Chair's Monthly Activity Log

May 2019

Sharing Best Practice and Quality Improvement:

1 May: RCPsych NI held the second meeting of the new ADHD Working Group, which is chaired by Dr Ryan O’Neill and works under the auspices of our General Adult Faculty. (The hope is to chart a consensus regional approach to what a service for adult ADHD should look like – and so this Group comprises representatives of the 5 Trusts, CAMHS and Neurodevelopmental Psychiatry.

2 May – 3 May: RCPsych NI and RCPsych Trent joined forces to host a Joint Spring Meeting in The Olympic Suite, Titanic Belfast. The event was chaired over its 2 days by Drs Krish, Gerry Lynch and Dearbhail Lewis. Delegates heard about Cyber Security (NCC Group) and the International work of the College (Professor Mohammed Al Uzri from Leicestershire) on Day 1, whilst on Day 2 attention turned to Psychosis and political violence (Dr Ciaran Mulholland), the Microbiome-gut-brain axis (Dr Gerard Clarke from Cork), Suicide Prevention (Dr Alys Cole-King from London), ADHD Services for Adults (Dr Ryan O’Neill), Simulation training in Psychiatry (Dr Paul McCormick from Derbyshire) and Trainee showcasing of best practice (Drs Charlotte Blewett, Elizabeth Masterson and Stephanie Campbell).
15 May: Dr Gerry Lynch and Barry Flynn held a tele conference meeting with College of Psychiatrists of Ireland Vice Chair Dr William Flannery and Chief Executive Miriam Silke to move towards completion of the programme for the joint event on 14 and 15 November.
**16 May:** As our flagship event promoting Mental Health Awareness Week, we hosted an event at Belfast Castle in conjunction with Professor Gerry Leavey and the Bamford Centre, featuring prominent Mental Health Academic, Dr Kelly Aschbrenner, PhD, Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at the Geisel School of Medicine, Dartmouth College, USA. The meeting considered why Patients with illnesses, such as schizophrenia and other psychoses, have a reduced life expectancy. Also speaking at the well attended event were our Members Drs Ruth Barr (on issues related to smoking), Aisling Diamond (on the workings of a physical healthcare ‘app’ for people with severe mental illness) and Laura McGowan (on the subject of weight bias and obesity stigma - what is it and what is its impact?)

![Image](image.jpg)

*L to R: Drs Judy McAuley, Kelly Aschbrenner, Annette Thampi & Gerry Lynch*

**Department of Health:**

**1 May:** Our responses were submitted to the DoH Workstreams flowing from the Inquiry Report into Hyponatraemia-Related Deaths – specifically our responses to the [Call for Evidence](#) from the Workstream on Duty of Candour and to the [Survey](#) issued by the Serious Adverse Incidents Workstream.

**14 May:** Chair of Perinatal Faculty Dr Julie Anderson (*pictured below second from right front row*) led a College delegation, accompanied by Dr Peter Sloan (*pictured*
below second from right back row), along with Interim Manager Barry Flynn, to meet with Department of Health Permanent Secretary Richard Pengelly at Castle Buildings, Stormont Estate, Belfast. The College delegation was there as part of a wider Maternal Mental Health Alliance delegation. The purpose was to seek funding for development of Perinatal Services in Northern Ireland. Afterwards, Julie commented: "It was great to have the opportunity to make the case for funding for specialist perinatal services and fantastic to be working with such fabulous committed individuals. We were told that "the case to the Department has been made beyond doubt", but that finite resources are the stumbling block at present – so we look forward to engaging further in the coming months. Patient persistence will continue to be required."

22 May: Drs Gerry Lynch, Paddy Moynihan, Richard Wilson and Rowan McClean, as well as Policy Officer Thomas McKeever met with DoH representatives Aaron Thompson, Rodney Morton, Dr Ian McMaster and Jonathan Doherty in Clifton House for an update on finalising the Mental Health role in Primary Care Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs). It was a further useful exchange. It was agreed that the College could nominate a representative to sit on the Group which guides the development of the Mental Health Practitioner in Primary Care MDTs. It was also agreed that, given that the Mental Health Practitioners in Primary Care would have responsibility across the lifespan, it was vital that Trusts would have representatives from Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Old Age Psychiatry on their joint Working Groups with the Federations in the pilot areas – and that the DoH would write to the Trusts to confirm that this would be the case. Given these developments, it was finally agreed that we would not need to reconvene this Group until the Evaluation stage of the project had been reached.
External Affairs:

2 May: (Left to Right below) Dr Barbara English, Dr Conor Barton (Chair of our Faculty of Old Age Psychiatry) and Thomas McKeever (Policy Officer) attended the Launch in Law Society House, Victoria Street, Belfast of the Journal of Elder Law and Capacity. Published by the Law Society of Northern Ireland, it aims to have UK and international appeal with coverage on legal issues relevant to the elderly, those with capacity issues, their families and carers. Law Society President Suzanne Rice paid tribute to the invaluable contribution of the Editorial Panel which was set up specially for this Journal and which is responsible for its compilation and publication. Also in attendance and speaker at the event was newly appointed High Court Judge Mr Justice Ian Huddleston, who welcomed the Law Society approaching this and other issues in a multi-disciplinary way. Afterwards Thomas McKeever commented: "We take pride in the fact that our Member Dr Barbara English is one of the 5 person Editorial Panel for this important publication. In the first edition, Barbara has contributed an article entitled ‘Mental Capacity Assessments – a medical perspective on legal instruction’. The contents of this Journal will be of huge interest to Members, especially with the advent of the Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016. It aims to attract a multidisciplinary audience in Northern Ireland and beyond to include Doctors, Lawyers, Social Workers and other bodies interested in Elder Law and Capacity issues. It will be published twice a year and contents of the first edition and order form if interested are set out below.”
8 May: Addictions Faculty Chair Dr Billy Gregg, who is representing the College on the Expert Reference Group (ERG) which is reviewing Community Addiction Services across Northern Ireland on behalf of Health and Social Care Board/Public Health Agency, attended the group’s first meeting in Clotworthy House, Antrim. Billy reported: “The ERG is designed to support a collaborative approach to the regional development of Tier 3 Addiction Treatment Services and it is anticipated that this group will develop the vision for Tier 3 Addiction Treatment Services for the future. At the meeting, the Review Team, ably supported by an external expert, gave feedback on recent process mapping exercises carried out in each Trust which tracked the Patient’s journey from the point of entry across Tier 3 services (statutory community based addiction services) to the point of discharge. Issues relating to activity and outcome measurement were also discussed, as well as a very helpful reflection on the aims and purpose of treatment for substance use disorders. The work of the ERG continues.”

10 May: Dr Gerry Lynch, on behalf of the College, attended a Regional Workshop entitled ‘Review of Acute In-Patient Services and NHS Benchmarking’ at Dunsilly Hotel, Antrim. The main speakers at the event were Stephen Bergin (Consultant in Public Health with our Public Health Agency), Stephen Watkins (Director of NHS Benchmarking Network), Dr Geraldine Strathdee (former National Clinical Director Mental Health) and Bryce McMurray (member of the Review Team).

The aim of the day was to update on the following:

1. Regional Review: In-patient services – preliminary findings & recommendations;
2. NI benchmarking of mental health acute care pathways;
3. Best practice in acute care flow and improvement methods;
4. Next steps: Benchmarking programme and regional acute care pathway model

Stephen Bergin addressed the Preliminary Findings & Recommendations of The Review team. Themes which emerged were:

- Acute services in all 5 Trusts are under great pressure;
- Significant variation in how services are delivered across the 5 Trusts in Northern Ireland;
- Even teams that deliver similar services are named differently in different Trusts;
- Marked differences in the level of information available- strong analysis not possible in view of major gaps in data, together with a lack of systematic analysis of data;
- Lack of dedicated clinical and social care governance teams;
- Lack of therapeutic purpose to admissions;
- Lack of outcome measures;
- Funding- there was an acknowledgement that there is underfunding with a disproportionately low proportion of the health budget going to mental
health, but in some circumstances we underspend, because we do not have the staff to deliver funded services;

- Different IT systems in each Trust;
- Silo working

.........all pointing to the need to move to a Regional Mental Health model.

Stephen Watkins, Director NHS Benchmarking Network dealt with NHS Benchmarking in terms of International benchmarking and potential Regional benchmarking for Northern Ireland. This was followed by a Group discussion on Designing a future regional benchmarking system – in terms of what information do we need to collect - and how can we develop the system – resources required, etc.

Dr Geraldine Strathdee led an Action Planning session on Enabling Regional acute in-patient care pathway development Summary of Best practice.

The day concluded with Group sessions: Action planning: short, medium, longer-term priorities and objectives – and specifically next steps and actions in terms of:

1. Action required to develop a regionally consistent and best practice care pathway;
2. What are priority deliverables in year 1 and year 2?
3. What best practice can be shared?
4. What support do we need from others?

Afterwards, Dr Gerry Lynch commented: “This was a really productive meeting as it secured provisional agreement that all Trusts will enrol in the NHS Benchmarking Network and begin to develop a much needed common data set – and that a Regional Mental Health Collaborative will be set up. This is all so very consistent with the themes that we in the College have been promoting over my years as Chair - ie a regional approach and better data. It marks a huge success for us in lobbying terms as for the first time we have secured cross Trust agreement to cure arguably the biggest two defects in our system – ie Trusts working in different ways and in silos, coupled with lack of data to interrogate in order to inform improvement. Our incisive analysis in identifying these defects and our persistent lobbying in driving discussions back at various fora to these 2 themes, has finally paid off and our role received really positive feedback from Dr Geraldine Strathdee.”

13 May: Representing the College, Dr Gerry Lynch accompanied Oscar Donnelly (Chair of the Regional Towards Zero Suicide Collaborative) to a meeting of Northern Trust Psychiatrists at which they both presented the principles behind the Collaborative, the work undertaken so far and plans for the development of the project.
Media:

**6-31 May:** The Northern Ireland Mental Health Arts Festival, which lists the College as a [Supporter](#) – ran throughout the month. Dr David Bell, with his extensive experience organising Medfest some years ago, attended some of the planning for this on the College’s behalf. Commenting in advance on the programme, David said: "Once again I am pleased to say that it has been curated to include a variety of promising events for Service Users and Professionals alike and showcases the passion and talents of both individuals and local projects. It deserves wide support."

**9 May:** Barry Flynn and Thomas McKeever took part in the first Devolved Nations’ Monthly Media Stories Forward Planning meeting by tele conference with Nick Hodgson College Media Manager and Laura Varney College Devolved Nations Press Officer.

**13 May:** Perinatal Faculty Chair Dr Julie Anderson (pictured above) was interviewed at Clifton House by the UTV Live team in relation to the ongoing lobby for funding for development of Perinatal Services in Northern Ireland. Interim Manager Barry Flynn worked with Julie on this. This was part of UTV’s coverage of mental health related matters for Mental Health Awareness Week – and it was [broadcast](#) on 15 May. Devolved Nations Press Officer Laura Varney commented: “Thanks to Dr Anderson for doing the interview on such an important subject for Northern
Ireland - you came across very well on camera.” Julie said afterwards: “Here’s hoping that our Department of Health starts seriously thinking about investing in Mums’ and babies’ future!”

15 May: Devolved Nations Press Officer Laura Varney issued the following Press Release in advance of the visit of US Academic Dr Kelly Aschbrenner to Belfast for our flagship Mental Health Awareness Week event organised jointly with the University of Ulster:

MENTAL AND PHYSICAL ILLNESS COMBINED TAKES 20 YEARS OFF A PERSON’S LIFE - ACCORDING TO US ACADEMIC

Date: Wednesday 15 May, 2019

HAVING both a mental and physical illness takes around 20 years of a person’s life – according to a renowned US academic who is visiting Belfast tomorrow (Thursday).

Dr Kelly Aschbrenner will deliver a speech at Belfast Castle during Mental Health Awareness Week on how positive lifestyle changes can help people with serious mental health conditions.

The event organised by the Royal College of Psychiatrists Northern Ireland (RCPsych NI) and the University of Ulster will see the academic discuss why illnesses such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, have a shorter life expectancy than others.

Factors such as smoking and obesity coupled with mental ill health can significantly shorten an individual’s life.

But Dr Aschbrenner from the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth College, will argue that medical professionals who intervene with lifestyle interventions such as health eating and exercise can help combat the problem.

She said: “While suicide explains some of the early mortality in people living with serious mental illness, it is now well established that physical diseases account for the overwhelming majority of premature deaths in this group.

“Cardiovascular diseases and diabetes represent the highest proportion of all-natural causes of death in people with serious mental illness. Lifestyle interventions
have been shown to reduce cardiovascular disease risk in upwards of 50 per cent of people with serious mental illness enrolled in randomized controlled trials.

"Unfortunately, few individuals with serious mental illness receive lifestyle interventions as part of routine care and sustained adoption of healthy behaviours is often limited following treatment.

"Our research team has been dedicated to developing strategies for adapting and implementing lifestyle interventions in mental health to address premature mortality and improve the health of people living with serious mental illness.

"I’m looking forward to this wonderful opportunity to share what we have learned with colleagues from RCPsych NI and Ulster University."

Dr Gerry Lynch, chair of RCPsych NI, said: "It is very exciting to have Dr Aschbrenner visit Northern Ireland during Mental Health Awareness Week to speak about such an important topic.

"The reduced life expectancy by about 20 years of those with serious mental illness is shocking. Together with the University of Ulster, we’re keen to address this.”

ENDS

The Press Release was picked up by the Irish News who printed this story based on same.

16 May: Belfast Live quoted Dr Julie Anderson’s comments on the Perinatal Services issue.

29 May: Dr Adrian East, at very short notice, contributed to a discussion on the Frank Mitchell Phone-in programme on U105. The context was the public statement by the late Lyra McKee’s sister addressing her sister’s killer – and the discussion centred on bereavement reactions and the ways in which the mind of a killer might work in the aftermath of their crime.

29 May: Leila Harris-Ryberg, College Senior Internal Communications Officer paid a visit to Clifton House.

30 May: The College’s report, called Antidepressants and Depression Position Statement, was launched and is available here and received significant media attention, including in Northern Ireland print media in particular: https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/improving-care/campaigning-for-better-mental-health-policy/position-statements/position-statements-2019

May 2019: Volume 214, Issue 5 of the BJ Psych featured a local contribution on its cover:
Louise 'Fifties' O'Donnell is an illustrator, graphic designer and DJ from the Ballymena area. Scribbling and drawing since she could hold a pencil, her love for all things creative was apparent from a very young age. After 20 years of honing her skills, she graduated with a BA Hons in illustration at Lincoln University. From here, she gained experience as a graphic designer working at a local newspaper and further from that an illustrative designer at a design and marketing agency. In 2008, her circumstances changed and she decided to move back to Northern Ireland. These events took a toll on her mental health and she became unwell, finding herself in Holywell intensive care with symptoms of paranoid schizophrenia. With no access to computers or internet, she regained her love for painting and drawing, inspired by coastlines, countryside and creatures (the title of her first solo exhibition). It gave her a spark of hope where there wasn't much at all.

"The 'Time To Change' Owl is important to me as it is based on an owl pendant I got as a gift whilst in hospital." said Louise. As for the slogan, “‘Time to Change' was formed in 2007 by mental health charities MIND and Rethink Mental Illness, aiming to reduce mental health-related stigma and discrimination. It is particularly relevant here in Northern Ireland as we have the highest suicide rate in the UK.”

For more see:

http://juicebox.org.uk/

https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/
BJPsych are always looking for interesting and visually appealing images for the cover of the Journal and would welcome suggestions or pictures, which should be sent to Dr Allan Beveridge, British Journal of Psychiatry, 21 Prescot Street London E1 8BB, UK or bjp@rcpsych.ac.uk.

**Faculty and Committee Business:**

**7 May:** Chair of Perinatal Faculty Dr Julie Anderson and Dr Peter Sloan met in Clifton House in preparation for the upcoming 14 May meeting of the Maternal Mental Health Alliance with DoH Permanent Secretary Richard Pengelly.

**7 May:** Forensic Faculty met in Clifton House chaired by Dr Adrian East. Matters discussed included the Mental Capacity Act – in particular Part 10 Approval, Conditional Discharges from Hospital Orders, Prison issues, Training and workforce planning, as well as the Low secure agenda.

**8 May:** Chair of Perinatal Faculty Chair Dr Julie Anderson and Interim Manager Barry Flynn took part in a tele conference with the Maternal Mental Health Alliance chaired by Tom McEneaney from Aware – in preparation for their upcoming 14 May meeting with DoH Permanent Secretary Richard Pengelly.

**17 May:** SAS Business Meeting took place in Clifton House chaired by Dr Liz Dawson. Agenda items included StartWell update, GMC SAS Survey 2019 and the upcoming June event ‘Surviving and Thriving as an SAS Doctor’ in Clifton House.

**20 May:** Intellectual Disability Faculty met in Clifton House chaired by Dr Arun Subramanian. Aside from the main Agenda items, the meeting was also addressed by Andrew Hayward from the Southern Trust in relation to Regional Intellectual Disability Strategy Development.

**23 May:** Informatics Committee met in Clifton House chaired by Dr Stephen Moore.

**NI Assembly:**

There is nothing to report this month, save for ongoing political talks aimed at restoring Devolution.

**Membership and Trainees:**

**9 May:** Barry Flynn and Thomas McKeever took part in the first Matrix Management meeting by tele conference with Kim Catcheside College Director of Strategic Communications and George Roycroft College Head of Policy and Campaigns - to discuss the new Dotted Line Management structure which is now operational.

**14 May:** Interim Manager Barry Flynn took part in a tele conference with the College Senior Management Team in relation to proposed governance changes for Faculty/Committee membership.
**14 May:** Policy Officer Thomas McKeever took part in a follow up tele conference with George Roycroft, College Policy and Campaigns Manager based on the new Matrix Management structure.

**20 May:** Staff participated by Skype (Thomas) and in person (Barry) in a Lunch and Learn session hosted by Central College which was addressed by Interim Manager of RCPsych Wales Oliver John. Ollie explained the current workplan of the College in Wales and the impact they are having there. Interim Manager Barry Flynn was in attendance in London as he was already there for a staff meeting.

**20 May:** Queen’s University Belfast held its Annual Careers’ Fair at which we took a stand - which was prepared by Temporary Administrator Fionnuala Fitzsimons and then overseen by Drs Amy Duncan and Kathy Hadden *(left to right below)*, who met and chatted with prospective students. This was part of our #ChoosePsychiatry work for the year, designed to encourage medical students to train to become psychiatrists. Together Amy and Kathy promoted the following message: “As a psychiatrist you will have a huge positive impact on the lives of your patients and their carers. You will face new and interesting challenges every day, but always be able to face them with the support of your doctor colleagues and team around you. You will always be learning and your medical and scientific knowledge and skills will constantly grow. You can work in a range of settings, from hospitals to people’s homes, anywhere in the world. As you progress through your career, you have
more opportunity to shape the way you work; you can work part time or full time and can combine your career with a wide range of other interests.”

Afterwards, Kathy commented: “We had a really good reception from the students with quite a few expressing an interest in working in Psychiatry even at this early stage of medical school. We were able to direct them towards the Royal College’s initiatives for medical students and hopefully will see some of them sign up to become Student Associates. Students definitely seem to be attracted to the opportunity to work holistically and make a real difference in their patients’ lives!......and great organization from Fionnuala - the stand looked super!” Amy meanwhile confirmed: “It was really encouraging to see so many students with a genuine interest in Psychiatry with lots of enthusiastic questions. It was a real pleasure chatting to them!”

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

**15 May:** Child and Adolescent Faculty Chair Dr Richard Wilson chaired a meeting in Clifton House of some of his Faculty members, Drs Mark Rodgers, Fransess Doherty and Clare McKenna with DoH representatives Tomas Adell (Head of Mental Health & Capacity Unit) and Allan Chapman (Mental Health & Capacity Unit) to explore the
specific issue of how the Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016 will work in practice for 16 and 17 year olds. The plight of those under 16 who will continue to be governed by the 1986 Order, was also discussed. This meeting was held in advance of the upcoming June Faculty meeting at which it is hoped that Faculty members will come to a shared view on how this new legislative interface with the Mental Health (NI) Order 1986 will work.

16 May: MCA Working Group met at Groundwork chaired by Dr Gerry Lynch to consider the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Code of Practice, Regulations and Forms issued by DoH for comment by 24 May. In attendance were Drs Bronagh Sproule, Conor Barton, Rowan McClean, Paddy Moynihan, Catherine Taggart, Niall Cosgrove and Adrian East – together with Policy Officer Thomas McKeever. Our further responses to this work in progress were recorded by Thomas and subsequently proofed by Gerry and were submitted in advance of the deadline.

22 May: We submitted our response to the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Code of Practice and Regulations today to the DoH within their deadline. The response was based on our reflections at the meeting on 16 May and subsequent follow up discussions with Child and Adolescent Faculty colleagues.