3 Phil Williams
National First5 Lead

4 Lana Fisher
South East Scotland

5 Sioned Enlli
North Wales

6 Isolde Shore-Nye
Wales

7 Richard Pratt
Tamar

8 Tim Horlock
Severn

9 Dilsher Singh
West Midlands

10 Steven Kinnear and Alexander Murray
Northern Ireland

11 Jaspree Dhillon
South West Thames

12 Jason John
Essex

13 Lily Lamb and Pippa Male
North East

14 Sonali Kinra
Vale of Trent

15 Amber Janjua
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire

16 Suzie Gill and Shamila Wanninayake
Thames Valley

17 Harish Kumar Thampy
North West England

18 Anirban Gupta
South London
Extending member support in a variety of ways

We continue to explore new methods for supporting GPs across the UK. This year we have added a rural First5 Lead to examine how we can better support the particular needs of newly qualified rural GPs. This role complements our existing military First5 Lead and our faculty First5 Leads. At our annual leads’ day, the team chose to focus on three priorities for the year; mentorship, signposting and supporting local CPD groups and networking. These three aims are key to tackling the isolation and burnout which affects so many newly qualified GPs.

There are now four elearning courses available to CPD groups which are designed to be used before, during and after an evening meeting. They are easy to use and make facilitating a session easy. The online mentor matching tool continues to fill with enthusiastic GPs who are happy to guide and advise you as your career develops.

National events to broaden networks and knowledge

The ski trip received excellent feedback with around 60 skiers travelling to Val Thorens in France and three CPD sessions included. As the organiser, Dr Lindsay Moran, moves to Australia, a new equally excellent team will be leading the trip for 2015.

October saw the RCGP Annual Conference and the jointly run AiT, Junior International Committee and First5 Preconference come to Harrogate. Roger Neighbour gave a lecture on consultation skills and there was a debate on the value of academic general practice. The main conference (my first as First5 National Lead) had First5 sessions on commissioning and a debate based on the results of a study on First5 GPs’ career intentions.

Representing the views of First5 members

As the number of First5 GPs increases (now nearing 11,000), it becomes ever more important the College is responsive to our needs. We are working on ways of actively seeking First5 views for RCGP consultations. The RCGP Council (which has overall responsibility for the governance of the College) has approved in principle the creation of a specific First5 seat to help ensure that the needs and views of First5 GPs are taken into account. Several of us also sit on various College committees and boards representing your views.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who works so hard to make First5 a reality for our members; the faculty leads, the officers of the College and the enthusiastic and dedicated staff both in the RCGP headquarters and in the faculties.

first5@rcgp.org.uk
One of the daily challenges we face in general practice is uncertainty. With the forthcoming referendum on Scottish independence there is additional uncertainty ahead – how will a ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ vote impact upon general practice in Scotland? The South East Scotland faculty is running a series of events over the coming months looking at how the outcome of the referendum will shape primary care in Scotland. It is an exciting time to be a Scottish First5 GP.

Facilitating peer support and learning through events and mentoring

Over the past few years, South East Scotland has set up and implemented a mentoring scheme for First5 members with a number now enrolled and benefiting from mentorship pairings with experienced GPs. We are gathering feedback from both mentors and mentees in order to evaluate the scheme and aim to share these experiences and learnings with other regions. We hope mentoring will continue to grow and develop as a First5 pillar across the UK.

The South East Scotland faculty continues to strive to offer useful and relevant events for First5 members. A First5 ‘Practice as a Successful Business’ course ran earlier in the year and there is a forthcoming First5 Leadership course on the calendar. There have been many other events relevant to newly qualified GPs which have been open to all members.

One particularly successful event was a charity fundraising event ‘Lessons from Endeavours’. Three local GPs spoke about their inspiring experiences doing voluntary or fundraising work overseas. Dr Jessica Cooper (First5 GP) spoke about working in Zambia, Dr Andrew Murray spoke about his long-distance running fundraising endeavours and Dr Scott Murray MBE, Professor of Primary Palliative Care, spoke about his memories of working in Kenya. The event took place in Edinburgh’s Grassmarket Community Project, a social enterprise charity which focusses on supporting people through life transitions and re-connecting disengaged people. This event was enjoyed by GPs at all career stages. Money was raised for the Scottish Borders Africa Aids Group and the Grassmarket Community Project.

There was good attendance of First5 GPs at the 2013 South East faculty ball. It was an excellent opportunity for new First5 GPs to celebrate qualification and to network whilst enjoying the glamorous masquerade theme. The faculty board was pleased to introduce a newly established local award for the highest joint score in the Applied Knowledge Test and Clinical Skills Assessment which was awarded to a recently qualified First5 GP at the ball.

I am still relatively new to the role of First5 representative in South East Scotland. I enjoyed meeting other region representatives at the annual First5 meeting in Euston Square earlier in the year and it was extremely useful to discuss national aims for First5 (mentorship, signposting and First5 networks). I am looking forward to continuing in the role and focusing on these areas over the coming months.

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A positive start for the region's new First5 group

Prompted by a suggestion from South Wales, we are delighted to have begun to gather a North Wales First5 congregation with much support and encouragement from the faculty. Recently appointed as First5 lead for North Wales I am looking forward to helping to put us on the map.

We have progressed from our initial meeting last September where we set out our aims and objectives for the up and coming year. We used Dr C. Taylor’s template of how to set up First5 CPD meetings and have been pleased to see an increase in attendance by our members at our various meetings and activities over the past year with positive feedback and reviews. We have also expanded our talks to AITs within the area.

We also organised a First5 day out, walking the North Wales Coastal Path as part of the RCGP 60th Anniversary celebrations. It was a great day, bringing together various general practitioners from newly qualified to retired doctors to network and share experience and mentor opportunities.

Attending a First5 lead day at the College’s headquarters in Euston gave me useful ideas and suggestions about how to improve services for newly qualified doctors within the area. Following this, our aim in Wales is to join forces and link up CPD groups from North and South Wales.

We are eagerly anticipating the RCGP Wales New GP Conference in November for which more information is available on the College’s website and on a personal level I am looking forward to furthering and expanding the opportunities for First5 in North Wales.

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Sioned Enlli
North Wales

It has been a very exciting year for the First5 GPs in North Wales with the introduction of a new CPD group and resource specifically tailored for newly qualified GPs in North West Wales. I am also happy to report a promising future and an expansion of First5 in North Wales with Dr Belwood starting a new First5 group in the East.
Isolde Shore-Nye
Wales

The First5 team of South East, South West and North Wales faculties have been busy organising educational events and encouraging people to become involved in RCGP Wales. We work together to support GPs in the years from MRCGP to Revalidation.

Extending the range of CPD activities

The First5 team in Wales is an enthusiastic group and despite the fact that we cover a very wide geographic area there are close links between the faculties in South East, South West and North Wales.

We have developed groups based in all local health board areas to deliver CPD activities. Over the last 12 months events organised by First5 include Essential Knowledge Updates and small group learning featuring RCGP modules on heart failure and complaints. All of the smaller CPD groups have regular significant event and quality improvement activities to support Revalidation.

Building for the future in NHS Wales

First5 members have also been active in supporting the College’s lobbying campaign Put patients first: Back general practice including meeting Assembly Members and local health boards.

Members have also been instrumental in driving the development of an All Wales Mentoring Programme and supporting careers events to encourage students to become GPs, recognising the impact falling recruitment will particularly have in rural areas. With closer links now forged with AiT members and training schemes we are looking forward to building on all of this for the future in NHS Wales and beyond.

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Strengthening the links and opportunities across the region for all First5s

Both our busy lives and our wide geographic spread across the region might pose challenges to setting up a meaningful network. We are making in-roads in addressing this with the inaugural regional First5 conference in October and its theme of flourishing in general practice. The emphasis of the day is networking and learning new skills. There are talks from some inspiring speakers and workshops on themes as diverse as career planning to hypnotic language and restorative yoga! No doubt these educational events will help generate a real buzz and sense of belonging to the group of First5s.

I’m really keen to avoid letting this enthusiasm and sense of collective-ness fizzle out, only to be rekindled at the next meeting. That is where our planned website will come into its own. It will initially have a few key elements with the plan and potential to widen its scope. It will include a searchable discussion forum for all members to contribute to threads of particular interest to First5s regionally. It will also have a library section where members are able to upload and view key resources that other First5s have put together and found to be particularly useful.

Though I’ve not been part of the First5 initiative for long, it strikes me that it gives us a great opportunity to draw together a group that might otherwise have bumbled along relatively unaware, not only of one another, but maybe even the reasons or opportunities to meet. I’m already enjoying helping to facilitate this process and I’m sure we can put together a combination of regional events and online forums to allow people to participate on whatever level they want and whenever it suits. The fact that the events are planned to take place at locations atop some of the most gorgeous surfing beaches in the country can’t fail to boost morale and productivity!

✉✉
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Richard Pratt

I’m newly appointed to the open post as the Tamar regional representative for First5, covering the Devon and Cornwall area. Since taking up this post in June I’ve spent some time getting to grips with exactly what First5 is all about. The cornerstone and starting point would seem to be the building of a cohesive group for the sharing of expertise, support and fun.

I’m spending some time getting to grips with the Devon and Cornwall area, understanding the needs and interests of First5s in this region. I’m looking forward to getting involved and contributing to the success of the First5 network across the region.
Developing groups and networks for peer support and clinical development

Our annual careers fair was once again a great success this year seeing 137 attendees. This is a useful forum for young GPs to explore future career options from traditional partnership models to more flexible portfolio careers.

We have encouraged the formation of several First5 CPD groups around our region (Taunton, Wells, Bristol, Bath and Cheltenham) which help to provide both peer support and clinical development to young GPs who cannot access this elsewhere. In Severn we also offer local mentoring to newly qualified GPs for the first two years if they would like it. This year we will match 15 First5 GPs with mentors.

We are keen to support the development of networks both nationally and internationally and have recently provided ten bursaries for AiT and First5 members to attend the RCGP national conference and two bursaries for the Vasco De Gama WONCA Europe conference. These have been competitive and are highly valued by those lucky enough to receive them.

In order to help raise the profile of general practice at medical school we have also provided two bursaries to support electives in primary care for students at Bristol University.

Last year we started a Facebook group for local First5 and AiTs to share information and keep up-to-date with events. It is currently in its infancy but I would encourage anyone in Severn to join - the more members it has the better the group will work.

Supporting GPs at all stages of their careers

Of course the faculty doesn’t just support young GPs and we have developed new educational resources to help all of our GPs. This included a series of workshops including the very popular telephone triage workshop and a course covering medically unexplained symptoms.

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Successfully securing funding to deliver more member training

This year, with the help of external funding, we have been able to create various new CPD educational events across the region. The members have steered the choice of topics through regular feedback and surveys, helping to enhance networking and trust in the initiative. Most of my work in the last year has revolved around the five pillars of the First5 group that form its very core. I have been involved closely with the National First5 leads group, local First5 GP members and the faculty board to help create a series of innovative measures in the Midlands.

At the start of the year, in order to achieve the set task of organising more CPD events, I was instrumental in securing external funding of £6,000 from private sponsors. This has helped us to roll out six educational events across the year. We have also been running a pilot programme with a CPD evening event organised once every two months. These events provided lectures from GP leaders in chosen topics and included hot supper and coffee breaks hence allowing plenty of opportunity to network and learn in a supportive environment.

With the aim of reaching out to our grassroot members, I have been supporting the roll-out of CPD events across the region, from Stoke-on-Trent in the north to Worcester in the south.

Strengthening local partnerships to broaden training and networking opportunities

It has also been great to work more closely with mentorship schemes in the Midlands and to be an integral part of the successful bid of mentorship funding from the deanery. This bid has provided opportunities to create new enthusiastic mentors with the aim of eventually integrating them into the mentoring scheme in the region.

I have also had the opportunity to give presentations and share my views with some of the local VTS schemes, further extending our engagement with AiTs in the area. Presenting at the GP trainee leavers’ conference provided me with an opportunity to showcase the innovative ideas and supportive schemes run locally by the Midlands faculty, as well as promote the College work and network with the final year AiTs.

Working closely with the local educational lead in the faculty, we are looking to create various networking opportunities and CPD events in the year ahead. The aim is to deliver a further 12 CPD events over the coming months.

All of the above CPD initiatives have been possible with the fantastic administrative support from Hayley Dunn and have provided me with a terrific platform to further enhance and strengthen the First5 GP presence in our region.

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With our ongoing work to develop our relationship with our AiT and First5 members through growing communication channels and educational events we look forward to the opportunities and challenges which lie ahead!

First5 bursaries to support professional development

In May 2013 three Investec First5 travel bursaries were presented at the RCGP NI Annual Excellence in General Practice Awards to Dr Suzanne McQuillan, Dr Neil Herron and Dr Janet McIlfatrick. These bursaries will be used to enhance their knowledge by funding their attendance at educational courses or providing support for research projects. We are looking forward to hearing about the outcomes of their funded learning experiences.

An eclectic mix of training events to meet different needs

This year also saw the continuation of workshops and events specifically aimed at our AiT and First5 members. In November 2013 a workshop on telephone triage and identifying a sick child was held in Belfast for our AiT members, helping to develop their telephone consultation and communication skills.

We also held the annual ‘Life as a Locum’ event to give AiTs a taste of what life is like as a new locum GP which was presented by First5’s experienced GPs and practice managers. Particular thanks goes to the delegate who travelled from England just to be with us for this very popular event!

We have also held several computer classes this year to introduce our members to the software systems they will be using in different surgeries and making sure they have the tools for excellent patient data management.

For our First5s we held a half-day session on childhood feeding, domestic violence and sexual health with our First5 representative Dr Alex Murray acting as Master of Ceremonies.

A big thank you to our First5 members who continue to play an active and valuable role in the Members Forum, sharing information and opinions on our events, communications and member services.

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Supporting research, career development and high quality patient care

Each year we run a careers event for AiTs and First5s and this year’s was held in June with great success and much positive feedback from all who attended. We are also in the process of appointing a new education lead so that we can offer even better courses to AiTs, First5 and GPs. Information about all of our local courses is available via our faculty page on the RCGP website.

Keen to support research and audit the faculty has two research leads on its board, Dr Helen Carr and Dr Sarah Carrod. It is also supporting the Commit To Change initiative, a pilot project run by Surrey University and NHS Kingston CCG with the aim of helping people achieve health goals by making online commitment contracts. Participants either take part for free or give money to a charity of their choice if they fail to carry out their commitments.

The faculty has an annual audit prize, the John Lasserson Award, which is presented to a GP Registrar in recognition of a project or audit that has enhanced patient care and I would urge all local AiTs to apply for this.

Keeping in touch with our First5 members

Our newsletter helps to keep members informed and includes updates from the First5 and AiT representatives on local issues along with details of courses etc. We are also trying to compile a list of local First5 CPD groups so if you have a local group please let us know so we can help promote their activities. More information on local CPD groups is also available on our deanery website.

Please join the Facebook groups and follow us on Twitter as we regularly update these with local events and as your First5 representative I am keen to hear your ideas, concerns and expectations! Alternatively you can contact me directly or Sarah Wright, the faculty administrator.

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Jaspreet Dhillon
South West Thames

I am delighted to be the South West Thames First5 representative alongside Dr Mark Jopling and am also the Communication lead for the faculty. Keen to support local AiTs, First5 and GPs our faculty has over 1900 members covering the areas of Surrey, West Sussex and outer fringes of South West London. We work closely with HEKSS (formerly the KSS Deanery) and the local South East Thames faculty.
Courses, conferences and cricket!

The year has been an interesting one with our involvement in events at both a national level and closer to home. In October 2013 at the RCGP conference in Glasgow we ran a well-received seminar on commissioning chaired by Dr Steve Mowle. Locally we had a successful NLP course organised by a fellow First5 GP, Dr Naveed Akhtar. Of course social events were not forgotten and an enjoyable cricket match was held for local members.

Our Essex faculty board has been very supportive with allowing First5 and AiTs to contribute to the development of the year’s projects and our quarterly meetings have been held in Broomfield Hospital. As ever my only request to all First5 GPs is to get more engaged with the faculty. With our Facebook page and other various routes there are a number of ways you can contact us and get involved.

Last year we carried out an online survey among First5s in Essex to better understand their learning needs as College members and the results have formed the basis of my action plan for the year ahead. This includes developing a map of local CPD groups to serve as a signposting directory for new members, responding to requests for training for First5 GPs with particular focus on practice management and financial management and helping to create GP induction packs in partnership with other First5 leads.

As we move forward and deliver our plans in the coming year we will endeavour to ensure our activities reflect the five pillars on which the First5 ethos is based.

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Delivering successful events for professional development

We have continued to deliver the Lecture Series on a monthly basis in Teeside and Gateshead with both consultants and specialty trainees giving lectures on a variety of topics from ophthalmology to men’s health and Parkinsons to contraception. We are finding that often more than 50% of attendees are GP partners/sessional GPs and whilst their learning needs may be different to those of trainees the lectures continue to gain good feedback. Sessions on ENT and gastroenterology are being planned for the autumn.

The AiT Committee also arranged a Careers Day in May, aimed at ST3 trainees although some ST2 trainees and First5s also attended. The day offered practical information from various groups with representatives from a medical defence union, financial advisors, locums and out of hours providers as well as a neighbouring faculty GP lead taking part. Feedback was excellent with all trainees finding the workshops on CVs, interview skills and careers particularly useful. We have subsequently been working with the AiT lead in Cumbria as they are hoping to provide a similar event in that region - a testament to our success.

Helping to extend local and national networks

In a new post as First5 lead, Pippa has been looking into the development and use of an app to encourage trainees and GPs to continue to use the RCGP ePortfolio easily and effectively. A dedicated faculty Facebook page and a Twitter feed have been set up which will be regularly updated with AiT and First5 events and article links. With participation in these social media tools growing we hope that it will be a good forum for discussion and information about educational events and revalidation support and help to enhance the support that the RCGP offers newly qualified GPs in the region.

As many trainees in the North East feel it is too far to travel to London for post-qualification celebrations, we are also planning a special event in September as an opportunity for First5s to meet up and celebrate their achievements. These events are often a great opportunity to connect with other First5 GPs and extend professional networks as well as have a great time socially.

✉✉ first5@rcgp.org.uk

In the North East we work collaboratively to support both AiTs and First5s. We feel that they have similar learning needs and new GPs can often be quite daunted by the jump to First5, away from the comfort of peer support and a training practice. This year there has been much more of a push to use social media as a key tool to engage with members, particularly around educational opportunities.
Enhancing membership engagement by working in partnership

The Vale of Trent faculty has over 1,460 members of which 376 are First5 members. We represent AiTs and First5 members from the south of Derbyshire and most of Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. Under the leadership of our Chair, Christine Johnson, we have made a huge amount of progress in engaging with our members, increasing our membership by 36% in the last five years.

We work closely with the Nottingham Medical School General Practice Society and other key stakeholders such as the Local Medical Committee (LMC) and hold First5 educational events in Nottingham, Lincoln and Derby. In 2013 we organised a two-day masterclass in advanced consultation skills delivered by Roger Neighbour which was very well attended and received excellent feedback. We also organised a successful AiT leavers’ event with keynote GP speakers at different stages of their careers.

I have had the opportunity to attend the first meeting on care planning in Euston Square headquarters following which I wrote an article for our faculty newsletter. This was spotted by our Clinical Commissioning Group and we now plan to hold joint events to engage and educate more GPs about care planning.

Tackling national issues at a local level

As general practice faces a difficult climate, similar concerns are held in the faculty and we have tried to address these problems head on.

On the issue of recruitment and retention the faculty has been in discussion with Health Education East Midlands to promote East Midlands as a lucrative GP training region. Our next AGM planned in September entitled ‘Celebrating Local GPs who have worked abroad’ will be jointly hosted with the Nottingham Medical School GP Society. This will enable medical students to better connect with the faculty and see the opportunities arising from a career in general practice.

From a funding perspective the faculty has applied for additional funds to the College for First5 CPD events and also to engage with our neighbouring faculties by attending their faculty board meetings and AGMs.

Moving forward, and as a part of the Central and East England region, plans are being put in place to work more closely with our neighbouring faculties in Leicester and the Midlands. We are keen to start a formal mentorship programme which will help in engaging our First5 members with experienced GPs. We are also working in close association with the Primary Care Development Centre, a first of its kind, which will bring together expertise from the field of East Midlands Leadership Academy and Nottingham University Business School to help prepare and support our GPs of the future.

We are currently in the process of setting up courses for the Clinical Skills Assessment and the Applied Knowledge Test to help our budding GPs with this crucial and mandatory examination process. In these dynamic times, I am pleased that we have an enthusiastic and encouraging group of members and look forward to working more collaboratively with our neighbouring faculties.

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Developing First5 support through courses, conferences and collaboration

We offer excellent educational courses locally with upcoming courses including minor surgery, joint injections, out of hours’ issues and women’s health amongst many more. This is supplemented with our own faculty Facebook page where GPs share clinical posts and advertise any other relevant events in the area.

We have set up ten New Practitioner Groups (NPGs) and are in the process of setting up more. In an effort to promote NPGs, we now consider a nominal contribution to NPG meetings in exchange for the minutes of their meetings.

As to my own role, I have welcomed and continue to welcome questions from First5s over the year. We have begun to work more collaboratively with neighbouring faculties to exchange ideas and seek solutions on First5 issues. We now offer a bursary to First5s and AiTs to attend the WONCA conference which I know from personal experience is a rewarding opportunity.

We continue to hold our popular quarterly First5 events which include ‘What is First5?’, ‘CPD, appraisals and Revalidation’, ‘Introduction to negotiation skills’, ‘Preparing for and gaining employment’, ‘How to get what you want and what you’re worth’ and ‘How to survive as a sessional/locum GP’. One key positive outcome has been the setting up of NPGs on the back of the contacts made at these events.

From an administrative perspective, these past two years have been challenging which has had an impact on First5 progress. One of my main tasks has been to feed back to the faculty board on the importance of administrative support when setting up events and NPGs and I remain hopeful that this issue will be resolved.

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Amber Janjua
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire

The Beds and Herts faculty supports over 1,100 Members, Fellows, Associates and Associates in Training across the region. We are an open faculty and regularly have doctors, both trainees and qualified GPs, sitting in on faculty board meetings to observe. We really welcome such visitors and encourage them to contribute so that we can stay directly in touch with the needs of GPs in practice.
Thames Valley RCGP is committed to supporting its New GPs. Every year we run a hugely successful symposium with a variety of interesting, relevant workshops & inspiring keynote speakers. We also offer a hugely successful range of clinical and business courses. There is a strong focus on leadership and resilience and Thames Valley runs very popular leadership & management courses geared towards First5s.

As First5 leads we organise more intimate local CPD groups which are entirely free of charge to new GPs. These are based at local GP surgeries and hospitals and include First5, GP and consultant led sessions. The sessions led by First5 members include case based discussions, sharing prescribing errors and learning and focused topics. As well updating knowledge these small group sessions are an invaluable chance for First5s to support each other and share experiences, concerns and achievements.

It is astounding that 40% of women leave our profession by the age of 40. Research around the world (in particularly Australia), has shown that where retention was a problem, it was not really about money, but more about mentoring and a collegiate network. New GPs often find the first few years very tough and say they would value the support of a more experienced colleague, preferably from outside their working practice. To meet this need our provost, Ken Burch, has spear headed the launch of a mentoring/coaching scheme for new GPs in the Thames Valley region. We now have a group of experienced GPs offering First5 GPs free one-to-one goal driven support for up to a year. This has proved a popular idea throughout our area and the first group have recently been matched and are starting their sessions.

The Thames Valley Faculty also supports the development of new GPs with an interest in international general practice by awarding a yearly bursary to attend the WONCA European Conference open to AITs and First5s.

On a national level Shamila sits on the RCGP Quality Training Board as the First 5 representative. The main aim of this board is to oversee the development of policy and the maintenance of high standards in all areas of the College’s work relating to specialty training in general practice through its own work, subcommittees and representative groups. This has been a hugely insightful experience into the cogs of GP training and the considerable energy and expertise that goes into making GP training unparalleled.

A lot of work still needs to be done. The views and experiences of newly qualified GPs are critical to help shape the next generation of GPs.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve on the Faculty Board as First5 representatives, Shamila over the past 2 years and Suzie joining this year. We remain passionate about General Practice, despite the demands and challenges we are facing on a daily basis. We cannot help but feel that we still offer a standard and model of care that is unprecedented around the world. We hope that the First5 events and mentoring will help to fuel enthusiasm and great care by providing opportunities for continuing professional develop and support to First5s across Thames Valley.
Since commencing my First5 Faculty Lead role last year, I have set-up a steering group of fellow motivated First5 GPs that meet regularly to decide, design and help deliver on our key projects for First 5 GPs across our faculty. Our biggest challenge we face is the wide geographical dispersion of First5s across the large size of the faculty’s footprint. Our first task was therefore setting up an online platform for all our First5s that would allow them to network with one another in the virtual environment.

We have therefore created a dedicated NW England First5 Facebook site that is gaining increasing sign-ups from local First5s. Our aim is for users to post useful information that they wish to share with their peers including clinical resources, local job adverts, forthcoming courses, recommended reading etc. We have endeavoured to complement the online environment by also setting up local First5 CPD groups in each of the VTS training scheme areas in our region. We now have successful CPD groups running in Blackpool, Tameside and South Manchester with lead First5s identified and ready waiting to set-up groups in most other areas.

We are also in the process of finalising details for our inaugural NW England First 5 Conference to be held in November 2014 and which will be tied into the faculty’s AGM and annual dinner. This is event is being jointly organised with support from the North West Deanery. The event will allow First5s to come together for the day for a series of talks and workshops on topics relevant to their current practice with topics including finance affairs, medico-legal issues, commissioning and clinical education.

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The South London faculty has been at the forefront of the First5 movement since its inception. We have had an elected First5 lead from the very beginning, and First5-ers from South London have worked hard not only within the faculty but also within the vibrant group that is the pan-London AiT and First5 committee to raise the profile of the movement.

As lead I have been privileged to have Chris Ferdinand as a very able co-lead to help further the First5 movement in South London. We have been helped by a committed team of First5s both within the faculty and within the pan-London structure as well.

One of the things that have given us most satisfaction is to help set up and help newly minted First5s join self-directed learning groups (SDLGs). We have a pack that we have used to get new groups off the ground and have provided support to those willing to lead locally.

Other things we have done include:

- The inaugural RCGP First5 pan-London conference, where over 100 delegates attended.
- Annual Transition programmes to help AiTs become First5s, and address all their questions, fears and concerns. The latest programme, called ‘Life After GPVTS’, ran a few weeks ago and was extremely well received.
- Webinar trials to look at how First5s could meet online.
- Meet-and-greet events to welcome First5s, as well as AiTs and other members, and introduce them to the faculty.
- EASE—a programme of educational and social evenings, completely free to RCGP Members and AiTs — although this is for all members, both EASE tutors and attendees are overwhelming from the First5 cohort.

We have had focussed, organized feedback on multiple events from 100s of attendees, which have been very complimentary — after our latest event, over 95% have said they would recommend events to a friend or colleague.

We have also engaged with First5-ers in South London at various other events, such as local membership ceremonies.

We have in the past used a local map to try and help First5 GPs find and join local SDLGs – one of our future aims is to work regionally and perhaps nationally to have a single map that could simplify and catalyse this process further.

The First5-ers within the South London faculty look forward to engaging further with our cohort, and doing more in the near future. I will be there at the Pre-conference and the Annual Conference in Liverpool later this year, representing First5 in South London, and presenting a poster about our transition programme—see you there!

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Anirban Gupta
South London

Helping South London First5s find their mojo.