

From the Royal College of Psychiatrists in Scotland

Principal Medical Officer for Mental Health
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

31 October 2023

Dear Dr Alastair Cook

We are pleased to now be able to share the Royal College of Psychiatrists in Scotland's new **State of the Nation Report: The Psychiatric Workforce in Scotland**.

As you will know, psychiatric services in Scotland are under severe pressure as a result of increasing demand. However, the workforce is not growing sufficiently to keep pace with this demand as the current pathway from medical students to consultant psychiatrists isn't able to fill the gap in sufficient numbers or in a timely manner. Furthermore, there are significant problems retaining senior medical staff due to the reasons outlined in the report, as well as high vacancy rates across the country which exacerbate this problem.

This report utilises a life span approach, starting with the basics, explaining roles and pathways before delving into the problems and crucially, trying to identify solutions. Each section of the report describes and summarises the challenges at each career stage of the pathway, from medical undergraduates and foundation doctors through to core and higher trainees, SAS doctors and consultants (including the retired and returned group). Each section then recommends solutions and actions, with a final set of overarching recommendations at the end of the report.

The RCPsych in Scotland would urge the Scottish Government to carefully consider these recommendations, which seek to offer solutions to many of the challenges facing Scotland's mental health workforce. Our members welcome the work that has been done in this regard to date, including the development of a Mental Health and Wellbeing Workforce Action Plan and the formation of a Psychiatry Working Group.

We hope you find this report helpful in understanding the current state of the psychiatric workforce in Scotland. We hope it stimulates discussion. We hope that the various stakeholders can work together to reimagine how the treatment of

Royal College of Psychiatrists in Scotland
12 Queen Street (First Floor), Edinburgh, EH2 1JE, UK Telephone: +44 (0)131 220 2910

mental illness is delivered. We hope the recommendations are useful in moving forward to a self-sustaining workforce model for the future.

Most importantly, we hope that, together, we can prevent this becoming yet another report that simply highlights the problem and makes aspirational recommendations. Unless we completely reimagine how we do things we are not going to be able to make meaningful change.

With our best wishes,

Yours sincerely



Dr Jane Morris

Chair of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in Scotland



Dr Ihsan Kader

Workforce Lead for the Royal College of Psychiatrists in Scotland