

Academy Council Policy Day - September 2021

Summary of key issues

21-22 September/ 2021

The Academy Council holds a Policy Day annually. This provides an opportunity to consider a number of items in depth outside the constraints of a normal business meeting and also to agree policy priorities for the coming year.

Our Policy Day this year was held as a face to face event at the Royal College of Anaesthetists. This was the first time the Council had met in person since February 2020 and the first time many colleagues had seen each face to face since that time and, for new members, a first opportunity to meet other Council members. This was a real pleasure.

Jeremy Hunt

On the evening of 21st Jeremy Hunt, Chair of the Health and Care Select Committee and previous Secretary of State was the speaker at the opening seminar. In this informal session Jeremy reflected on his experiences and possible lessons going forward. There was then a Q and A session with a very open discussion of a wide range of issues.

Academy Strategic Review

The Academy Board of Trustees and Council had agreed that there should be a strategic review of the Academy's activities. In part because it is the right thing for organisations to do on a periodic basis but also to ensure that we are fit for purpose as we enter a post-pandemic world. Members had an update on the initial work of a small group of members looking at the Academy's membership, activities and offer to members. There was broad agreement that the key role and strength of the Academy was to provide a powerful collective voice for Colleges and the profession on cross-cutting issues. Engagement with and representation of issues in the devolved nations was also an important theme. The Group will continue its work and report to the November Council meeting.

Amanda Pritchard

We were very pleased to have Amanda Pritchard, the new NHSE Chief Executive, join us for a session along with Steve Powis, NHS Medical Director [albeit remotely]. Amanda stressed her thanks to Colleges for their engagement and work with NHSE during the pandemic and her wish to maintain that close working relationship.

She talked about the current pressures on the NHS and how we go forward. There was then a full Q and A session with a good opportunity for all members to ask questions. Topics covered included, amongst others, tackling health inequalities and the prevention agenda, training recovery – which Amanda strongly supported – , mental health, diagnostics and performance management.

This was a valuable opportunity to engage with the NHSE CEO and the Academy will be discussing with her how we best continue our engagement.



Education Reform

Sheona MacLeod, Deputy Medical Director at HEE, led a session on the package of education reform being undertaken by the Statutory Education Bodies. There is fairly broad alignment across the four nations on the reform agenda. In essence, the various initiatives are looking at what we teach, where we teach, when we teach and how we teach. We discussed issues around flexibility and less than full time training – its opportunities and challenges – progression and credentials. Colleges and the Academy are already involved in much of this work and the key message was to keep that involvement and we will continue engagement with Sheona.

Sheona also briefly mentioned the consultation on the HEE Workforce Framework which had originally been intended as a discussion item. We will be arranging a separate discussion with Jo Lenaghan, HEE Director of Strategy on the issue.

Policy Priorities

The Council considered the Academy's policy priorities for the coming year under the main themes adopted last year – workforce, education and training, system improvement and Tomorrow's NHS. The importance of a clear focus of priorities and the dangers of too many objectives was stressed.

Council agreed that the Academy should develop a clear narrative for all its work being to meet the double aim of addressing the workforce issues and defining a clear vision for the future of the NHS. We bring proposals to Council on how to do this.

Bite-sized sessions

We had several shorter “bite-sized sessions” to update Council on issues or initiate discussions. Topics covered were:

Genomics – Professor Kate Tatton-Brown, the Academy's Genomics Clinical Lead and now newly appointed HEE Genomics Lead, gave an overview on the likely impact on genomics across medicine and the educational needs that arise from that.

Invited Reviews – Rose Jarvis, Academy Policy Lead, updated on the work with Colleges to review the Academy Framework for Invited Reviews. Council supported the initiative and the need for various clarifications and additions.

Abuse of healthcare staff – There was a discussion of the rising abuse of healthcare staff. Whilst the current media campaign about GP access was exacerbating the problems, it has been long standing issue with abuse and violence a continued problem in emergency departments and parts of psychiatry. The Academy and Colleges are not going to solve this alone but we will explore seeking a strong statement from a range of organisations on the unacceptability of abuse to staff.

ME/CFS – There was brief discussion of the forthcoming meeting with NICE on their proposed guidance on ME/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. This has become a hugely difficult and divisive issue and clear College approach is important which will be discussed a pre-meeting for Colleges.

Members Meeting

The Policy Day also incorporates the Annual Members Meeting where the Board presents the Trustees Annual Report and Accounts. The Academy accounts have been agreed by our external auditors and been adopted by the Board. They are in a health state. The more informal [Academy Annual Review](#) was also presented. This was the final Annual Meeting for the Board Chair, Charles Winstanley who demits office in the spring, and Helen Stokes-Lampard thanked Charles and paid tribute to him for all his work for the Academy.