Chair's Monthly Activity Log

July and August 2019

Sharing Best Practice and Quality Improvement:

1 July: RCPsych NI Chair Dr Gerry Lynch and General Adult Faculty Chair Dr Rowan McClean represented the College at the latest Towards Zero Suicide Board meeting and Learning Event in Holywell, Antrim. Afterwards, Gerry commented: “We heard stimulating presentations by Professor Louis Appleby (pictured below) from the National Confidential Inquiry and by Dr Denise O’Hagan from the Public Health Agency. There is a real commitment to a collaborative approach on this issue across the 5 Trusts, to examine our practices and processes – and to learn about and implement the evidence about what works best in our drive to reduce the suicide rate in our Patients.”
18 July: Our new Mental Health Policy Group, which comprises the College, British Psychological Society NI Branch (BPS NI), Action Mental Health (AMH) and Inspire Wellbeing - met with Department of Finance Permanent Secretary Sue Gray (pictured second from left front row below) in Clifton House. Present were College Chair and Vice Chair respectively Drs Gerry Lynch and Michael Doherty, Policy Officer Thomas McKeever and Manager Emma Allen – Dr Mandy Irvine who was standing in for Professor Nichola Rooney for BPS NI – David Babington as Chief Executive of AMH– and Lisa McElherron Group Director of Insight and Engagement for Inspire Wellbeing. Afterwards Gerry commented: "All participants in the meeting were really struck by Sue Gray’s commitment to mental health and her enthusiasm to effect meaningful change. By her follow up action, Sue has put us in contact with the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) and we have a meeting arranged with their Director of Analysis Dr Tracy Power and her colleague Eugene Mooney to take place on 24 September 2019. The intention is to ascertain if anything can be done by NISRA regarding mental health data. Currently, the absence of any/reliable data hinders analysis of performance and hence Quality Improvement targets and priorities here. Sue also indicated that she would like to meet with us again to review progress on the Actions which were discussed – and that meeting will hopefully take place in early 2020.”

1 August: Barry Flynn and Emma Allen took part in a Tele Conference with counterparts in the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland regarding the forthcoming joint All Ireland Conference.
14 August: RCPsych NI Manager Emma Allen met with the Chair of Public Engagement Dr Maggie McGurgan to discuss plans to roll out a teacher training programme on mental health called ‘CRASH’ across Belfast schools, with a launch for this planned for around October’s World Mental Health Day.

28 August & 29 August 2019: Chair of our Public Engagement Committee Dr Maggie McGurgan and her CEIS colleague Nadine Kane delivered Mental Health Training to over 300 teachers over 2 days at both North Coast Integrated College, Coleraine and also at Cross & Passion College, Ballycastle - as part of the Crash Course Initiative. RCPsych NI Manager Emma Allen also attended the Coleraine event. The Crash Course has been nominated for the Regional Social Work Awards 2019 due to take place in November. Maggie afterwards commented: “In the wake of a reduction of funding which has withdrawn Autism training for all teachers in Northern Ireland - this training has come as a valued addition and one which, having seen such a positive response in the Northern Trust area, we are hoping to roll out to more education establishments in 2020.”
Faculty & Committee Business:

2 July: Forensic Faculty Chair Dr Adrian East (pictured below) presented ‘Prison Mental Health Care in NI: The View of RCPsych NI’ (based on CR219) to the Quality Network for Prison Mental Health Services’ Annual Forum in London. The purpose was for the audience to hear from and learn more about services outside of England and Adrian reported that a helpful discussion was stimulated.

17 July: Policy Lead Dr Peter Trimble and Policy Officer Thomas McKeever took part in the Central College Policy and Public Affairs Committee meeting via Skype, chaired by College Registrar Dr Adrian James. A full Report of our local Policy related work from January to July 2019 was submitted in advance on paper and a number of key points were highlighted by Peter at the meeting itself.

18 July: SAS and Affiliates Chair and Vice Chair respectively Drs Liz Dawson and Adele Swindles, together with Barry Flynn and Emma Allen, took part in a Tele conference call with Res Consortium who had delivered our mid-June 2 day course
in Clifton House entitled ‘Surviving and Thriving as an SAS Doctor’. The purpose was to follow up on the success of the event, feedback and any learning.

**26 July:** Child and Adolescent Faculty Chair Dr Richard Wilson met with Manager Emma Allen in Clifton House to discuss plans for our 2020 Programme, business planning and collaboration input from Faculty Chairs and Vice-Chairs. He also met with Policy Officer Thomas McKeever regarding forthcoming September discussions on the Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016 arranged to take place involving Faculty Members, DoH and the Departmental Solicitor.

**21 August:** Drs Gerry Lynch (Chair), Julie Anderson (Chair of Perinatal Faculty) and Janine Lynch met with the Chief Medical Officer Dr Michael McBride at Castle Buildings, Stormont to discuss a business plan for Specialist Perinatal Services in Northern Ireland.

**Membership & Trainees:**

**2 July:** Drs Chis Sharkey and Vivian Sing (*both pictured below*) presented at the Rapid Fire Poster presentations competition at the College International Congress in London and were awarded joint 1st place. Chris’ poster was titled ‘Personalised Safety Plans’, which is a Quality Improvement project he is currently working on with colleagues in the Western Trust – and his category was Service Evaluation/Audit/Quality Improvement. Vivian’s poster was titled ‘Quality Improvement Project: Improving Adherence to DVLA Guidance on Driving for those with a diagnosis of ADHD’ – and her category was Research. Vivian had done this Quality Improvement project when she worked in Belfast Trust last year. Vivian had further success as she was additionally awarded 2nd place in the RCPsych Trainee Researcher of the year - Junior/Trainee of the year poster prize - in the category of Service Evaluation/Audit/Quality Improvement. The full list of Winners is [here](#).

Chair Dr Gerry Lynch said: "Many congratulations to these 2 Trainees. This was the best attended Congress in the College’s history - so the Trainees’ achievement will really raise the profile on the excellent work being done in the areas of quality and safety here in Northern Ireland. The work on safety planning, led by the Western Trust, is very relevant to the Towards Zero Suicide Regional Collaborative and the Trainees’ work will be very helpful for the Collaborative.”
10 July: Thomas McKeever and Barry Flynn took part in a Matrix Management Meeting by tele-conference with College Director of Strategic Communications Kim Catcheside and College Head of Policy and Campaigns George Roycroft, which focused on the work of our recent and future joint Policy work partnership with the British Psychological Society NI Branch, Action Mental Health and Inspire Wellbeing.

10 July: Some Trainees met in Clifton House to practice for their upcoming September CASC exam.

12 July: Dr Gerry Lynch attended both the Council Meeting (pictured below) and the Devolved Council Chairs’ Meeting in Central College London, accompanied to the latter by Interim Manager Barry Flynn. Reflecting later on both meetings, Gerry said: “At Council, it was very interesting to hear about the increasing levels of recruitment into training grades - the fruits of the hard work done by the College in the ongoing ‘Choose Psychiatry’ campaign. The Devolved Council Chairs’ meeting heard about the increasing College media presence following the appointment of Laura Varney, the Devolved Nations’ Press Officer. The terms of reference for the new Devolved Councils were also discussed at this meeting; the view of the Devolved Nation Chairs being that all matters relating only to each jurisdiction should be decided upon by the Devolved Council in that particular jurisdiction. This is a discussion in progress and final agreement has not yet been reached. We will have an opportunity to shape the direction of the Devolved Council in Northern Ireland at our forthcoming Strategy Day on 16 October.”
15 July: Outgoing College Director of Professional Standards Fauzan Palekar and College former International Affairs Manager and now newly appointed Head of Devolved Nations and Divisions (while Vivine Muckian is on sabbatical) Elen Cook travelled over from London and spent the morning in Clifton House to formally introduce Barry and Thomas to newly appointed RCPsych NI Manager Emma Allen, as part of the first stage of Emma’s induction into the role. Barry and Thomas went through current issues with Emma. Chair Dr Gerry Lynch also called in to meet with Emma, who spent the morning in the office prior to her formal start mid-week.

16 July: We provided comments to the College Policy and Public Affairs Editorial Board in relation to their draft College Position Statement on Personality Disorder, prior to its final sign off and publication. The feedback was provided by Drs Iain McDougall and Owen McNeill, with oversight from Dr Gerry Lynch as Chair.

17 July: Newly appointed RCPsych in NI Manager Emma Allen began today in her new role, which she will officially assume from 5 August, following a handover period. Chair Dr Gerry Lynch said: “The Staff and Members wish Emma well in her new role and we all very much look forward to working with her as this new chapter begins in the life of the local College. Our gratitude also goes to Interim Manager Barry Flynn for steering the College office so well since January and we are very pleased that Barry will remain on with the College in his new role of Co-ordinator.”
**25 July:** Staff took part in a Lunch and Learn via Skype with Central College on the topic of Safeguarding.

**26 July:** Dr Gerry Lynch attended the College Trustee Board in Central College, London as the Devolved Nations’ representative.

**31 July:** CASC practice was held in the Members’ Room in Clifton House.

**2 August:** Local and Central Staffing changes took place today and over the Summer. Locally Emma Allen officially took over the reins at close of business today as RCPsych NI Manager from Barry Flynn, who had been acting as Interim Manager since January 2019 and who has now assumed the new role of RCPsych NI Coordinator. We said goodbye to RCPsych NI Temporary Administrator Fionnuala Fitzsimons, who has taken up a position with the Pharmaceutical Society NI – and Chair Dr Gerry Lynch, together with Staff, sent her our deep gratitude for her sterling work with us over recent months assisting in the delivery of a large number of key events and meetings. Centrally in recent weeks, Sonia Walter was appointed Director of Professional Standards (previously Head of Events Operations) and Elen Cook was appointed Interim Head of Devolved Nations and Divisions (previously International Affairs Manager).

**6 August:** Staff took part in a Lunch and Learn via Skype with Central College on the topic of Cyber Security.

**12 August:** RCPsych NI Manager Emma Allen met with our Finance Officer Dr Stephen Moore to sign off the RCPsych NI 2020 Budget and Programme.

**14 August:** RCPsych NI Manager Emma Allen delivered an introduction to the Royal College of Psychiatry to new CT1 students at The Northern Ireland Medical and Dentistry Training Agency (NIMDTA), Beechill House, Beechill Road, Belfast.
**External Affairs:**

**3 July:** Dr Gerry Lynch held a tele conference with Andrew Millar Assistant Director Judicial Appointments, NI Judicial Appointments Commission (NIJAC) to assist him with preparing for a meeting with Trust Clinical Directors. Gerry provided him with information in relation to how Consultant Contracts work and how work for NIJAC might be accommodated within job plans. Gerry commented: "Both parties are very keen to encourage and facilitate Consultants to apply for posts involving Mental Health Review Tribunals."

**17 July:** Drs Gerry Lynch and Michael Doherty met in Clifton House with 2 academics from the University of Granada in Spain, Antonio and Dr Zoraida Callejas Carrion and from the University of Campania in Italy, Professor Anna Espisito. They are involved in a Europe-wide study looking at innovative digital solutions to the delivery of personalised mental health care with Action Mental Health and Ulster University, among other collaborators. They discussed their work and gained a local Clinician perspective on the topic from Gerry and Michael.

**29 July:** Emma Allen and Barry Flynn took part in a tele conference with representatives of the Central College’s Sport and Exercise Special Interest Group
(SESIG), Drs Alan Currie and Allan Johnston, regarding the hosting in Belfast of a UK-wide seminar on mental health in sport. It is anticipated that the event, which will be co-hosted with Ulster University, will take place in late March 2020 and will attract prominent speakers from a range of sports. Dr Gavin Breslin, Senior Lecturer in Sport and Exercise Psychology from Ulster University School of Sport and member of the Sport and Exercise Sciences Research Institute, is assisting us with this - and further telephone discussion with him followed. Barry Flynn said: "This event is timely given the prominence of mental health issues in sport and particularly with 2020 being an Olympic year, so it is hoped that the seminar will attract a wide audience to Belfast."

20 August: Dr Gerry Lynch, Emma Allen and Barry Flynn held a teleconference with the Chair of the College’s Sport and Exercise Special Interest Group (SESIG), Dr Alan Currie and its Finance Officer Dr Allan Johnston to further develop plans for a locally based Mental Health in Sport Conference in 2020.

Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016:

3 July: Drs Gerry Lynch, Dearbhail Lewis and Stuart Brown, together with Barry Flynn, met in Clifton House to plan for a December Workshop designed to provide training on the Mental Health (NI) Order 1986. Gerry advised: "Provisional date is 5 December and it promises to be an exciting programme."
4 July: In anticipation of the commencement by the DoH, in conjunction with the DoJ, of the Mental Capacity Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 for the purpose of deprivation of liberty (DoL) (and certain offences and money and valuables in residential care and nursing homes) on 1 October 2019, our Old Age Faculty Chair Dr Conor Barton critically reviewed the training for this, which is specifically about deprivation of liberty processes operating where the Mental Health (NI) Order 1986 does not apply. The critical review work involved going through the planned Formal Assessment of Capacity training for its broad educational soundness and applicability. Conor’s review was submitted today to the MCA Project, HSC Clinical Education Centre in advance of the tight deadline for same.

18 July: RCPsych NI Chair Dr Gerry Lynch and Interim Manager Barry Flynn held a tele-conference with the NI Judicial Appointments Commission (NIJAC) regarding our plan to hold an innovative Mental Health Order training day, which is scheduled to take place on 5 December 2019.

20 August: Chair of RCPsych NI, Dr Gerry Lynch met with Department of Health officials, Dr Ian McMaster and Kevin Myles regarding partnering with them on a Mental Health Order event in December 2019.

29 August: Chair of RCPsych NI Dr Gerry Lynch hosted a meeting in Clifton House to plan an innovative Mental Health legislation training day, which is scheduled to take place on 5 December 2019 at NI Judicial Appointments Commission headquarters, Victoria Street, Belfast. The day will include a simulation of a Mental Health Review Tribunal (which will post 1 October be known as the Review Tribunal). In attendance at the meeting were Drs Dearbhail Lewis, Paul Devine and Stuart Brown – also Emma Allen and Barry Flynn – also Gerry Gormley and Paul Murphy from Queen’s University Belfast who are assisting with the simulation aspect - and by telephone link from RQIA were Dr John Simpson, Ted Finnigan and Lynn Long (who is RQIA Assistant Director for Mental Health).

Media:

4 July: Barry Flynn took part in a tele-conference chaired by RCPsych Wales Manager Oliver John and involving Nick Hodgson, College Media Manager and Laura Varney, College Devolved Nations’ Press Officer and staff from RCPsych Scotland - to plan ahead re upcoming media opportunities in the Devolved Nations.

9 July: Devolved Nations’ Press Officer Laura Varney issued the following Press Release from Dr Mark Rodgers, Vice Chair Child and Adolescent Faculty in response to the BBC News item about Beechcroft broadcast today:

"This situation has highlighted the long term under investment in CAMHS services across Northern Ireland."
"There needs to be a view on how these services are run across the country, to make them fit for purpose for our young people.

"To place young people within adult mental health wards is an unacceptable practice and underlines the need to address workforce challenges in the short, medium and longer term."

ENDS

18 July: Barry Flynn and Emma Allen took part in the fortnightly Devolved Nations Media Teleconference, this time chaired by RCPsych Scotland Interim Manager Laura Hudson. Matters discussed included sign off.

23 July: The College was quoted in the Irish News in response to research by NSPCC Northern Ireland, the Royal College of Midwives and the Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association. Perinatal Faculty Chair Dr Julie Anderson had this to say.

26 July: We issued the following Press Release by Perinatal Faculty Chair Dr Julie Anderson supportive of the NSPCC NI research highlighted on 23 July by the Irish News. Julie also welcomed new funding allocated to the College for further Perinatal Training.

Royal College endorses research which highlights under provision of perinatal health care across Northern Ireland

The Chair of the Royal College of Psychiatrists’ Perinatal Faculty in Northern Ireland has endorsed the findings of new research which has found that thousands of women are disadvantaged by the absence of dedicated perinatal services. The research, led by NSPCC Northern Ireland, has demonstrated that significant gaps exist in the provision of services for women and their families affected by perinatal mental health illnesses.

Dr Julie Anderson, Chair of the Faculty, commented: “The current inequity that exists in Northern Ireland cannot be allowed to continue.”

"Given the absence of a functioning Assembly, we are calling upon the Department of Health to release resources to create these much-needed services and provision of a regional mother and baby unit as a matter of urgency,” added Dr Anderson.
Dr Anderson’s statement coincided with news that RCPsych NI will, on behalf of the Public Health Agency, deliver more perinatal training to almost 160 mental health professionals over the coming months.

“This training is timely and builds upon last year’s sessions which trained almost 200 professionals”, commented Dr Anderson.

“However, the fact remains that any investment in creating a skills’ base needs to be supported by the establishment of much needed services to support those enduring mental health problems due to the lack of facilities.”

ENDS

1 August: Emma Allen took part in and chaired the fortnightly Devolved Nations’ Media Teleconference.

6 & 7 August: Devolved Nations Press Officer Laura Varney travelled to Belfast and met with the Chair Dr Gerry Lynch and Manager Emma Allen to discuss RCPsych NI campaigns for 2019/20.

7 August: Perinatal Faculty Chair Dr Julie Anderson was interviewed and quoted widely by local media outlets in relation to welcoming funds for more Perinatal Mental Health Training (to be delivered by the College on behalf of the Public Health Agency), but equally stressing the need for specialist Perinatal support and a Mother and Baby Unit for Northern Ireland. Coverage included Belfast Telegraph, Irish News, News Letter, MyHeadlinez Online, Belfast Live, MSN UK, ITV, UTV.

Department of Health:

10 July: Dr Gerry Lynch attended the first formal meeting of the Primary Care Multi-Disciplinary Teams’ Mental Health Professional Group at Castle Buildings, Stormont, Belfast. Gerry advised afterwards: “The concerns we have raised were
echoed by most of those who attended; namely that secondary care mental health services are likely to be de-stabilised by the movement of skilled and experienced staff to these new primary care teams. Beyond a promise to stage the implementation of the teams and a clear acknowledgment by all (including GP leaders) that it is in no-one’s interests for this to happen, no real solution to this issue was forthcoming. It will clearly be vital for mental health services in the 3 pilot areas where the teams are being initially set up to work very closely with the GP Federations and to monitor the effects on secondary care. In the longer term, investment in mental health workers in primary care may pay dividends, but difficulties in the short term are envisaged.”

17 July: We were invited by Andrew Dawson, Acting Director of Workforce Policy in DoH to join the Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy 2026 – Regional Workforce Strategy Reference Group – which we immediately accepted. Our Nominee is Vice Chair, Dr Michael Doherty. This Group is being established as part of the oversight and accountability arrangements to support the implementation of the Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy 2026, which was published on 2 May 2018. Links to Strategy documents are below:


**Findings link** - [https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/workforce-strategy-initial-engagement-findings](https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/workforce-strategy-initial-engagement-findings)

The Strategy contains 24 actions, marshalled under 10 key themes, which aim to address the workforce issues that need to be resolved in order to transform the health and social care workforce. It is essential that a future workforce has the necessary skills to deliver a transformed health and social care service, which keeps up with the fast pace of innovation and developments in the health and social care system. As Departmental Workforce Policy Director, Andrew Dawson will lead on the implementation of the Strategy and will chair the Reference Group. The group will have representation from across the wider health and social care sector, including independent and private sectors, trade unions, regulators and others as required.

The role of the Reference Group is to:

- Provide advice, assurance and constructive challenge throughout the implementation phase of the health and social care workforce strategy 2026, to the Project Teams and Programme Board as required.

The first meeting of the group will be scheduled for early Autumn and should meet every two/three months thereafter.
Dr Gerry Lynch commented: “I strongly encourage all Faculties and Committees to contribute to this important Workforce initiative by contacting Michael with your concerns.”

17 July: Dr Gerry Lynch, Thomas McKeever and incoming Manager Emma Allen met with Dr Ian McMaster in Clifton House for our regular meeting on shared College and DoH concerns. Topics covered included Mental Health Data and the proposed Five Year Mental Health Plan.

24 July: Emma Allen and Barry Flynn visited the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission (NIJAC) to plan a collaborative RQIA event in December based on our mental health legislation. Chair Dr Gerry Lynch commented: "I am pleased to report that DoH have kindly agreed to assist with the funding of this event and NIJAC are kindly providing the use of their conference facilities for the event, which will include a simulated Review Tribunal."

30 July: We submitted today our response to the DoH Consultation on Information Sharing for Child Protection Purposes. The key contributors to this response were Drs Gerry Lynch, Richard Wilson, Rowan McClean and Iain McDougall. Gerry said: “Sincere thanks to Richard, Rowan and Iain for bringing their specialty knowledge and expertise to this task and for giving of their time under deadline pressure. This was an important Consultation topic, very relevant to our Clinical Practice - and hence important that we made our views known to the Department of Health.”

31 July: We submitted today our response to the DoH Pre-Consultation to seek views on a Successor Strategy to the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs Phase 2. The author of this response was our Chair of Addictions Faculty Dr Billy Gregg. Gerry said: “Sincere thanks to Billy for taking on this task and devoting a lot of his time to it, under deadline pressure. This was a long and detailed Consultation and Billy’s expert views in this area provide us with a strong representative voice at the DoH table as they make plans for future strategy in this clinical practice area.”

NI Assembly:
There is nothing to report this month, with Devolution not yet restored.

Department of Justice:
30 August: We submitted today our response to the DoJ Consultation to seek views on The Review Tribunal (Amendment) Rules (NI) 2019. The author of this response was Chair, Dr Gerry Lynch, who said: “This was a targeted Consultation with chosen stakeholders, so we were pleased to have been asked to contribute to same.”