3 Brewers - and it proved just as joyful an occasion as hoped for.

"The weather was great and everyone enjoyed it. Her rainbow even made another appearance, just like at our son's wedding."

Around the venue, QR codes and collection buckets meant that partygoers could support medics in need by donating to the RMBF. To date, Becca's family and friends have raised over £8,000 together, a fantastic achievement.

These donations will help doctors and medical students to make

it through the tough times and get back to doing what they love – what Becca loved, practising medicine and caring for patients.

"Becca was more than just a brilliant doctor," says Martin. "She was the most compassionate and selfless person we have ever met. She truly cared about people. Whether it was comforting a patient in need, or simply being there for family and friends, her empathy and kindness knew no bounds. She gave so much of herself to others, and that spirit of giving is something that will forever be a part of her legacy."

Thank you so much to the Brown family and all of Becca's friends. We are honoured to support doctors in her memory.



How to make an impact

Three simple actions you can take today

Become an RMBF Champion

Looking for an easy, flexible way to support medics in need this year?

Sign up as an RMBF Champion, and every quarter, we'll send you a simple list of actions that will help raise awareness and vital funds in your local community. Just pick one (or more!) and you'll be making a difference for doctors.

Anyone can become an RMBF Champion – from medical students to retired doctors.

Sign up: rmbf.org/champions

Request our new info leaflets

With new cohorts of doctors and medical students arriving every year, there's always work to be done in making sure they know where they can turn in a crisis.

And the best way to reach busy, hard-working medics is to come to where they are.

Order a free pack of our info leaflets, and distribute them to break rooms, doctors' messes, or study halls. It'll make a difference!

rmbf.org/leaflets

Consider a gift in your will

We are honoured and very grateful that many RMBF supporters choose to remember us in their will.

Any gift, large or small, makes a lasting difference for doctors and medical students in times of need.

If you would like to know more, please get in touch with Claire Andersen, Head of Fundraising & Communications.

Email: candersen@rmbf.org
Phone: 020 8545 8443

Super fundraising efforts

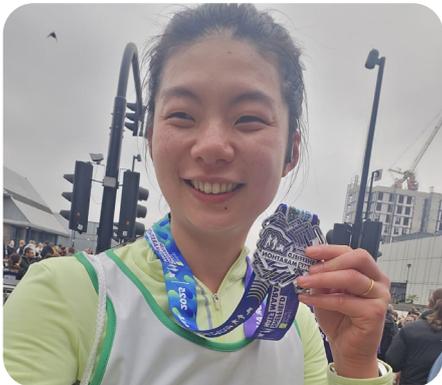
We're delighted to share some more brilliant fundraising success stories from our supporters in 2025.

Running shoes on

Sharon (*below left*) is an RMBF medical student volunteer, studying at the University of Sheffield. On top of her hard work to raise awareness of our support, she also took on her longest-ever running challenge in aid of current and future colleagues - the Sheffield Half Marathon.

"I have a lot of friends who are doctors, and they tell me about colleagues who are struggling to get by," Sharon says. "I wanted to do my part to support the RMBF and their incredible work."

Y12 aspiring medic Ananya (*below centre*) donned her training gear after a year's break from running, building up to a 10k for doctors in need.



"Training to become a doctor is demanding enough," says Ananya, "and I can't imagine how difficult it must be when financial pressures are added on top."

Hospital hopping

Our Hospital Hop challenge - to run, walk or cycle between UK hospitals - continues to prove popular with fundraisers!

Aspiring medic Michelle gathered a trusty crew of family and friends (*below right*), and hopped between the Royal London Hospital and St Bartholomew's, sightseeing along the way.

"It's such a fun and memorable experience, and so worth it," she says. "You get to do something you enjoy while making a real impact on the medical community."

Hot wheels

Further west, aspiring medical student Isobel (*right*) put her

lifelong love of cycling to the test, riding the 13-mile Bristol-to-Bath cycleway alongside her dad.

"I can't help but notice how much I take my healthcare for granted, and how much I haven't truly appreciated all that the doctors and nurses have done for me throughout my life," she told us.

A huge thank you once again to all our fundraisers - your efforts will change lives!



Get involved in 2026!

Miles for Mental Health

It's not too late to add a New Year's Resolution to your list! Miles for Mental Health is a nationwide fundraising challenge that's open to everyone, from **January to March 2026**. You decide the activity and the distance - it's completely up to you, and every mile makes a difference! By raising £200 for doctors and medical students in need, you'll earn a custom medal and certificate.

Sign up: rmbf.org/miles

The Great North Run

Seeking a tougher challenge this year? Run a 10k before and looking to take the next step? We have guaranteed charity places in the Great North Run. The iconic half marathon from Newcastle to South Shields takes place on **Sunday 13th September 2026**. The race route offers famous landmarks, wall-to-wall support and a fantastic atmosphere. Apply for your place today - we can't wait to hear from you!

Apply: rmbf.org/great-north

Why I volunteer

Dr Roger Davies tells us why the RMBF matters to him

After a career in general practice in Kenilworth, I retired in 2012.

Twelve years before that, I became chair of the South Warwickshire Guild, raising money and awareness for the RMBF.

I first encountered the RMBF through my senior partner at the practice. He took me and my wife along to some of the events. Back then, they were held in consultants' houses, because they had the biggest ones! Sometimes at a GP's house as well, but they weren't quite so big! But my wife and I started attending the summer lunches, the Christmas events, the dinners.

Then in 2000, someone from the committee called me up and asked if I'd like to join. A recent event had been cancelled because they couldn't get the numbers, and I'd said they should let me know if they needed any help. So they did!

They asked me to be chair, which was a bit of a shock. But I was honoured to be considered. And 25 years later I still feel honoured. I've managed to keep our local guild going with the aid of these fabulous volunteers.

We still hold around three or four events a year around Kenilworth and South Warwickshire – a summer lunch, a golf competition, an AGM, and of course a Christmas event with mince pies and a raffle.

These events are a great way to keep in touch with other doctors. A lot of medicine has become so fragmented now, but doctors do communicate well with other doctors. Plus, I keep everyone up to date if someone is unwell or has unfortunately passed on. And the support is excellent. We have one lady who was helped by the RMBF years ago when unfortunately, her husband passed away and she was left with two



young children. She was greatly impressed with the help she received. She stayed involved, and now she's a really great supporter of the charity.

The social element is really important. I think doctors have lost the comradeship of other doctors, and younger doctors are more individually isolated than we were. But lots of people don't know about the RMBF. They're not aware of the support they can get or the community they can find here. That's why I'm involved. To help raise awareness and to support my colleagues.

The impact of your support

In the words of doctors and medical students



"I'm deeply grateful for this award. Your support directly eases immediate pressures (rent and essential travel) and allows me to concentrate on my clinical training with confidence. **Thank you** again for your time, care and kindness."

"I am overcome with gratitude. I don't know what to say. **Thank you** and the team so much for your generosity and trust. I feel a huge sense of relief, knowing that I have a little stability for now. I can't tell you what it means."

"I am doing better with my health and slowly going back to work (as of last week). I am so grateful for the huge financial support the RMBF have given me over the past year, and can't explain how much worry it has relieved. I hope that as I progress through my career, I will be able to support the RMBF, as a way to **thank you** for all the support you have given me!"

RMBF joins call to protect doctors under GMC health investigations

The RMBF has joined 31 leading organisations urging the Health Minister to retain the GMC’s ability to investigate doctors with health concerns under a distinct ‘health’ category.

This route allows supportive language, private hearings, and a focus on recovery and safe return to practice - rather than framing issues as misconduct.

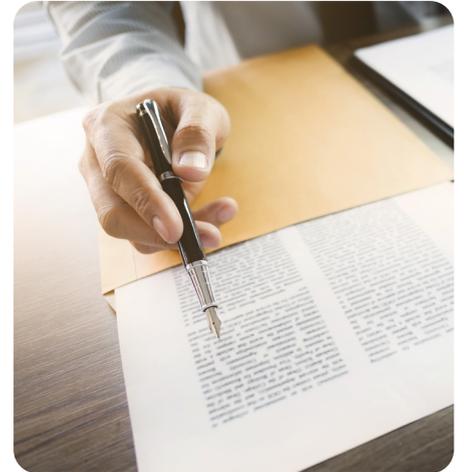
The previous government proposed removing this category, in its consultation on reform of the Medical Act.

The change would mean doctors would be investigated under “misconduct” or “inability to provide care,” which could deter early help-seeking and worsen mental health impacts.

GMC data shows health-related cases account for 17% of investigations, with nearly half self-referred.

Find out more and read the open letter at:

rmbf.org/GMCLetter



MDU partnership surpasses £100,000

MDU

We’re thrilled to announce that our partnership with the MDU has passed the £100,000 mark and will continue into 2026.

Since 2021, MDU has generously donated £2.50 from each reduced first-year subscription for FY1 members, helping RMBF provide vital support to medical students

facing financial pressures beyond their control.

These funds have made a real difference, ensuring students can stay on track to complete their training and join the profession.

A huge thank you to MDU and to all the members who have helped us reach this fantastic milestone!

Key online event for aspiring medical students

Next month, we’re giving aspiring medical students a chance to find out what to expect when they go into medical practice - and we need your help!

On 26th February 2026, 5-6pm, we’ll be hosting the free online event *Behind the Scenes: Life as a Doctor*.

Attendees will hear directly from current doctors and medical students, as they discuss:

- What their day-to-day work is really like
- The highs, challenges, and surprises of medical school
- How they found their path to specialising
- Their advice for applying to medical school

How you can help

As well as offering valuable insight for tomorrow’s doctors, this event will help young medics be aware

of the support the RMBF can offer - right from the start of their careers. That’s why we’re looking for RMBF supporters - especially current and retired doctors - to help promote this key event in your community.

A great way is to get in touch with **your former school, sixth form or college**, and ask them to share the event details with students.

You can find all the details here: rmbf.org/bts

If you’re not sure where to start, our team can advise on who to contact, how to find details, and also provide a template email.

Get in touch on info@rmbf.org and we’ll be able to help out.