Chair's Monthly Activity Log

November 2018

External Affairs:

6 November: Chair of our Forensic Faculty, Dr Adrian East met with Robbie Butler MLA (both pictured below right to left) and Ulster Unionist Policy Staff at Parliament Buildings, Stormont, Belfast to discuss the content of College Report CR219 entitled ‘Prison Mental Health in Northern Ireland’. Adrian advised them that “Prison mental health care presents the single most significant challenge to the delivery of forensic mental health care in Northern Ireland. As such, it is crucial that the Royal College of Psychiatrists in Northern Ireland clearly sets out the issues needing to be addressed and potential solutions to support progress. This report, which has been prepared by the Forensic Faculty of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in Northern Ireland, seeks to do this.”

7 November: Dr Gerry Lynch attended an evening debate entitled “The future for the NHS in Northern Ireland” in Riddel Hall, Stranmillis, Belfast organised by the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, in association with the Good Governance Institute. Against the backdrop of Brexit and the breakdown of devolved government, the debate critically considered
how we move the Health Service in Northern Ireland forward over the next 10 – 15 years. The discussion posed questions such as:

- What effect, if any, has the collapse of devolved government had on the NHS?
- Is a more radical and challenging approach required? Are there lessons to be learned, or examples to avoid, from other parts of the UK, and further afield?
- How can the balance between hospital and social services be improved?
- What should the model of investment for integrating health and social care look like to make it a success?
- How is Health spending going to keep up with the increasing pressures being placed upon it? Should there be charges/taxes/other models used?

Speakers included Andrew Corbett-Nolan (Good Governance Institute), Mark Taylor (Consultant Hepatobiliary and Pancreatic Surgeon) and Dr Deirdre Heenan (University of Ulster). Afterwards Gerry said: “It was an interesting discussion which pointed out the necessity for transformation in how we deliver health care in Northern Ireland.”

19 November: Dr Adrian East, as Chair of Forensic Faculty, met with Michael Heery from the NI Audit Office in connection with their current value for money study focused on whether the criminal justice system has a coherent end to end strategy to deal with the issue of offenders who are in poor mental health. Adrian discussed the recent College Report CR219 and confirmed that it had been “a very informative meeting offering a good opportunity to influence wider policy, with the Audit Office agreeing to send the College their draft report for comment once ready.”

21 November: Dr Gerry Lynch attended a meeting organised by the Northern Ireland Confederation for Health and Social Care (NICON) which took as its theme: ‘How we can work together to improve mental health outcomes’. The keynote speaker was Sean Duggan, Chief Executive of the Mental Health Network of the NHS Confederation. Gerry reflected later: "Sean Duggan described how there had been a number of successes in England in terms of influencing Mental Health policy and investment decisions by developing a unified voice across the professional and voluntary sectors. The evidence was that this collaborative approach made it more difficult for Government to ignore Mental Health when making spending decisions...food for thought here in Northern Ireland...and indeed the College locally has been taking this approach here over recent years.”

26 November: Dr Julie Anderson, Chair of Perinatal Faculty, attended a joint event organised by NSPCC NI, the Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association (CPHVA) and the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) at the NSPCC Regional Office, off York Road, Belfast. Its purpose was to launch the new Research Report entitled ‘Time for action on Perinatal Mental Healthcare in Northern Ireland: A Report on the perspectives of Health Visitors and Midwives’. The event was introduced by Mark H Durkan MLA and Robbie Butler MLA, Mental Health Spokespersons in their respective parties. Julie afterwards reported back: "Throughout the afternoon, the audience heard from Ms Sarah Jane Knox who talked about her lived experience with postnatal mental illness. The findings of the report were presented, along with a discussion on the recommendations. Ms Emily Slater from Maternal Mental Health Alliance gave an impassioned talk reflecting on the UK perspective and put out a strong challenge to the politicians present to act to progress the development of specialist perinatal mental health services in Northern Ireland. The report in essence recommends:

1. A training standard for perinatal mental illness;
2. Ways of working review to ensure sufficient face to face time and continuity of care;
3. The Public Health Agency should provide clarification on the use of screening tools and review training needs on advanced practice skills around disclosure of perinatal mental health problems;

4. Policy and practice alignment of perinatal mental health with infant mental health and the parent-infant relationship;

5. Provision by each Trust of specialist perinatal mental health services and establishment of a regional mother and baby unit in NI.”

“This report shines a powerful light on the urgent need for action on perinatal mental health in Northern Ireland” per Dr Alain Gregoire, Chair, Maternal Mental Health Alliance UK.

Faculty and Committee Business:

2 November: The Group which takes as its focus Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services for those within that age group who are deaf or hard of hearing, met in Clifton House. Chaired by Dr Holly Greer, the discussion looked at the way forward for making CAMHS services more accessible to deaf and hard of hearing children in Northern Ireland. Catriona Rooney, Social Care Commissioning Lead in the Health and Social Care Board, whose responsibilities include commissioning for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services across Northern Ireland, kindly attended. Catriona is supportive of ongoing developments to support interested Clinicians within each Trust CAMHS service, by means of a virtual team model. It is hoped that this will be supported regionally by Service Managers and that a more formalised and regional approach can be taken, ensuring that existing links with local charities supporting these children are further developed and strengthened.

7 November: Academic Committee met in Clifton House chaired by Dr Tony O’Neill. Topics discussed included an overview of the proceedings of the latest meeting of the UK College Academic Faculty, the upcoming Spike Milligan Intervarsity Competition in Dublin, as well as potential input into both the Curriculum Review at Queen’s University and the College International Congress.

19 November: Perinatal Faculty, chaired by Dr Julie Anderson, held a Planning Meeting in Clifton House with members and staff to commence the organisation of further 2 day Regional Multidisciplinary Perinatal Mental Health Training events to be jointly hosted with the Public Health Agency, hopefully at the end of January and again towards the end of March 2019.

23 November: Psychiatry of Old Age Faculty met in Clifton House chaired by Dr Conor Barton. There were three short presentations at the outset - from Dr Kevina Nix - RCPsych Neurology Update, Dr Graeme Young - Home Treatment Services and Dr Rosemary Kelly - NI Frailty Initiative – and there was a huge turnout of members to hear these. The business meeting followed thereafter.

28 November: Dr Gerry Lynch chaired a meeting of the Executive in Clifton House. In advance of the usual agenda of the meeting involving Chair’s business, Reports from Vice Chair, Faculties and Committees etc, Members heard from Invited Speaker Tomas Adell from the DoH Mental Health and Capacity Unit in relation to their proposed Mental Health Five Year Plan. Tomas explained the background, context and hopes for the Plan - and some of the material covered is included here: "The draft Bamford Evaluation report remains unpublished as it did not receive full Ministerial and Executive approval prior to the suspension of the Assembly in early 2017. With the continued absence of a functioning Executive it has become necessary to look at the overall context for mental health provision post-Bamford to ensure that all relevant
bodies and stakeholders are working towards the current strategic context as set out in NICS Outcomes Delivery Plan and the Department’s 10 year vision Delivering Together. To this end the Department is currently developing a new five year plan for mental health with the focus on improving the general mental health of people in Northern Ireland. The plan will be fully co-produced with extensive engagement with all stakeholders throughout each stage of the process. The purpose of the 5 Year Plan is (within the current strategic context) to:

- identify the key areas for improvement in mental health services in Northern Ireland;
- provide a common direction and focus within the Department, and appropriate bodies, such as the Board and Trusts; and
- achieve and deliver improvements in mental health services.

The Department is fully committed to co-produce this plan with all relevant stakeholders. It is our belief that for the plan to be successful, it has to be created together with those it affects directly, in particular people with lived experience (both service users and carers) and the professionals delivering the care and treatment. Already Drs Gerry Lynch and Michael Doherty have attended a Strategic Insight Lab on 12 and 13 November. The Lab was for representatives from all relevant stakeholders (about 50 people), including professionals, the Trusts, Board/PHA, academics, community and voluntary sector, people with lived experience and the Department. The aim of the lab was to focus on a single “challenge question”; namely "How can we improve the experience of people using Mental Health Services in Northern Ireland?”. 9 themes emerged which will inform where the focus on the five year plan should be. The next stage is that we will be returning to the College for assistance when we set up particular groups in February/March 2019. It is hoped that the Plan will be ready by the end of 2019 and will be in place for any incoming Minister. We cannot create new Policies, but we cannot stagnate either- so we can see how we can improve services, but it has to be from existing resources.”

29 November: Chair of Addictions Faculty, Dr Billy Gregg, was an invited keynote speaker of Royal College of GPs Northern Ireland at their Cromac Square, Belfast premises for their half day course on drug dependence, featuring particularly prescription drug issues (like Pregabalin, Gabapentin) and mortality as a result of these. Billy spoke on the management of prescription drug misuse or overuse, using case scenarios. Other speakers were Coroner Patrick McGurgan on the role of the Coroner and drug related deaths, as well as Joe Brogan on safe prescribing guidance and the potential for abuse. Afterwards Billy said: “It was a privilege to take part in this training event and to discuss strategies to support safer prescribing of medications, which have an abuse potential, in primary care settings”.

Media:

7 November: Dr Adrian East was interviewed live on air by Stephen Nolan this morning on the Nolan Show in relation to College Report 219 recently made available on our Website entitled "Prison Mental Health in Northern Ireland".

7 November: Dr Gerry Lynch was interviewed in Clifton House by second year Broadcast Production Queen’s University student Chloe Murray as part of her project involving a pre-recorded segment for a live radio programme called “Taboo Health.” The module in question was called “The Live Radio Programme” and Chloe was working on the interview as forming part of a pre-recorded segment looking at “Taboo Topic: Stress.”

10 November: Dr John Simpson’s book entitled ‘The Revolutionary Youth’ launched this afternoon at Culturlann, Falls Road, Belfast. John explained: “I’ve just published my first novel,
'The Revolutionary Youth'. Previously I'd written a few short stories, four of which were broadcast on BBC Radio Ulster and published in the Belfast Telegraph and one of which was published in a BBC book of short stories in 2006, entitled 'My Story'. I don't write for pleasure because it isn't, it's painful! For pleasure I play the harmonica and sing the Blues! Individual lives and history collide in this book. As a result of the breakout of the Troubles, childhood friends become enemies and families are uprooted. Tommy decides to take matters into his own hands. But there are consequences - there are always consequences - and the boy becomes a man long before his time.

23 November: Dr Richard Wilson was interviewed by 17 year old Caoimhe Tumelty, who is currently making a short film about schizophrenia with the help of Headliners, a youth media charity whose Saturday journalism bureau Caoimhe attends. Caoimhe wants to help combat stigma and ignorance with a documentary about the general landscape for schizophrenia sufferers and their experiences. It is hoped that the interview with Richard will be followed by a further interview in due course with Professor Ciaran Mulholland. After Richard’s interview, Headliners posted: “A fantastically informative morning for us and Caoimhe as she interviewed Dr Richard Wilson from the Royal College of Psychiatrists. They talked about young people, mental health and in particular the condition of schizophrenia for a short film Caoimhe is making. Thanks to Dr Wilson for coming out to meet us and for making film production work seem like easy fun!” This initiative was arranged with the help of Caroline Ryder, Journalist/Outreach Worker with www.headliners.org who are based at Unit 318 Forsyth House, Cromac Square, Belfast.
28 November: The Tyrone Courier reported on our Psychiatrist of the Year winner, Dr Heather Hanna.

28 November: Dr Ryan O’Neill was interviewed by Louise Cullen from BBC NI as part of their planned Newsline series on Adult ADHD. The interview will be broadcast in due course. Ryan will be chairing a Working Group, looking at the issue of Adult ADHD as part of our General Adult Faculty, which hopes to start meeting early in 2019.

Sharing Best Practice and Quality Improvement:
7 November: At the annual College Awards Ceremony in London, the award for Psychiatrist of the Year went to our former Child and Adolescent Faculty Chair, Dr Heather Hanna, who is Clinical Lead for Northern Ireland’s first and only fully integrated service for children and young people with Intellectual Disability. Heather pioneered the concept of equality of access to CAMHS for these children and young people in Northern Ireland, leading on strategic improvement at a regional and national level. The service is recognised for its innovation, outcomes and child-centred approaches. Judges said: “We were particularly delighted that this year’s winner is from Northern Ireland. Dr Heather Hanna’s impressive energy and drive enabled her to set up an innovative and well-regarded service for children and young people.” On hearing the news, Dr Gerry Lynch tweeted: “Fantastic news: well-deserved award; Heather is a great ambassador for Psychiatry in Northern Ireland.” Dr Richard Wilson, Chair of Child and Adolescent Faculty, said: “We are all delighted at Heather’s wonderful achievement which has brought great honour to the profession in Northern Ireland and great hope for our patients. Amazing for Heather to receive this accolade for her work carried out with such great energy, passion and positive effect.” Dr Bernadka Dubicka, Chair of the Central Child and Adolescent Faculty said: “Very well done to Dr Hanna and Northern Ireland!” Theresa Nixon, Director of Assurance at RQIA said: “Heather’s vision and leadership of the CAMHS service for Children and Young People with intellectual disabilities, her sense of teamwork and her drive and enthusiasm for improvement has always been very evident to me. This is a wonderful accolade which is really deserved.”

20 November: Drs Gerry Lynch, Michael Doherty and Staff met in Clifton House to draft our response to the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) Consultation (and EQIA) on Introduction of Proposed Clinical Response Model. The proposal was to introduce a revised clinical response model providing a more clinically appropriate response by targeting the right resources to the right patients. Our input centred on drawing attention to the needs of those with serious mental illness and Intellectual Disability who may not be able to give the appropriate information when calling NIAS, those with communication difficulties such as the deaf community, the lack of reference to Psychiatric emergencies or to the NIAS role in conveying a Patient to hospital under Article 130 of the Mental Health (NI) Order 1986 and the need for the street triage initiative here.

26 November: Staff took part in a Lunch and Learn via Skype with Central College on the topic of Training and Workforce.

27 November: Staff took part in training with College Head of Digital, Peter Markham in relation to the use of the new Website, following its recent launch.

28 November: Dr Gerry Lynch met with Drs Paddy Moynihan, Michelle Francis-Naylor, Adrian East and Boris Pinto to discuss specialist views on future Commissioning needs for Low Secure/Rehabilitation Services. Following the meeting, Dr Lynch confirmed that “it was common cause that separate needs and separate care pathways are required for

A Patients requiring rehabilitation

B Patients requiring a low secure service.

The former group sits within the General Adult service and will receive most referrals from acute adult inpatient wards. Each Trust should provide an inpatient rehabilitation unit. The latter group sits within the Forensic Service and will receive most of its referrals from the Shannon Medical Secure Unit or from custodial settings. More work will need to be done as to the precise numbers of beds or units. However, low secure should be seen as a regional service within the Forensic network. At present, there is no low secure service within Northern Ireland. In both these groups, it is anticipated that patients will progress within 2 years. There is a third
group of patients – those with long term complex needs, most of whom will have had trials of resettlement placements that have broken down. This group will not generally benefit from rehabilitation and are probably at their optimum level of functioning. Separate provision should be made for this group, which is likely to require long term inpatient provision to manage their complex needs. Separate services are required for the rehabilitation and low secure populations and the College is happy to support this position, also urging that more work needs to be done, especially in the area of the low secure population. In addition, it is recognised that there is a need for a network of supported housing options with varying levels of support in order that these services can work effectively.”

28 November: A Masterclass in Clifton House held via Skype (due to last minute travel problems!), featured Professor Dame Til Wykes (pictured below) on the topic of Cognitive Remediation, and attracted a large attendance.

Dame Til Wykes is Professor of Clinical Psychology and Rehabilitation and Vice Dean Psychology and Systems Sciences at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience, King’s College London. She is also a Consultant Clinical Psychologist at the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust. She founded and is now Co-Director of the Service User Research Enterprise (SURE), which employs expert researchers with experience of using mental health services. Til spoke from her research on rehabilitation for many years both in the developments of new assessments and novel psychological treatments and health services, as well as the randomised controlled trials and meta-analyses, that have affected treatment guidance, which she has been involved in/led.

30 November: College Chief Executive Paul Rees visited and spent the morning in Clifton House, where he met first with Dr Gerry Lynch and then with the Staff Team. Our new Devolved Nation status and hopes for the future were discussed.

NI Assembly:

There is nothing to report this month.
Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016:

8-9 November: Dr Gerry Lynch attended a Four Jurisdiction Conference on Capacity and Guardianship organised by Master Hilary Wells in Belfast. This is a biennial event when members of the judiciary, public guardians and those working in the field of the welfare and protection of adults with incapacity - from England and Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland - meet to discuss matters of mutual interest and to learn from each other. There were many fascinating presentations from all the jurisdictions, with a particular emphasis on the problem of protecting those with incapacity or otherwise vulnerable people from financial abuse. Dr Lynch convened a session focusing on capacity to manage financial affairs and property, Deprivations of Liberty and associated safeguards (DoLS), as well as the creation of an Office of Public Guardian - all flowing from the Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016 once implemented. Speakers were drawn from the Departments of Health, Justice, Finance and Personnel. It is clear that much detailed work remains to be done to ensure successful implementation of the Act. In another session, Drs Ray Paul and Barbara English gave a comprehensive presentation on their approaches to assessment of capacity, illustrating very well the potential complexities involved. Professor Roy McClelland also delivered a fine after-dinner speech in which he described the history behind the MCA. Gerry afterwards reflected: "This was a closed event with members of the judiciary and public guardians from the four jurisdictions present and it was my privilege to be invited by Master Hilary Wells to be involved and to address the delegates. Just as the medical profession is exercised about the Code of Practice and its importance in terms of implementation, so the legal profession are exercised about the need for appropriate Practice Directions, especially with regards to DoLS issues. It became clear to me that the Judiciary do place a high value on the input of Psychiatrists as experts in the field of mental health and they have equally high expectations of us as well!"

8 November: Dr Catherine Taggart represented the College at a teleconference held with the Mental Health Act Oversight and Steering Group chaired by College President Professor Wendy Burn. Afterwards, Catherine advised that a variety of issues pertaining to mental health and capacity legislation were discussed.

20 November: Dr Gerry Lynch chaired a meeting between our Mental Capacity Working Group and Tomas Adell from DoH at Groundwork, 63-75 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast, to discuss scenarios from clinical practice with a view to further helping inform the drafting of the Code of Practice for the Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016. This followed a previous meeting of the Working Group itself on 22 June 2018 when the subject further scenarios were drafted for use at this Autumn meeting of the group with DoH, the idea being that these new scenarios would shine additional light onto the perceived consequences of the Act for practice in different specialties, would break new ground and hopefully assist overall in allaying lingering fears about the Act in practice. Tomas Adell from DoH in advance had drafted responses to each scenario so that we could really drill into potential problems as envisaged by our Members. The meeting proved to be particularly educational and informative for both sides. In attendance were Drs Gerry Lynch, Stephen Kane, Phil Anderson, Amy Grimason, Adrian East, Niall Corrigan, Catherine Taggart, Jo Minay, Ruth Grant and Richard Wilson, as well as Staff and Tomas Adell. Tomas Adell gave the following update: "It is our intention to issue the next Code of Practice, Regulations, some scenarios and further documents to the Reference Group before Christmas. It is hoped that we can then have a formal public consultation in the middle of next year (with the normal caveats of course re the Assembly etc). The Department of Justice now has two teams working on issues relating to the Justice side of the Act. This includes one team for Civil Justice issues such as Courts, Tribunals etc and one team on the Criminal Justice elements. They are working on issues such as the Code of Practice and Regulations." When asked for a summing up of the Act's central messages, he said: "The key message is twofold: one, that it is all about autonomy;
two, the Act does not provide powers or requirements to act, but a protection from liability providing protection for an act when the safeguards are met.”

30 November: Dr Stephanie Campbell (pictured below) attended and spoke about the Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016 at the Intellectual Disability Trainees’ Conference in Edinburgh. Other speakers similarly addressed the Mental Health legislation in their country. Stephanie reflected afterwards: “It went very well! The discussion generated a lot of interest from Trainees across the UK and there were a lot of questions about the legislation and how it would work in practice.”

Membership and Trainees:

9 November: Dr Julie Anderson met with some of the General Adult and Dual Training Higher Trainees in Clifton House. From this it was decided to develop this initiative in a particular direction on a pilot basis, which Julie outlined as follows: “There has been an idea for some time to develop a course for Higher Trainees. Many Higher Trainees have completed a survey - and essentially all seemed to be looking for two things: 1 - training on legal issues relating to MHO, capacity, Declaratory Orders, Court reports etc; 2 – the opportunity and space to meet regularly together to discuss issues relevant to training, to have the opportunity to discuss complex cases/scenarios, to find out what Consultants wish they had known before they started their jobs and what parts of their jobs they find the most challenging etc. Therefore, we have decided that these afternoons should be opened out to all Higher Trainees in all specialities. The plan is to meet on the 2nd Friday of the month in Clifton House. Dr Niall Corrigan kindly agreed/was volunteered to coordinate the programme! Obviously, this will be very informal and the idea is for this to function like a large peer group, with some focus pre-set for each afternoon.”

19 November: Central College Staff hosted a Focus Group with Medical Students at Queen’s University, Belfast about perceptions of Psychiatry in Medical School and their thoughts about whether or not they would themselves consider Psychiatry as a career. Dr Aidan Turkington,
who is a Clinical teaching Fellow at Queen’s University Belfast, acted as promoter for this event. The College’s project in this regard is on Medical Schools and Psychiatry. The aim of the project is to try to better understand what interventions at undergraduate level might have an impact on students choosing psychiatry as a career. These focus groups of Medical Students across the UK, are linked to a Survey also being carried out. Ideally there should be some participants who are keen on Psychiatry and some wavering more than others – in order to achieve the maximum information from a Group such as this.

23 November: Dr Colin Gorman attended the School of Psychiatry meeting at NIMDTA on behalf of the Trainees.

28 November: Spike Milligan Intervarsity Public Speaking Competition took place in Dublin at The Button Factory. Representing Queen’s University Belfast was Christopher O’Hagen and Louis-Phillipe Delaugere (pictured). The theme was ‘Mental Illness: Everybody’s Business Nobody’s Child’. Seven teams took part and Professor Anthony McCarthy gave feedback. He praised the high standard of all the presentations and said this year was “the highest standard I think we’ve ever had and the most difficult choice”. He announced University of Limerick as this year’s winners and presented them with the Dick Joynt trophy and cash prize on stage. UCC were named as Runners-Up. Great thanks are due to Dr Rosanna Moore who worked with the Queen’s University team.
Department of Health:

12-13 November: Drs Gerry Lynch and Michael Doherty represented the College at the Department of Health (DoH) Strategic Insight Lab event at the Europa Hotel, Belfast. Drs Nial Quigley and Ryan O’Neill were also present, representing their respective Trusts. The purpose of the 2 day Workshop was to ask the question: How can we improve the experience of people using mental health services in Northern Ireland?

In advance, the DoH had made the following clear: “Mental health services in Northern Ireland have for the last decade been based on the Bamford reports. However, the context has moved forward and the DoH is contemplating a refreshed direction in policy and service delivery. The Mental Health and Capacity Unit in the Department has therefore instigated a new project with the aim to co-produce a 5 year plan for mental health. It is the intention that the project will last less than 18 months with a finished product by the end of 2019.

The purpose of the 5 Year Plan is:

- to identify key areas for improvement in mental health services in Northern Ireland;
- to provide a common direction and focus within the Department and appropriate bodies, such as the Board and Trusts; and
- to achieve and deliver improvements in mental health services.

The objectives of the 5 Year Plan are:

- To hear from all the relevant stakeholders about what is most important;
- To explore what is currently happening in the system that needs addressing;
- To discover where there is innovation that we can use as inspiration;
- To agree what we want for the future (collectively)
- To agree the strategic themes to inform a realistic five-year plan.”

Afterwards, Gerry reflected: "The Workshop organised by the DoH is, I think, a recognition by the DoH that there is a lack of strategic direction for the development of mental health services which would build on the undoubted successes of the Bamford process. The idea was to begin to plot a 5 year forward view for mental health services; our initial enthusiasm was somewhat dashed by the clear message from the outset that this was to be in the context of no extra resources. We used the opportunity to yet again highlight the underfunding of services here and to contrast this stance with the increases in funding allocated in England to help implement their 5 year forward view. Notwithstanding the resource issue, several themes emerged: the importance of implementing evidence-based practice, the need for Trusts to work much more closely together with the development of a more consistent approach, the increasing emphasis on co-production, the need to simplify structures, the problems of excessive paperwork and the need to develop common IT systems. Additionally, Staff recruitment, development and support was discussed as an important issue with an acknowledgement of excessive caseloads as an impediment to the delivery of good clinical care. The pressure on acute care was seen as a priority and the difficult issue of how we best manage transitions was discussed. We could say that it was a useful first step, but progress will be limited if the resource stance is not changed and if there continues to be stalemate at a political level.”

20 November: Dr Gerry Lynch met in Clifton House with Dr Ian McMaster (DoH) to discuss current issues of mutual interest to both the College and the Department, including the proposed 5 Year Plan for Mental Health and the introduction of Mental Health workers into primary care as part of the planned Multi-Disciplinary Teams.