

Academy Council Meeting

Summary of key issues

February / 2021

Welcome and introduction

The Council formally welcomed Camilla Kingdon, President-Elect RCPCH, as an observer.

The Council paid tribute to Donal O'Donoghue, Registrar of the RCP, who died on 3 January.

Northern Ireland

Members strongly supported a proposal to seek to establish a cross-College group in Northern Ireland both to share information between Colleges and to engage with the Northern Ireland Government on professional issues. The Irish Colleges of Surgeons and Physicians were both extremely supportive of the proposal. Work will begin to identify members and define terms of reference.

Gender Pay Gap report

Professor Dame Jane Dacre, immediate Past-President RCP, introduced her report, "Mend the Gap", on the gender pay gap in medicine commissioned by the Government. The pay gap in medicine is larger than for any other healthcare staff. The report has a range of proposals to address the issues, many of which involve Colleges. It was agreed that the Academy will facilitate a group to look at the proposals in detail and make recommendations for action back to Colleges.

SAS Doctors

The Council endorsed the Capabilities Framework for the new Senior SAS grade and also agreed the proposed concordat with the BMA and NHS Employers for College involvement in the appointment process for new posts. The Council congratulated and thanked Waleed Arshad, SAS Committee Chair, Carrie MacEwen, Chair of the Reference Group, and Alison Moulds, Academy Policy Manager, for all their work to bring this to a successful conclusion.

Resetting the NHS – The College role

The Council held a detailed and thoughtful discussion on the role Colleges could and should be playing in "resetting" the NHS in a post-pandemic world. There was unanimous agreement that Colleges had to be active participants in the process sharing rather than just responding to proposals. There will be further thought on how we take forward this work, which links to the Rethinking Medicine initiative.

NHS Legislation

The Council noted the imminent publication of details of the proposed NHS legislation covering Integrated Care Systems.



Race Equality activity

The Council received a further iteration of the summary of College and Faculty work on race equality. This was recognised as a useful resource which will be kept up to date.

GMP and planetary health

The Council endorsed a proposal from the RCGP to ask the GMC to include reference to the importance of planetary health in the next revision of Good Medical Practice.

COVID-19

The Council supported a proposal for an Academy project to gather the views and experiences of College Presidents on COVID.

Restructuring of Public Health England

The Council expressed its frustration at the slow progress in getting clarity on the replacement arrangements for PHE both in terms of health improvement and the health protection functions going to the National Institute of Health Protection.

Guidance on Safe Sedation

The Council endorsed the RCoA's refresh of the 2013 Academy guidance on safe sedation. It was agreed to shape a specific remit for NICE to potentially undertake a fuller review.

Education and Training update

The Council expressed its concerns at the continuing problems facing trainees not able to progress as they should because they have not been able to gain the right experience due to COVID. This is causing real problems to normal progress of the whole training system. Council recognised that Government has to unlock this by funding posts outwith the current budgets of the Statutory Education Authorities.

The Council also welcomed and endorsed the proposals for near-peer support for Foundation Doctors which have been developed.

MTI

The current training progression issues are having a knock-on effect on MTI placements with posts being used for trainees and MTI appointments being put on hold. The Council agreed the principle of a joint statement with COPMED recognising the situation, reaffirming commitment to the MTI scheme and setting out ways to manage the issues.

Support for Late Career doctors

The Council noted that NHSE/I are planning work on support for late career doctors. Colleges are keen to be involved and input to this work.

Mental Health Act reform

Council noted the publication of the White Paper on Mental Health Act Reform. RC Psychiatrists would be leading the response to this although there are important implications for emergency and acute medicine. The Academy will not submit its own response.

Work to support professional activities

It was agreed to press for a further national letter to remind employers of the importance of releasing doctors to undertake professional activities for the wider NHS and particularly College work. Supporting training activity will be particularly crucial in the restoration of NHS activity. Undertaking professional activities can also give a boost to doctors following the stress of COVID work.