

THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Meeting of Devolved Council

Wednesday 9 December 2020 at 2pm

Via Microsoft Teams

In attendance: Dr R Wilson (Chair) and Drs Doherty, Dawson, Boggs, Largey, Anderson, Mullen, Somerville, and Bill McKnight (Patient Representative).

Also attended: Karen Hall, Barry Flynn and Thomas McKeever.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of 23 September and 1 October were agreed and adopted.

2. Dr Adrian James

The Chair welcomed Dr Adrian James, President of RCPsych, who outlined his priorities for his term in office.

Adrian thanked the chair and the members for all the work they did both locally and across the College. He outlined the challenge which had been posed by Covid-19 and acknowledged the resilience which had been displayed by members. He outlined his own background, and his key aims and objectives as President, which were:

- Equity between physical and mental health
- Championing diversity
- Supporting the workforce
- Sustainability at the heart of what we do.

He outlined in detail how he would seek to implement those objectives during his term in office.

Dr Doherty referred to the vacancy rates which had illustrated that approx. 20% of consultant posts remained unfilled in NI, with locums providing significant cover. This vacancy figure stood at approx. 30% in respect of specialty roles. He outlined the geographical problems which existed across the five Trusts, together with the College's aim to promote regionalisation as one of its key aims.

In response, Dr James outlined the challenges that existed in England, particularly with the use of locum doctors. He explained that the problem, essentially, related to the numbers of people entering psychiatry which needed to be addressed and increased substantially to meet current and future needs.

Dr Anderson outlined how training was delivered in Northern Ireland, together with the recruitment processes. Dr Somerville explained that the quality of foundation training was a crucial factor in attracting people into psychiatry.

Dr Dawson referred to career progression and the role of the CESR process, which assisted specialty doctors to progress to consultant grade. Dr James agreed that the College could provide further assistance for specialty doctors in this process and more could be done to address stigma for newly qualified consultants who had completed CESR.

Dr Boggs referred to the relatively low success rate for psychiatrists entering CESR, when compared to other branches of practice, and that some of the experience required – particularly psychotherapy - had to be attained within the previous five years. He requested that Dr James might consider becoming an advocate for specialty doctors as part of his remit. As a starting point, it was suggested that Dr Boggs would contact Professor Nandini Chakraborty who could provide a valuable insight in the matter.

Bill McKnight outlined the various models of care existed to assist patients within the community. Dr James agreed that community-based models provided tangible benefits and it would be of benefit for Bill to examine the types of models which were delivered in England and Scotland.

3. Dr Catherine Taggart – Sustainability

Dr Taggart outlined her role within the Sustainability and Climate Emergency working groups, particularly how these topics related to health organisations. It was particularly relevant to psychiatry as the issues would, ultimately, impact on mental health and that the College was duty bound to act and had therefore established two working groups. She explained how the work of these working groups would seek to change the way the College operated corporately and in Northern Ireland.

The Council noted the comments of Dr Taggart.

4. Meeting with Health Minister Swann/ DoH Strategy and Engagement

Dr Wilson updated the Council on the meeting with Minister Swann on 9 September, which was attended by a range of chairs and representatives from the DoH. A further meeting with the Minister would take place in January 2021.

He explained that the meeting had been successful in that it had clarified the role and enhanced participation of the College in the development of the Mental Health Strategy. This meeting had been followed by further engagement with the Department and the participation of members on the various work streams feeding into the strategy.

5. Meeting with Interim Mental Health Champion for Northern Ireland

Dr Wilson provided members with an update on the recent meeting with Prof. Siobhan O' Neill and indicated that the College would be holding further meetings with her as the strategy developed.

6. RCPsych NI Strategy

The Chair gave an overview of the workshop which had been held with members in November and how the strategy would be developed and implemented in 2021.

7. NI Terms of Reference Update & Implementation Plan

Karen Hall advised members that central College had reviewed the draft terms of reference and had suggested one small amendment to the first section stating that "These Terms of Reference are subject to the By Laws and Regulations of The College and, in the event of a conflict between them, the By Laws and Regulations will take precedence" Karen Hall advised that the Terms of Reference would be submitted to the Board of Trustees in the new year. In the interim period an audit of current roles would be undertaken, together with a communications plan to help inform members of the proposed changes.

8. Events Update

The NI Manager gave an overview of the recent events which had been hosted by RCPsych NI, which had all attracted excellent attendances. She indicated that work on next year's schedule had commenced and that themes were being considered for the Winter Conference in November 2021.

9. Reports from Faculties and Groups

The reports received can be accessed [here](#).

10. 2021 Meeting Dates

It was noted that the Devolved Council would meet in 2021 on 10 March, 16 June, 22 November, 8 December at 1.30pm.

11. Any Other Business

Dr Somerville raised the issue of Northern Ireland Trainees applying for the Leadership and Management Fellowship Scheme and it was agreed that Karen Hall would follow-up with the College centrally and update Dr Somerville.

Chair