

To the Academy's partner organisations

23 July 2020

A letter from the new Chair of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges

Academy of Medical
Royal Colleges

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Dear Colleague

As I have just taken on the role Chair of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, succeeding Professor Carrie MacEwen, I thought it would be timely to write to you. I am both delighted and honoured to have been elected by my fellow College Presidents and excited by the prospect. I first wanted to pay tribute to my predecessor – I think everyone agrees that Carrie MacEwen has done a tremendous job not only during COVID-19 but throughout her term of office. It is my wish to build on the relationships and partnerships she has developed.

I am planning to meet as many of our key stakeholders as possible in the not too distant future but I thought it would be helpful to set out what I see as my priorities and the priorities for the Academy and how we can best engage with you prior any meeting. Hopefully, we can pick up on these issues and I can answer and questions you may have when we do meet.

A COVID-tinged world - Where I believe the Academy should focus in the year ahead

We are in an uncharted world, where we, as leaders of the medical profession, have a huge responsibility to be wise, responsible and responsive. Everything we do together in the year ahead must incorporate the learning from the changes which have occurred and utilise the unique opportunities that are emerging from the COVID19 pandemic.

Prior to taking up post I have had discussions with all our members to understand their aspirations for the Academy. I have picked up a clear narrative that the Academy is seen as a force for good, widely respected and professionally appropriate, and these are vital attributes to nurture.

I also I distilled a strong narrative about sustainability of the NHS as an organisation and its people but also of our planet, tied in with health inequalities and social inclusion.

With the myriad of initiatives across the four nations around avoiding medical interventions which do not add value, being evidence based and 'evolution of medicine groups' and projects there is a real opportunity to bring this thinking together under the mantle of "Rethinking medicine". At this time of great change, we may have a once in a generation opportunity to shift the paradigm in terms of both public and professional thinking.

With respect to our education, assessments, workforce and wellbeing priorities, we are



going to have to have challenging conversations amongst ourselves, with partner organisations and with doctors in the service about the inherent tensions of budget and workforce constraints and implications on our practice and working differently with other healthcare professionals.

On workforce we must address both the long-term issues around supply and the crucial issues of staff wellbeing and support.

In education we must lead the way in ensuring the nation is training and assessing our doctors for the NHS of the future, not the NHS of the past.

COVID-19 and responding to it is not optional. How we have reacted, what we retain, what we work with to modify for the future and what must be abandoned will be a major piece of work that all Colleges have a responsibility to lead for their own discipline, but in turn, the Academy has a responsibility to lead for the whole profession. There will be unifying themes that we need to articulate and stand behind, and other areas which will highlight (and perhaps help us celebrate) the differences between our branches of practice.

Engagement

I believe it is essential that the Academy has constructive and active engagement with all our national stakeholders whether in government, regulation, education or amongst fellow professional bodies.

I want us to understand the issues and challenges your organisation is dealing with and try to use our expertise to help you find solutions to help improve health and care services for the benefit of patients.

Our four nations have diverging healthcare systems but, hopefully, converging solutions. I want to ensure that work we do is relevant and applicable across each of the nations. I firmly believe that the underlying issues and challenges in health and healthcare are comparable across the four nations, even if the mechanisms for addressing them may be different.

I therefore want to build on the relationships Carrie and her predecessors developed and ensure we have a close, productive working relationship.

Whilst I already know many of you from my time at the RCGP I look forward to meeting you and working with you in my new role as chair of the Academy.

If you have any immediate queries do please contact me at helen.stokes-lampard@aomrc.org.uk. Otherwise I look forward to meeting up with you soon.

With best wishes

Yours faithfully

Helen

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