A year ago I was honoured to take on the role of Chair of the Wales Academy. I knew I had to build on the progress made by my predecessor Simon Emery with his enthusiasm and leadership in developing and raising the profile of the Academy over the past 3 years. I have been very pleased to welcome the Royal College of Surgeons Edinburgh and many new representatives onto Council. Our profile in Wales is on the up.

2016 has been a year in which the Academy has enabled effective collaboration between 16 Medical Royal Colleges and Faculties in Wales in all areas of work including medical leadership, education, training and patient care. I would particularly like to highlight the lead role we have played in the development and successful launch of the international Choosing Wisely ‘movement’ in Wales (6 weeks ahead of the UK launch). We had great publicity on BBC (including Inside Health on Radio 4), have developed an informative website and raised a lot of interest across Wales. Our next challenge lies in the implementation phase to ensure a change in clinical conversations across Wales.

Since 1999 the Wales Academy has been closely linked to Welsh Government as part of its advisory structure but we need to be more than that and earlier this year we became fully independent and further strengthened our position as the voice of doctors on professional issues in Wales by affiliating with the UK Academy. We are increasingly the “go to” organisation for a multispecialty medical opinion. This is certainly a true testament of how far we have come and an indicator of the direction in which we want to go. I attend the UK Academy Council to ensure devolved issues are not ignored.

During 2016 we have seen the publication of a number of position statements alongside our existing programme of work. The Academy council was unanimous and leant its powerful, unified medical voice to issues such as the out of hours: time to care report, introduction of physicians associates, death certification, and a training strategy for doctors in Wales. Our relationship with the Welsh Government in general and some key ministers and policy advisors in particular have gone from strength to strength. We have held meetings with the CMO, Deputy CMO and the Cabinet Secretary for Health.

Earlier this year we published and received considerable recognition for our National Assembly election manifesto, which provided a consensus view of the cross-speciality issues and overarching policies. We will continue to promote these actions in order to maintain and improve health and health services for the patients in Wales.

New pieces of work lined up for 2017 reflect our increasing influence and ability to provide multi-speciality professional leadership in Wales. We will be aiming to improve the primary and secondary care interface, launch a series of professional conversations and address gender identity services in Wales.

I look forward to the next year of my term as chair, continuing to focus on the big upcoming health challenges that lie ahead in Wales. I look forward to working with all colleges, faculties and external partners.

Best wishes

Paul Myres
Chairman
Choosing Wisely Wales launched in Sept 2016 and received extensive coverage by BBC TV, radio and press. Articles also appeared in various trade magazines and on health-related websites. CWW gained significant social media coverage too through the website, twitter and Facebook. The number of visitors and hits continues to grow.

www.choosingwisely.wales.nhs.uk

System Sustainability
AMRCW will be submitting evidence to the Parliamentary commission into the future of the NHS and the implementation of Health Education Wales

Retaining Professionalism
Patient involvement in planning and shared decision making which links to Choosing Wisely Wales

Workforce recruitment and retention
Looking after our juniors which links to our recent position statement on strategy for training doctors in Wales

Three priorities for 2017

Programme of work

Choosing Wisely Wales is a movement to encourage open conversations between patients and their clinicians to make decisions together about the right care for the patient informed by good evidence and responsive to the needs and wishes of the patient. It seeks to reduce unnecessary or harmful interventions and introduces the concept and practice of shared decision making.

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Contributing to improving the medical workforce
Wales continues to be under-doctored, our review will show where the need for more initiatives to recruit and retain doctors is greatest.

Improving the primary and secondary care interface
The Welsh Government has commissioned the Academy to produce an ‘initial principles’ document for communication and clarification of clinical responsibility across the primary and secondary care interface. The Academy plans to follow this up with a paper on the problems and offer potential solutions.

Multi-specialty professional leadership
— Submitting evidence to the Parliamentary commission into future of the NHS and the implementation of Health Education Wales
— Gender identity services
— Respond to national actions, guidance and event on the role of doctors as clinicians and leaders
— Professional conversations – producing a series of leaflets on issues relating to doctors in Wales
— Continue to have regular CMO and ministerial meetings
— Continue to act as representatives on national bodies

Priorities for the Fifth Assembly
A consensus view of the cross-specialty issues and overarching policies which AMRCW believes needs to be delivered in primary and secondary care was widely considered. These were then articulated to a range of policy makers and key influencers across Government, including The Chief Medical Officer, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, and Cabinet Secretary for Health, Well-being and Sport. Dai Lloyd, Chair of the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee.

Key position statements and briefings
— Physicians Associates. March 2016
— Out of hours: Time to care report. April 2016
— Death Certification. June 2016
— Strategic view on training doctors in Wales. November 2016