Chair's Monthly Activity Log

February 2019

Membership and Trainees:

1 February: Dr Gerry Lynch attended the College’s Board of Trustees meeting in Central College, Prescot Street, London in his new role as Devolved Nations’ representative to the Board.

13 February: College Director of Professional Standards, Fauzan Palekar visited Clifton House and met with Staff for a catch up on staff and work issues.

External Affairs:

4 February to 10 February: Belfast Trust Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist (in the Forensic Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service for NI), Dr Phil Anderson worked with local Charity Action Mental Health, as one of their local experts, during the 5th Annual Children’s Mental Health Week. Phil, along with others, offered insight and advice (in social media podcasts) on ways to develop emotional resilience among children and young people, as well as tips to help recognise the common causes of stress among our younger generation.
4 February: Dr Michael Doherty attended a Department of Finance Briefing on the NI Budget 2019-2020 at NICVA, Duncairn Gardens, Belfast on behalf of the College. The event was addressed by the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Finance, Sue Gray. Michael had attended a similar briefing last year, following which a one-year budget was finally agreed and extra funds were made available by the Confidence and Supply agreement between the Government and the DUP. The Treasury also allowed the Department of Finance to transfer resources from Capital Expenditure to Revenue Expenditure (normally not allowed). Michael commented after this year’s event: “There is little doubt that the situation is again very challenging.” Arising out of this event, Sue Gray has kindly accepted our invitation to meet with the local College in June 2019 to discuss finance and data concerning mental health services.

6 February: Dr Gerry Lynch was pleased to welcome Sir Declan Morgan, Lord Chief Justice and Tonya McCormac, recently appointed Chief Executive of the NI Judicial Appointments Commission (NIJAC), to Clifton House. Gerry and Policy Officer, Thomas McKeever met with them to discuss an initiative to increase uptake of Psychiatrist appointments to the Mental Health Review Tribunal etc. Consultant Contract flexibility and remuneration were discussed, as well as making eligibility known particularly to recently qualified, part time, retired and semi-retired Consultants. We look forward to working together on this with NIJAC in the time ahead.

7 February: Dr Gerry Lynch attended RCGP NI, Cromac Place, Ormeau Road, Belfast office for a further planning meeting connected to the forthcoming 20 March
launch of the document entitled ‘Professional Behaviours and Communication Principles for working across Primary and Secondary Care interfaces in Northern Ireland’. The meeting explored next steps and the typical daily challenges on the interfaces that it is hoped these principles will address across professions, Trusts and the DoH. Also discussed were possible next steps, such as introducing the principles to QUB and NIMDTA in order to seek to have them incorporated in medical education and training. Gerry later commented: "This initiative is a good example of the Medical Royal Colleges in Northern Ireland collaborating closely and demonstrating strong clinical leadership in their approach to an issue which has the potential to affect quality of care and patient safety."

12 February: Policy Officer, Thomas McKeever attended a Law Society of NI Seminar in Law Society House, Victoria Street, Belfast on Death Reporting and the Decision to hold Inquests - delivered by local Coroner Paddy McGurgan and the Medical Adviser to the Coroner, Dr Gemma Andrew. Interestingly, the Medical Adviser role is unique on these islands, when compared with other Coroner Services in GB and RoI.

16 February: Following on from a previous presentation that she gave for the Samaritans in Newry last April, Dr Lauren Megahey (pictured below) was invited to give another presentation, this time in The Emmaus Centre, Swords, Co Dublin. The topic was again around self-harm, this time focusing on younger adults, as the presentation was for the 'Festival Branch' of the Samaritans. Lauren included statistics from both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. This was followed by a dynamic discussion. The presentation and discussion were very well received, with positive feedback.
19 February: Dr Gerry Lynch attended a Lecture given by Lord Alderdice at Queen’s University, Belfast organized by the Ulster Medicolegal Society entitled 'Conflict, complexity and co-operation'. Gerry later commented: "There were plenty of Psychiatrists present to hear Lord Alderdice’s talk which ranged widely over psychiatry, psychoanalysis, the nature of conflict and political developments. It was stimulating to hear his thoughts on the application of psychoanalytic and psychotherapeutic ideas in non-clinical situations."

20 February: Policy Officer Thomas McKeever and Interim Manager Barry Flynn met in Clifton House with Andrew Millar Assistant Director Judicial Appointments from the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission (NIJAC) as a follow up to the 6 February meeting with Sir Declan Morgan and Tonya McC Cormac. Plans for NIJAC engagement and awareness raising with our Members in relation to the need for Psychiatrists to sit on the Mental Health Review Tribunal and other Judicial panels were discussed and further planned.

22 February: Dr David Bell attended, on behalf of the College, a meeting in the Peter Froggatt Centre of the Committee chaired by Professor (of Social Care) Gavin Davidson, Praxis Chair of Social Care, School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work, Queen’s University, Belfast - who are putting the programme together for the next Northern Ireland Mental Health and Arts Festival (planned for May 2019). Afterwards, David advised: “I was pleased to hear the emerging plans for yet another exciting and vibrant festival. This year the festival will take place from May 13th - 17th, with a launch anticipated during the daytime on Monday 13th May. The theme this year is 'Moving Forward'. The programme should be finalised in March. I would like to continue to liaise with the development and programme itself on behalf of RCPsych NI. I would recommend wholeheartedly that the College remains aligned with the festival this year and am happy to keep the College updated accordingly.”

Faculty and Committee Business:

5 February: Forensic Faculty met chaired by Dr Adrian East. Topics covered included positive engagement flowing from CR218, Training and Workforce, the Low Secure Agenda and the Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016.

6 February: The Committee overseeing the preparations for the forthcoming Joint All-Ireland Psychiatry Conference discussed arrangements at a teleconference with the College of Psychiatrists Ireland. The agenda for the 2-day event, which will be held at the Titanic Hotel on 14 and 15 November, is taking shape and there will be opportunities for Faculties on both sides of the border to co-present at a range of plenary sessions. It is anticipated that the President’s Lecture will be delivered as part of the programme on 15th November and a number of keynote speakers have
been identified. This initiative is being led by Dr Gerry Lynch and Interim Manager Barry Flynn, in conjunction with Drs Tony O’Neill and Ciaran Mulholland, together with our counterparts in the College of Psychiatrists in Ireland. Further updates will be provided in due course.

11 February: Intellectual Disability Faculty met in Clifton House, chaired by Dr Arun Subramanian. Matters discussed included the vision for ID Psychiatry-2019, Muckamore Abbey Hospital, Special interest workstream, Strategic review of ID psychiatry/Survey, Dementia research, Acute care review, as well as Catatonia-assessment and management. Drs Judy Curran and Marietta Cunningham presented as part of this agenda.

15 February: Child and Adolescent Faculty met in Clifton House, chaired by its Vice Chair Dr Mark Rodgers, as Dr Richard Wilson was unavailable. Matters discussed included the recent NICCY Report ‘Still Waiting’, as well as both the forthcoming UPS/RCPsych NI joint Conference and the UK Scientific Conference.

25 February: Perinatal Faculty met in Clifton House, chaired by Dr Julie Anderson. Among the items considered were an Update from the Public Health Agency, the final upcoming Two-day training session on 21 and 22 March at Templepatrick, targeted training and the Interface between Perinatal and Addictions.

Department of Health:

6 February: Dr Gerry Lynch met with Dr Ian McMaster (DoH) in Clifton House to discuss matters of mutual interest to the College and DoH, including the upcoming 6 Workshops associated with the DoH 5 Year Plan for Mental Health, Multi Disciplinary Teams in Primary Care and Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016 training plans.

6 February: Drs Gerry Lynch, Michael Doherty, Paddy Moynihan, Richard Wilson and Conor Barton met with DoH representatives Mark Lee, Aaron Thompson, Rodney Morton and Dr Ian McMaster in Clifton House for an update on finalising the Mental Health role in Primary Care Multi Disciplinary Teams. It was a useful exchange. There was a commitment to look again at the exclusion of children and to involve the College in the evaluation in due course. Another meeting is planned for May.

6 February: Richard Pengelly, Permanent Secretary & HSC Chief Executive issued the following important statement on the Health and Social Care Board Closure and Transition of New Model: "As you know the closure of the Health and Social Care Board was confirmed as a priority by the then Minister in October 2016 when launching Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together. You will be aware that we have been working to an
anticipated date of 31 March 2020 for closure; however this was predicated on a legislative Assembly being in place. Given this is not the case, it has been necessary to change our plans and after careful deliberation, myself and senior leaders across the impacted organisations have agreed a revised anticipated dissolution date of 31 March 2021. This planned date is contingent on Executive approval by November 2020, and has been set to coincide with a financial year-end. We wish to give staff as much certainty as possible in what are unprecedented times politically for us all."

25 February: Drs Peter Trimble and Joy Watson represented the College at the first of the six Workshops organized by the DoH in connection with their proposed Five Year Plan for Mental Health. This Workshop was titled as ‘Access to Person Centred Services’ and was held at the Skainos Centre, Newtownards Road, Belfast. Peter was hoping to raise the College’s Brain Injury agenda and Joy the content of the College’s Alcohol Related Brain Damage CR212 Report. The idea was to place these issues on the DoH agenda for action, if at all possible, given that there is no additional finance said to be available to fund any emerging Plan. Joy reported having provided the following input:

"The morning session involved group work to map out the different journeys a Patient makes when trying to access mental health services across a range of different access points.

There then was a session where groups had to choose different areas where access was delayed or difficult and try to develop solutions to these issues going forward into the next 5 years of health care.

There was an interesting range of issues highlighted and mainly this reflected the diversity of the group. At each table were people from different Trusts and it instantly came to light that there was a lot of variation in pathways depending on geography and age.

It was highlighted that through the patient journey there is also an issue of repetition and duplication of work, with the patient having to “tell their story” multiple times to a range of different teams.

During discussions a common theme was the “Silo” mentality that can develop in healthcare - and that for change to happen there needs to be more joined working.

An example of positive change on the horizon was the multidisciplinary team input to GP surgeries, to include mental health practitioners. This has potential to greatly improve patient experience and to reduce duplication.

This same Silo mentality relates to the area which I was there to represent – ie the issue of patients with acquired brain injury, and in particular my area of interest, which is alcohol related brain damage – please see CR212. For many years we have campaigned for specialist services here. We no longer need to prove the need for services because it is very clear that they are needed."
Over many years there have been debates around whether mental health or physical disability fund such “placements”, as well as debates as to which part of health care (brain injury services, dementia services, addictions services etc) should take clinical responsibility. The fact that so many teams exist can be a contributor to the fact that these patients do not fit into any particular team at all and fall ‘through the net’.

The challenge now is to actually get services set up with agreement around where the service sits and who funds it.

Despite highlighting the millions of pounds spent on hospital beds for patients with this condition and yet the cost saving potential of providing a service, we continue to have made little progress in developing such services here in Northern Ireland.

The challenge now is to be innovative, work together across traditional boundaries and step up to the mark to provide these life changing services for a currently neglected but costly group. This is something I believe is essential to achieve in the next 5 years of healthcare development in Northern Ireland.”

26 February: Drs Stephen Moore, Leo Tumelty and Ruth Grant represented the College at the second of the six Workshops organized by the DoH in connection with their proposed Five Year Plan for Mental Health. This Workshop was titled as ‘Workable Electronic Solutions’ and was held at the Skainos Centre, Newtownards Road, Belfast. All three attendees are Members of our Informatics Committee, which Stephen chairs - and they were hoping to raise our agenda on Informatics. The idea was to place our issues on the DoH agenda for action, if at all possible, given that there is no additional finance said to be available to fund any emerging Plan. Afterwards, Stephen reported: “The event went very well and was well attended. There was a focus on a variety of areas. These included the forthcoming Encompass project, opportunities using IT which HSCNI has already paid for but which may not be being fully used by Clinicians and “blue sky” thinking about what systems could be developed over the next few years. One of my main take-home messages was that there are systems available now to allow better communication and digital techniques within the HSCNI which we are not taking advantage of.”

Leo also reported: “This was a very worthwhile workshop exploring a number of different avenues of technological development in the area of mental health. There was good representation from various professional backgrounds, all of whom contributed well to the general discussions about the way forward. The development of the Encompass project and the potential for it to revolutionise the way we deliver mental healthcare to people in all areas of mental health was the main focus. This new information system will replace paper notes, allow for patient booking, have a patient portal and facilitate electronic prescribing. Electronic prescribing alone has the potential to greatly improve safe and effective patient care and so this is a very exciting development. We emphasized the need for improved infrastructure and a huge emphasis on staff training to ensure this project is successful.”
Media:

6 February: Consultant Forensic Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist Dr Phil Anderson was interviewed on BBC Newsline by Tara Mills in relation to parents investing quality time with their children as being the most important investment for future emotional and mental health. His interview was also covered online.

12 February: 6 Members attended MacMillan Media, Dublin Road, Belfast for all day Media Training. In advance, they provided their specialty areas and within those areas, what topics they would find it difficult to be interviewed about. Reports came back that the training had gone well and that it had been both “very useful” and “enjoyable”. We look forward to the members representing the local College in the time ahead. Pictured below left to right are Drs Arun Subramanian, Bronagh Sproule, Zoe Moore, Amy Grimason, Joy Watson and David Bell – with Jane Veitch and Michael MacMillan, who provided the training.

20 & 21 February: Dr Ryan O’Neill was featured on the BBC News Website and also on Good Morning Ulster on Radio Ulster (1h50m) and on Newsline in relation to Louise Cullen’s investigative journalism looking into Adult ADHD. Ryan told her: "There is a recognition that there needs to be much more integration through that transition from child and adolescent mental health services or paediatric services across to adult services. Those services are very different and if that’s not done in a very controlled and processed way, young people can fall through the net. That would lead to increased impairments in a part of life that’s very important when they’re moving towards educational goals and occupational goals at around 16. In
the future, you could see that we would have transitional services for young people from the ages of 16 to 25, so it kind of bridges that difficult time." On ADHD itself, Ryan said: "With adult ADHD in general, there’s an increased co-morbidity of other mental health problems, including anxiety disorders, substance abuse, mood disorders and personality disorder also. With untreated ADHD, you’re much more at risk of having difficulties with substance misuse, you’re more likely to be arrested, you’re more likely to be divorced, you’re more likely to have multiple jobs over short periods of time. Those types of patterns are more likely without treatment than with treatment."

21 February: An interview with Dr Gerry Lynch about Early Intervention was featured in Derry Now, in terms of managing conditions and preventing them from worsening. Gerry said: "Early intervention is key as this can prevent things from getting worse. That’s why we do have targets and say that people should be seen as quickly as possible. It is damaging, the fact that we can’t provide early intervention, because illnesses can get worse and at the later stage people may need a more complex intervention, whereas if they had been seen earlier there could potentially have been a better outcome."

28 February: The College announced that Laura Varney has been appointed to the post of Devolved Nations Press Officer. Laura Varney, has more than 15 years’ experience as a journalist and in communications - and has a wide range of experience, including working for the one of the main political parties in Edinburgh during the last general election and more latterly in the press office at Heriot-Watt University. Laura will work from the office in Edinburgh where she currently lives, but she will be a regular visitor to Belfast and Cardiff. It is hoped that she will be
able to start with the College on 25 March. College Director of Strategic Communications, Kim Catcheside commented: "This is a really exciting development which will make a huge difference to the way that the Devolved Nations are able to engage with the media and will take pressure off Managers and Policy Officers."

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

**13 February:** Our Mental Capacity Act Working Group met at Groundwork, Duncairn Gardens, Belfast, chaired by Dr Dearbhaile Lewis as Dr Gerry Lynch was unavailable, to further consider Draft 3 of the Code of Practice received from DoH. In attendance were Drs Dearbhail Lewis, Chris Southwell, Ryan O’Neill, Frances Doherty, Richard Wilson, Paddy Moynihan, Fiona McCutcheon and Kathryn McGuckian. Further progress was made working through the Code, with a lot of follow up work in hand to meet the DoH deadline of 22 February for replies.

**14 February:** Dr Gerry Lynch attended the second Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016 Steering Group Meeting on Development of Educational Packages at HSC Clinical Education Centre, Clady Villa, Knockbracken Healthcare Park, Belfast and reported back as follows: “The CEC has been tasked at very short notice to produce a training programme in the Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016 for all HSC staff. They hope to sign off the package by the end of March but it will need considerable resources to deliver it. It is also clear from the discussions that the programme will not deliver profession-specific training; the training package will need to be augmented by further programmes.” Gerry will be attending the third such meeting and representing the College on 22 March. Subsequent to this meeting, both Gerry and Dr Catherine Taggart have taken on the role of Critical Reviewers of the training programme package.

**22 February:** Dr Gerry Lynch having succeeded on 14/02/19 at the Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016 Steering Group Meeting on Development of Educational Packages in persuading of the need to have psychiatry as critical reviewer of these packages, the first tranche of material arrived in for review. Our Critical Reviewers, Drs Gerry Lynch and Catherine Taggart reviewed the material and met the first deadline, which was 27 February.

**25 February:** The second tranche of material arrived in for review from the Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016 Steering Group on Development of Educational Packages. Our Critical Reviewers, Drs Gerry Lynch and Catherine Taggart reviewed the material and met the second deadline which was 4 March.

**NI Assembly:**

There is nothing to report this month.
**Sharing Best Practice and Quality Improvement:**

**22 February:** Interim Manager Barry Flynn and Temporary Administrator Fionnuala Fitzsimons took part in Website Editor (CMS) Training via Skype with College Digital Transformation Manager Navin Motwani.

**25 February:** Dr Gerry Lynch and Vice Chair Dr Michael Doherty convened a meeting in Clifton House. Present was Kim Catcheside, College Director of Strategic Communications - and then by Skype Sam Hunt, College Data Analysis & Research Manager and Holly Paulsen, College Deputy Head of Policy & Campaigns. Also present were the 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 of the British Psychological Society here, Nichola Rooney. All of these had been involved in one way or another with research and the challenges of data here. Thomas McKeever and Barry Flynn also attended.

The context for this meeting was the forthcoming DoH Five Year Plan for Mental Health and the six Workshops linked thereto, namely:

- Access to Person Centred Services, Workable Electronic Solutions, Unifying Mental Health Approaches and Delivery Across the Lifespan, Evidence Based Interventions in Mental Health, Mental Health Workforce Planning and Supporting the Mental Health Workforce, as well as Early Interventions, with College delegates seeking to bring the various strands of our agenda to the table of each Workshop and seeking to influence the Plan as it moves ahead. Key within those strands are our College Reports on ARBD, Prisons and Rehabilitation.

The Central College staff took us through the following:

- Reflections on involvement in the establishment of the independent Mental Health Taskforce and publication of the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health (FVFVMH) in England;
- Rationale for and development of the FYFVMH Dashboard – monitor progress against the strategy, enable accountability;
- Examples of the research and analysis which have been delivered with the Dashboard – child and adolescent spend per head, mental health investment standard, eating disorder waiting times etc;
- Opportunities and challenges experienced so far – the Dashboard has enabled the College to shine a light on system performance, but data quality concerns persist;
- Critically…..to ask the question: Whether – and if so, how... might RCPsych NI and its partners channel this experience into ensuring improved data for the NI mental health system?
The discussion proved to be helpful, as all shared the view that the poverty of data here impedes progress as there is difficulty measuring the success or otherwise of those initiatives which are undertaken and those which have failed/are failing.....as well as in particular tracking the money which is allocated in theory to Mental Health in Northern Ireland. It was agreed that this informal group would meet again in April.

**26 February:** Kim Catcheside, College Director of Strategic Communications met with Barry Flynn and Thomas McKeever in Clifton House to discuss the practical ramifications of our Devolved status and the forthcoming arrival of a Devolved Nations Press Officer.