Sharing Best Practice and Quality Improvement:

2 April: Forensic Faculty Chair Dr Adrian East met in Clifton House with a representative of the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust to discuss workforce planning issues.

2 April: RCPsych NI Chair Dr Gerry Lynch availed of a further informal engagement opportunity offered by the NI Ambulance Service to further reinforce by teleconference with their representative Brian McNeill our messages in relation to their recent Consultation on the proposed Clinical Response Model. This time Gerry focussed on safe conveyance to hospital for mentally ill patients, the need to involve Psychiatry and Social Workers in any agreed NIAS protocol, street triage, training for first line staff in mental health with Mental Health professional back up, as well as learning from Scotland.

4 April: College Assessor Training was held in Clifton House with Julian Ryder Head of College Training and Workforce, Dr Paul McCormick Consultant Psychiatrist and College Assessor from Sheffield and David Rosenbauer from Rosenbauer Consulting. Feedback was excellent and we now have 17 trained local Assessors which should speed up and reduce the cost of Panels for Consultant positions going forward. Julian commented: "It was great to be in Belfast for the first time to spend the day with new College Assessors. There was great enthusiasm and engagement from everybody attending and we look forward to working with this cohort of assessors, and many more in the future, to support Trusts in Northern Ireland and further afield in recruiting the right people for Consultant roles. Our thanks to the College team in Northern Ireland for helping to make the day a success."

Left to Right: Julian Ryder, David Rosenbauer and Dr Paul McCormick
8 April: Dr Gerry Lynch represented the College at the latest Towards Zero Suicide initiative meeting in Holywell Hospital, Antrim.

8 April: Dr Gerry Lynch and Barry Flynn held a teleconference planning meeting with Professor Gerry Leavey, Director of the Bamford Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Ulster University in relation to the upcoming May Seminar in Clifton House on the topic of ‘Physical Health of those with Severe Mental Illness’ featuring Dr Kelly Aschbrenner.

8 April: The second meeting of our informal Lobby Group was held in Clifton House and was attended by representatives who had attended with Gerry at the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee hearing on Northern Ireland’s Mental Health Services, which took place in Westminster at the end of 2018, namely: Willie McAllister substituting for Peter McBride) of Inspire, David Babington of Action Mental Health and representative for the British Psychological Society here, Nichola Rooney. Thomas McKeever and Barry Flynn also attended. The meeting provided a useful planning exercise for the next meeting of this group, which will take place in mid June with Sue Gray, Permanent Secretary, Department of Finance coming to Clifton House.

10 April: Drs Gerry Lynch and Maria O’Kane, as well as Thomas McKeever, met in Clifton House with Conrad Kirkwood, Chair of the Serious Adverse Incident workstream and Peter McBride, Chair of the Being Open Sub Group which is part of the Candour Workstream respectively – both in relation to the Implementation of Recommendations from the Inquiry into Hyponatraemia-Related Deaths. Both of these groups are currently consulting and the meeting was arranged to facilitate our informal and formal (in due course) responses to each.

On 21st March, Deputy Chief Medical Officer Dr Paddy Woods had said: “The commitment to candour affects not just what we do to put things right, but how we go about doing it. This is why more than 200 people from a wide range of backgrounds are working together to respond to the Report. It is why we want to broaden our deliberations to include all organisations and individuals who have an interest.”

The Candour and SAI Workstreams are broadening their deliberations to include all who have an interest and this meeting formed part of that.

Dr Gerry Lynch commented: “This was a really useful exchange of ideas with Peter and Conrad with real engagement to move the process forward and seek to improve outcomes for all. We look forward to further engagement on these important issues and we will be meeting shortly to draft formal responses on both issues.”
17 April: Dr Gerry Lynch hosted his quarterly meeting with the Trust Medical Managers in Clifton House and our Chair of ID Faculty Dr Arun Subramanian addressed the meeting on current Workforce issues for ID.

17 April: Vice Chair Dr Michael Doherty chaired a meeting in Clifton House concerning planning for the upcoming May event on physical healthcare for those with severe mental illness (featuring Dr Kelly Aschbrenner). Also in attendance were Drs Ruth Barr, Annette Thampi and Ciara Walsh.

17 April: Vice Chair Dr Michael Doherty chaired a meeting in Clifton House to look at physical healthcare for those with Intellectual Disability. Also in attendance were Drs Arun Subramanian and Simon Patterson. The outcome was that a proposal will be discussed at the next meeting of the Intellectual Disability Faculty.

17 April: Drs Janine Lynch and Peter Sloan attended an evaluation session with the Public Health Agency regarding the recent three Perinatal 2 day training events hosted by the College, with discussions including the hope of further such sessions being funded by the PHA, supported and administered again by the College.

17 April: Our local response to Central College Policy and Public Affairs Committee’s ‘Write Around’ seeking any substantive issues within the content of the planned College Report on Self Harm and Suicide - was submitted today, with input from Chair Dr Gerry Lynch and Former Chair Dr Philip McGarry.

24 April: Drs Gerry Lynch, Maria O’Kane and Peter Trimble, as well as Policy Officer Thomas McKeever met in Clifton House to draft responses to the DoH Workstreams seeking to implement the recommendations flowing from Mr Justice O’Hara’s Report on Hyponatraemia in respect of both Duty of Candour and Serious Adverse Incidents.

26 April: We submitted our response to the Consultation issued by the Safeguarding Board for NI (SBNI) in relation to their Draft e Safety Strategy & 3 Year Action Plan for NI 2019-2022. The response was drafted by our Child and Adolescent Faculty Chair Dr Richard Wilson.

29 April: Our local response to Central College Policy and Public Affairs Committee’s ‘Write Around’ seeking any substantive issues within the content of the planned College Report on Early Intervention for Eating Disorders - was submitted today, with input from Chair Drs Heather Mills, David Coyle and Richard Wilson.

Membership and Trainees:

2 April: RCPsych NI Chair Dr Gerry Lynch and Interim Manager Barry Flynn met with David Watters and Paula Reynolds, Chair and Chief Executive respectively of our Landlord The Belfast Charitable Society – in relation to possible development of
Clifton House, potentially affecting our tenure. They were updated on current thinking and planning and it was agreed that they would be further updated in June, by which time matters might be more clear.

**8 April:** Fauzan Palekar, College Director of Professional Standards visited Clifton House for one of his regular visits and while with us participated along with staff in the Staff Briefing from Chief Executive Paul Rees via Skype with Central College.

**11 April:** Colinda Latour, Sharepoint Specialist and Phil Burke, College Director of Information Services spent the day in Clifton House with Staff Barry Flynn, Thomas McKeever and Fionnuala Fitzsimons - providing detailed training in Sharepoint and making adjustments to recent improvements in our IT infrastructure respectively.

At the end of the day, Barry Flynn commented: "This was a day well spent and allows us as the Staff Team – and in turn our local Members - to really obtain value from recent IT and system investments made by Central College."

**11 April:** The Western Health and Social Care Trust hosted a very successful open evening, with a cross border element, for year 12 and 13 students from schools across Counties Fermanagh, Tyrone and Donegal interested in a career in Medicine and Dentistry. The annual event, which was held at the South West Acute Hospital Enniskillen, provided an opportunity for 50 students to meet frontline Medical and Dental staff, recent graduates and students working across the Western Trust area - including medical students and Foundation 2 Doctors who had recently rotated through community and in-patient Psychiatry in the Western Trust, as well as a Consultant Psychiatrist. This forms part of our local involvement in the College’s ‘Choose Psychiatry’ campaign and our member Dr Patrick Manley led on this. The College office assisted him by providing informative College literature etc. Educational video clips from the College site were also made available.
Afterwards Patrick reflected: "Students had an opportunity to gain an insight into life as a Doctor or Dentist and were able to participate in practical stations adding an extra ‘hands on’ element to the evening. Dr Inez Cooke, Queen’s University Belfast, then gave a presentation on the application process for Medicine and Dentistry. Feedback from students was overwhelmingly positive, with all who attended rating the event ‘Excellent’ or ‘Good.’ They enjoyed the practical stations and the opportunity to speak directly with professionals from a varied range of disciplines. One student commented that it was “a very informative and enjoyable experience”, whilst another said the event had “motivated” to progress into the medical field. Students demonstrated a general awareness of current themes and issues of concern in mental health. Questions from them focused on the various sub-subspecialties in psychiatry, the duration of training required to be a Psychiatrist, what a Psychiatrist’s typical day looked like and how dealing with Patients in distress could impact upon a Psychiatrist’s own mental health…..all told a very worthwhile effort for recruitment to our Specialty.”

12 April: Dr Gerry Lynch attended the College’s Trustee Board Meeting in Central College, London – his second such meeting since appointment to the Board.

12 April: Dr Julie Anderson chaired a meeting of the Senior Trainees’ Focus Group in Clifton House which was addressed by Dr Neta Chada, who shared with the group on her experiences working as a Consultant Psychiatrist.

12 April: Chair of Perinatal Faculty Dr Julie Anderson addressed a large group of students on the topic of Choosing Psychiatry as a career at the ‘Medicine at Queen’s Open Day’ run by the School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Science at the Medical Biology Centre, Lisburn Road, Belfast. Julie reflected: “This event was organised for Year 13 School Students considering a career in medicine and I was pleased to be able to make the case for Psychiatry as part of this. There was great enthusiasm in the room and hopefully a number will opt for Psychiatry when their studies progress to that stage of making further choices. Thankfully our intake numbers for Psychiatry in Northern Ireland remain well above average, but we need to continue intervening early at events such as this in order to keep those figures healthy.”

24 April: Dr Mary Short was awarded a Fellowship by the College at a Ceremony in Prescot Street, London. Dr Peter Talbot was also presented. Peter did part of his training in Northern Ireland and has been working for a long time in Manchester.
28 April: The death has occurred of Dr ARTHUR (ARTIE) KERR, peacefully, at Park Manor Care Home, Dunmurry, dearly-loved husband of the late Joan, much-loved father of Jackie, Deirdre and Simon, father-in-law of Alan and Keith. Treasured papa of Anna, Thomas, Robbie, Alex, Ella and David. Service of Thanksgiving in Malone Presbyterian Church on Friday 3rd May at 2.00 p.m. followed by private
committal. Will be sadly missed by everyone who knew him. Donations, if desired, to Alzheimer’s Society, c/o Melville Morgan Funeral Directors, 257 Lisburn Road, Belfast BT9 7EN.

30 April: College Head of Devolved Nations Vivine Muckian visited Clifton House and met with Staff.

Department of Health:

2 April: RCPsych NI Chair Dr Gerry Lynch and Policy Officer Thomas McKeever met with DoH representative Dr Ian McMaster in Clifton House for one of the regular updates on matters of current concern to both the College and the DoH. Matters discussed included Data, Informatics, funding streams, the Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016, as well as the current Duty of Candour and SAIs consultations flowing from Mr Justice O’Hara’s Report on the Hyponatremia Deaths.

External Affairs:

3 April: Drs Gerry Lynch and Ciaran Mulholland attended the NI Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Conference 2019 at the Tullyglass Hotel, Ballymena. The Conference title was ‘A Trauma Informed Conversation: Accelerating Progress for the Programme for Government Outcomes’. The idea was that building on the success of the Regional ACE Conference held in Templepatrick in 2017, this Conference would bring together senior leaders to set out our roadmap of building a trauma informed culture of practice across all organisations to realise our ambition of creating a trauma informed Northern Ireland. Objectives of the Conference were:
To understand the ACE agenda in Northern Ireland – One Year on;
To share trauma informed practice exemplars locally and internationally;
To build on the committed leadership within agencies and across sectors to embed a whole system trauma informed culture of care and practice.

Speakers included Deborah McMillan (Children’s Commissioner for Jersey) who discussed the ACE agenda and children’s rights, as well as Dr Lisa Bunting, who presented theoretical models relevant to ACEs and how they influence subsequent development.

Afterwards Gerry commented: "There is an increasing evidence base about the role of adverse childhood experiences as risk factor for the subsequent development of mental illness and substance misuse. In addition to increasing access to specific evidence-based therapies, the speakers emphasised the need for a societal response across all sectors.”

4 & 5 April: Dr Gerry Lynch attended the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland Spring Conference 2019, celebrating their 10th Anniversary - in the Castleknock Hotel, Dublin. Gerry as RCPsych NI Chair was very much welcomed to the Gala Dinner, where the latest Brexit developments and its attendant healthcare implications for
North and South were very much the topic of conversation. Conference Speakers at the Conference itself included Adam Harris of AsIAm on ‘Autism Friendly Mental Health Service’, Dr Marc Woodbury-Smith from Newcastle upon Tyne on ‘ASD and its comorbidities in Adulthood’ and Professor Louise Gallagher from Trinity College Dublin on ‘Autism: from Biology to Therapeutics and Clinical Practice’. Gerry reflected: "It was agreed at our March Devolved Council meeting that we would give some focus this year to Autism in Adulthood and it was therefore really interesting to hear these expert speakers discussing the complexities of the concept of autism and societal response to the condition. There were many other fascinating speakers, such that the audience stayed until well after 5pm on the Friday afternoon, energetically debating the question of what should be the profession’s response to the changing attitudes to the availability of cannabis in civil society. All in all, a very well-organised and well-attended conference which was a tribute to the College in Ireland.”

4 April: Chair of General Adult Faculty Dr Rowan McClean was our representative at the Northern Ireland Healthcare Leadership Forum event at Assembly Buildings, Fisherwick Place, Belfast entitled ‘Transformation: Paving the Way Forward 2019’. Speakers included DoH Permanent Secretary Mr Richard Pengelly, Professor Charlotte McArdle, Michael Bloomfield, Gary Loughran and the Encompass team, Dr Sloan Harper and the Integrated Care Partnership team - with Mark Taylor chairing the panel debates. The event was billed to look at Transformation in our Health and Social Care system as being a way of ensuring that it can continue to provide high quality health and social care, whilst meeting the demands of generations to come. With the reality being that challenges are ahead, nonetheless as Aneurin Bevan once said, “The NHS will last as long as there are folk left with the faith to fight for it.” With this in mind, the organisers stated that seventy years on, everyone has their role to play in helping pave the way forward to ensure we retain one of the best health care systems in the world. The invitation was to debate and discuss the future with leaders from Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland and help pave the way forward, taking account of where we are at with the Transformation agenda in Northern Ireland and some of the transformative projects already underway. Rowan later commented: "This was a worthwhile event as it drew an audience of people from diverse areas and backgrounds, including clinicians and other frontline staff, service users, carers, voluntary organisations and MLAs. We heard about the progress that has been made to date in transforming services and the significant challenges that lie ahead. There was a particular focus on multidisciplinary working and co-production. The speakers were very passionate about transforming and improving services and it provoked stimulating discussion.”

10 April: Dr Chris Sharkey addressed a Class of Counselling Students in North West Regional College on the topic of Depression. This was an event organized by local Charity Aware and was the first in the new series they are rolling out across
Northern Ireland for 2019-2020. His talk was really well received by the audience of 50 students. Afterwards Chris reflected: "It was clear that the audience were engaged in the talks and enthusiastic about tackling depression. This was very obvious, particularly during the question round that followed the talks, in that the discussion over ran and many students stayed behind to ask further questions. I was very pleased to have the chance to present on such an important topic in collaboration with colleagues in AWARE - and thanks to Tom, Caroline and our host Colm from the North West Regional College. Thanks also to Thomas McKeever from the Royal College who coordinated my involvement."

12 April: Chair and Vice Chair of Child and Adolescent Faculty respectively Drs Richard Wilson and Mark Rodgers – and Dr Clare McKenna, Consultant in Child Intellectual Disability - attended the Children’s Law Centre Annual Lecture 2019 in The Inn of Courts, Old Bar Library, Royal Courts of Justice, Chichester Street, Belfast delivered by Baroness Hale, President Supreme Court of the United Kingdom. The Lecture was entitled: “The Rights of Disabled Children” and the event was chaired by The Honourable Mrs Justice Keegan. Richard later reflected: "In a storming and thoughtful address, Baroness Hale outlined key cases to illustrate the dilemmas and potential conflicts of interest between consideration of child welfare and parental responsibility. Particular scenarios recently considered by the Supreme Court have key relevance to our local work in attempting to resolve the important gaps in the application of our own Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016 to under 18s. Dr Clare Mc Kenna asked relevant questions on the restriction of liberty aspect of
patients in delayed discharge situations in Northern Ireland units. This afternoon’s learning will galvanise our ongoing task of providing equitable and just services for our patients.”

**12 April:** Professor Ciaran Mulholland addressed the Northern Ireland Branch of the British Psychological Society 2019 Annual Conference at the Hilton Hotel, Templepatrick, Co Antrim entitled: ‘Building Better Psychological Futures’ - on the topic of the Regional Trauma Network.

**29 April:** On behalf of our Perinatal Faculty, Dr Janine Lynch was on the Panel of Experts at the 2nd NI Maternal Mental Health Alliance Conference in The Mac, Belfast. Janine commented: “The Conference aimed to educate and raise awareness of perinatal mental health issues and encourage collaboration to improve services by bringing together people from a wide range of backgrounds to seek to ensure that every Northern Ireland parent suffering can get access to the right care at the right time – and the Conference succeeded in its aims with hopes raised for better outcomes.” Perinatal Faculty Chair Dr Julie Anderson was also in attendance, saying: “Fantastic hearing from the parents’ panel from women with lived experience of significant perinatal mental illness.”
Media:

5 April: Following our hosting last week of the highly successful UK Brain Injury Conference in Belfast, we collaborated with the Leonard Cheshire Trust in the release of a joint Press Statement highlighting the soaring rates of alcohol related brain injuries in Northern Ireland. This was linked to RCPsych College Report 212 on Alcohol-Related Brain Damage in Northern Ireland. That report established that the effects of alcohol misuse in Northern Ireland cost £900 million each year, £250 million of which is on health spending. It recommended also the establishment of specialist services across Northern Ireland to address the current lack of service. At present, patients with ARBD are often placed in expensive dementia care homes totally unsuited to their recovery. RCPsych NI has consistently highlighted that there is an urgent need to address the lack of suitable care options in Northern Ireland. Dr Joy Watson, who spoke at the conference, said: "With the right treatment, patients with alcohol related brain damage (ARBD) can recover and transform their lives. Services in the UK with similar populations to Northern Ireland have shown impressive outcomes such as a reduction in hospital admissions for people with ARBD by 85%, highlighting the impact of providing treatment."

8 April: The newly appointed Devolved Nations Press Officer Laura Varney, who is taking over responsibility for all media work locally, made her first trip to RCPsych NI and met initially with Dr Gerry Lynch, Barry Flynn and Thomas McKeever to discuss the way the College works in Northern Ireland and our unique priorities as a Devolved Nation, the external landscape politically and local media outlets.

9 April: Laura Varney met in person Drs Liz Dawson, Paddy Moynihan, Maggie McGurcan, Adrian East, Richard Wilson, David Bell, Rowan McClean, Billy Gregg, Amy Grimason, Janine Lynch, Joy Watson, Conor Barton, Heather Hanna, Stephen Moore, Jo Minay and Julie Anderson – and spoke to Drs Bronagh Sproule, Arun Subramanian and Heather Mills by phone. Dr Gerry Lynch commented: "It is testament to the commitment of our Faculty Chairs and Leads, their interest in
engaging with the external environment and our member led focus that we managed to get 16 busy professionals to call in to meet Laura and 3 further busy professionals to teleconference with Laura on her first trip to the College in her new role. All specialties were covered. Laura learned a lot from the engagement which will assist her in advancing our profile still further and highlighting the various issues which our Faculty Chairs and Leads need aired from time to time. I would pay tribute also to all our local staff who have carried out this role so successfully over the years since our inception. Laura will build on the hard work the College staff here in Northern Ireland have done over the years in building relationships with the media. We look forward to Laura building still further on this in the time ahead.” Laura reflecting on her trip to Belfast and meetings with Members and Staff said: “It was an interesting and very informative day and I was delighted to meet with so many of the Doctors and learn more about their fascinating and very important work. Going forward, I look forward to working closely with Dr Lynch, the Members and the Staff in Northern Ireland to promote important mental health issues in the local and national media.”

26 April: Former Chair Dr Philip McGarry featured in the Belfast Telegraph in relation to his views on the recent murder of Lyra McKee – and he also wrote the Editorial for the Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine, Volume 36, Issue 1, pages 3-5 on the topic of ‘Progress in Home-Based Treatment’.

NI Assembly:

There is nothing to report this month.

Faculty and Committee Business:

9 April: Our Perinatal Faculty issued a letter asking for a meeting with Mr Richard Pengelly Permanent Secretary, Department of Health, which was complemented by a press release from the local Mental Health Alliance (a group of charities campaigning for perinatal services).

Perinatal Faculty Chair Dr Julie Anderson explained: "The background to this is that in Northern Ireland, there are no dedicated perinatal services for women suffering from mental health issues linked to pregnancy. The College in NI has a Perinatal Faculty which has led a successful campaign to raise awareness of this issue. We received funding to deliver perinatal training from the Department of Health which was a great success (over 200 health professions attended) – the next step is to ask to meet with the Department and to press for funding (- of course, this is within the context of a lack of Devolved Government). This is being done today via a letter
from the College asking for a meeting with the Permanent Secretary (DoH),
complemented by a press release from the local Mental Health Alliance (a group of
charities campaigning for perinatal services). As Faculty Chair I have provided the
following lines for the press release.”

“RCPsych NI is calling for both urgent and significant investment to be
made to establish specialist maternal mental health care across Northern
Ireland.

A number of recent studies have identified increasing levels of self-
reported mental disorders associated with pregnancy across the region.

There is also clear evidence that poor mental health during this period can
have a long-term and detrimental impact on the mental wellbeing of not
only women, but also their partners and children.

Significant ring-fenced funding in mainland United Kingdom has led to the
extensive development of specialist services; Northern Ireland cannot be
allowed to be left behind.

The College feels strongly that steps must now be taken to address this
inequity of service and that significant funding should be released to
address this worsening situation.”

10 April: Chair of our Intellectual Disability Faculty Dr Arun Subramanian (pictured
below left) met with Chair of Central Intellectual Disability Faculty Dr Ken
Courtenay (pictured below right), who was acting as the Panel Member
representing the College for a Consultant job interview.

11 April: Chair of Forensic Faculty Dr Adrian East met with Department of Justice
official Steven Allison in relation to a recent Supreme Court ruling on conditional
discharges. It was agreed that in advance of the next Faculty meeting on 7th May,
the Department of Justice hopes to have a draft policy with the College for
discussion and input. The issue will further lead to a review of Hospital Orders which Forensic Faculty will participate in.

**Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016:**

**16th April:** BMA NI held an event at the Radisson Gasworks, Belfast taking the Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016 as its focus, in an effort to raise awareness of its coming impact on all branches of medical practice. Policy Officer Thomas McKeever attended and commented: “The College was centre stage at this event as it was opened and ably chaired by Dr Dearbhail Lewis and the speakers were College Chair Dr Gerry Lynch and Tomas Adell from DoH. A significant number of our members attended this instructive event.”

*L to R: Dr Dearbhail Lewis, Tomas Adell and Dr Gerry Ly*