RCGP Northern Ireland
Annual Review
November 2013 - October 2014

RCGPNI Chair, Dr John O’Kelly, with the team from Maple Group Practice receiving their Quality Practice Award (QPA) at the Annual Excellence in General Practice Awards 2013.
Our vision

Excellence in general practice for patients worldwide.

Our values

The RCGP is the heart and voice of general practice.

- We promote the principles of holistic generalist care in partnership with other health professionals and our patients.
- We are committed to equitable access to, and delivery of, high-quality and effective primary health care for all.
- We are committed to the academic and practical development of high-quality general practice.

Our purpose and strategic aims

To promote the best possible quality of health and health care for the population by:

- setting the highest standards for general practice.
- ensuring that GPs have the best possible training.
- supporting GPs throughout their professional lives to deliver the best possible service.
- leading the profession and demonstrating the value of general practice.
- developing general practice as the foundation of effective and sustainable primary care worldwide.
- using resources efficiently to support our members and develop the College sustainably.
Introduction
This report provides a review of the Royal College of General Practitioners Northern Ireland’s activities for the period 2013-14.

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Dear Colleagues,

It is hard to believe that it is nearly a year since I became Chair of RCGPNI. It has proved an enjoyable and hectic period, much busier than I envisaged. It coincided with the launch of the College’s Campaign: Put Patients First; Back General Practice in November 2013 and, indeed, this has dominated the past year. Your Chair and members of Council are determined to highlight the chronic underfunding of general practice, increasing demands and significant manpower problems. Over the year, on your behalf, we have had meetings with the Health Minister, Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Health and Social Care Board (HSCB), General Practitioner’s Committee (GPC) of the BMA, various professional organisations and politicians (MLAs). Indeed we have met with the Health spokespersons of all the main parties. Visits have been arranged for MLAs to visit their local practices and this has proved very useful in both informing them about general practice and gaining their support. Judith Cochrane, Alliance MLA East Belfast, wrote a very supportive article in the Belfast Telegraph following our meetings.

Earlier this year the College commissioned Deloitte’s to produce a report on the under-investment in general practice throughout the United Kingdom and continues to work with Deloitte’s who will be producing further reports in the near future on how investment in general practice can produce significant benefits for patients. In Northern Ireland we commissioned an opinion poll from ComRes highlighting the public’s concerns for general practice. A petition supporting the Campaign is being presented to the four governments. Allied to all this has been increasing engagement with the media and, on your behalf, I have been putting our position to radio, TV and the print media. I have even taken to social media by setting up a twitter account (@JohnRCGPNI)!

One of the key areas that we will be involved with in the coming year is the Clinical Workforce Planning Committee - addressing the workforce crisis is a critical area that needs urgently to be addressed. Together with our colleagues in GPC we will be advocating for an increase in GP training and effective retention and returner schemes.

Transforming Your Care remains on the agenda but appears to be stalling. We continue to have serious concerns with its implementation and it is difficult to see how this will happen unless the concerns of general practice are addressed.

College activity in Northern Ireland continues at an impressive rate. We have an active educational agenda, including CPR and minor surgery sessions. The Quality Committee has been active with the Out of Hours Accreditation close to being completed. This has involved close co-operation with our colleagues in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) Faculty and the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP) and I would like to thank all involved, especially Dr David Johnston who has led for RCGPNI. The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) guidelines are due for publication at the end of the year. This sub-committee has been highly committed under the excellent chairmanship of Dr Mark Holloway and my thanks to him and his team. I am also delighted that Dr Keith McCollum has been appointed as Chair of the Quality Committee and, with his background in innovative quality improvement, I am confident that the committee will go from strength to strength. The
Patients in Practice committee have also been very active under their Chair, Dr David Keenan. A DVD and booklet have been produced on patient participation which was launched at the RCGP national conference in Liverpool - congratulations to all involved!

Over the past year we have maintained close relationships with our colleagues in the RCGP ROI Faculty, under the leadership of Dr Dermot Halpin and also look forward to further developing our relationship with the ICGP.

As Chair I have been representing RCGPNI at a national level and have appreciated support and guidance from central College and from my fellow Chairs Maureen Baker (UK Chair), Paul Myres (Wales) and John Gillies (Scotland). In particular, I wish to pay tribute to John as he steps down - I have particularly valued his wise words and advice and wish him all success in the future. I am also delighted to announce that Dr Shauna Fannin has recently been appointed as Deputy Chair Policy and I also wish to thank Dr Michael Scott for all his work and commitment as Deputy Chair Business & Finance as he steps down from this position.

Finally I must thank Northern Ireland Council Executive and the team in the Belfast Office under Jill Brennan, namely Bronagh, Ashleigh, Laura and Catherine, without whom this job would have been impossible. Their patience, guidance and advice has been much appreciated.

General Practice faces significant challenges over the next few years. It remains a great job and career and it is something I, with your support, will continue to fight for.
RCGP Northern Ireland Council Update

The RCGP Northern Ireland Council held its previous AGM on 11 November 2013. Members were updated on the College’s activities over the past year and a number of new NI Council members were elected and ratified.

During the period 2013/14 items noted for information or those under discussion and debate by NI Council are outlined in the following activity report. Details of RCGPNI Council members can be obtained by contacting the office (see contact details at foot of page).

National Campaign
Put Patients First: Back General Practice

In November 2013, the College launched ‘Put Patients First: Back General Practice’, a UK wide campaign calling for increased investment in general practice. In 2012/13, general practice received only 7.96% of the healthcare budget in Northern Ireland, despite carrying out over 90% of healthcare contacts. The campaign called on the four governments of the UK to increase spending on general practice to 11% by 2017 to address the crisis in general practice, including spiralling waiting lists and offering longer appointments to those who need it most.

Upon its launch, the campaign received support from local organisations within Northern Ireland, including Action Cancer, Aware Defeat Depression, Cancer Focus NI and The Rainbow Project.

Stakeholder Engagement
Since the launch of the campaign the RCGPNI has been working hard to raise awareness around the need for increased investment in general practice. A number of campaign meetings have taken place with senior decision makers, including the Health Minister, the Chief Medical Officer and the Health and Social Care Board (including the Director of Transforming Your Care, Ms Pamela McCreedy).

The College has also met with a number of politicians, including the Chair of the NI Assembly Health Committee, Maeve McLaughlin MLA, and Deputy Chair, Jim Wells MLA who recently took over the role of Health Minister in Northern Ireland. Other politicians have included Naomi Long MP, Ross Hussey MLA, Jo-Anne Dobson MLA, Patsy McGlone MLA, Fearghal McKinney MLA, Roy Beggs MLA, Judith Cochrane MLA and Kieran McCarthy MLA. The College has also held meetings with the Northern Ireland General Practitioners’ Committee and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health to discuss the campaign. Following our initial meetings with politicians, some have proven themselves to be strong advocates of
general practice. Various politicians have written letters in support of our campaign to the Health Minister, while others submitted written questions to the Health Minister through the NI Assembly.

NI Assembly
The College’s lobbying has proven effective in raising the profile of general practice within the NI Assembly. During a debate in the NI Assembly in June 2014 around Transforming Your Care, several politicians including Health Committee Chair, Maeve McLaughlin MLA, Pam Cameron MLA, Kieran McCarthy MLA, Roy Beggs MLA and Gordon Dunne MLA either mentioned the work of the RCGPNI or cited the ‘Put Patients First’ campaign statistics in calling for increased investment.

In June 2014, Mr Gordon Dunne MLA raised an adjournment debate about Bangor Health Centre. Several MLAs acknowledged the need for more GPs and increased investment in general practice, and the Minister for Employment and Learning, Stephen Farry MLA, addressed the Health Minister saying “The Minister is well aware of the campaign that is being run by the Royal College of General Practitioners, which looks to increase the share of our overall health budget that goes in through GP services to reflect the increased responsibility that may well be coming in the direction of GPs. On the one hand, GPs have major reservations about the implementation of Transforming Your Care, but, equally, they would be the first to recognise that, in many ways, they are the key to unlocking the full potential of that major strategic reform of the health service. So, it is important that we follow that with investment.”

Practice Visits
As part of the campaign, the RCGPNI has invited local MPs and MLAs to experience general practice ‘on the frontline’ by visiting a surgery within their constituency. Since November, various politicians have taken the opportunity to visit a local practice, including the previous Health Minister, Edwin Poots MLA, the Minister’s Assembly Private Secretary, Alex Easton MLA, Gordon Dunne MLA, Judith Cochrane MLA, Ross Hussey MLA, Mervyn Storey MLA, Kieran McCarthy MLA and Phil Flanagan MLA. In July, the Chair the NI Assembly Health Committee, Maeve McLaughlin MLA, took the time to visit Dr John O’Kelly’s practice in Derry/Londonderry and spent the day talking to GPs, practice staff and patients to gain a greater understanding of their views around primary care. In October, Pam Cameron MLA visited our Executive Member for Membership, Dr Philip Lusty’s, practice in Templepatrick. Ms Cameron informed the RCGPNI that she was very impressed by her visit and would write to the Health Minister to encourage him to arrange a visit to the practice before the end of 2014, if possible.

These visits have proven particularly effective in highlighting the essential care which GPs deliver for their patients. Gordon Dunne MLA visited a practice in Bangor Health Centre and it had such an impact that he returned for a second visit with the Health Minister and the Assembly Private Secretary. During a discussion at the NI Assembly Health Committee...
in February, Mr Dunne informed other Committee members that he recently visited his local practice: “I spent about an hour and a half with a local GP in Bangor and had a very useful meeting. I came away convinced that GPs have a heavy workload having gone in thinking that they did not, to be honest.” Referring to Transforming Your Care, he continued: “I feel that they will need additional resources in order to take on this task.”

Other MLAs issued press releases about their visit in which they praised the work of GPs, including the Alliance Party’s Judith Cochrane MLA and Ulster Unionist Party MLA Ross Hussey, in which he described GPs as the backbone of our health service.

**Media**

RCGPNI has continued to work with the media to promote general practice and to use it as a platform to promote the ‘Put Patients First’ campaign. Over the past year, the College has sought to build relationships with journalists by meeting with the Health Correspondent from the Belfast Telegraph and also the Editor of the NI Healthcare Review magazine. The College’s campaign has also received attention from the press, and was covered on the day of its launch by the Belfast Telegraph in an article which highlighted that GP’s fund share was the ‘lowest on record.’ In December, the paper also ran a story highlighting how waiting times to see a GP would only increase without urgent investment.

In February, the RCGPNI Chair, Dr John O’Kelly, participated in a live interview during the TalkBack show on BBC Radio Ulster alongside the NIGPC Chair, Dr Tom Black, to discuss how funding for general practice had fallen by 17% in real terms over the past few years and how OOH had seen an increase in attendances, compiling pressure on GPs. In the same month, Dr O’Kelly contributed to the BBC 1’s ‘The Nolan Show’ to discuss the growing crisis in Emergency Departments.

In April, the RCGPNI launched the results of an opinion poll which found that 63% of the public believed that GP workloads in Northern Ireland were a threat to the level of care provided. The story was covered by the Belfast Telegraph, the Irish Times, the News Letter, BBC Good Morning Ulster, BBC Radio Foyle and Drive 105.

In May, the Patient and Client Council launched its report on ‘Access to GP services.’ The College used the opportunity to warn that although 26.5% of patients surveyed were dissatisfied with the access they had to their GP, this situation was only set to get worse without the vital funding which the profession needs. The RCGPNI Chair, Dr John O’Kelly, was interviewed by the BBC on both TV and Radio, Citybeat, Cool FM and Downtown radio. The story was covered by the Belfast Telegraph, UTV, OnMedica, Health Canal and Pulse.

In October, the College issued a statement which was covered on p.2 of the Belfast Telegraph which warned that practices would be under threat of closure unless the workforce crisis was urgently addressed. Dr O’Kelly also highlighted that Northern Ireland had the oldest GP population and the lowest GP/patient ratio in the UK.

**Petition**

As part of the campaign, a petition was launched online and hard copies were sent to all practices across the province. The College supported our members in ensuring its wide circulation, with RCGPNI staff members assisting in gathering signatures in Belfast. We were
delighted that approximately 16,000 signatures were collected across Northern Ireland and the College hopes to present these figures to Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister over the coming months.

Influencing Local Policy Issues

RCGPNI has continued to liaise closely with politicians and key healthcare stakeholders in Northern Ireland over the past year to discuss local policy issues. Dr John O’Kelly met with the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and a number of key stakeholders within the province including the new Permanent Secretary, Mr Richard Pengelly, the Chief Medical Officer, Dr Michael McBride, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Dr Paddy Woods, the Health and Social Care Board to ensure that the College had a central role in influencing policy developments.

These have included:

Transforming Your Care
The College organised a series of meetings with senior decision makers over the past year to highlight our members’ concerns around the implementation of Transforming Your Care. The pace of progress of the implementation of Transforming Your Care had been slower than expected.

The RCGPNI Chair, Dr John O’Kelly, has been consistently highlighting that funding as part of TYC seemed to be lagging behind the work, as the Health and Social Care Trusts were using the reform programme to push more work into a community setting. This is placing GPs under increasing stress and strain. He has also been pressing for the need for funding for primary care to be ring-fenced to prevent its absorption into secondary care.

Out of Hours
The RCGPNI previously responded to the Out Of Hours (OOH) Consultation on the Strategic Framework and the College has continued to raise concerns around OOH to the Chief Medical Officer and the Health and Social Care Board. GP OOH has experienced an 18% increase in consultations over the past five years, compared to Emergency Departments which have seen a 2% reduction in the same period. The College has been stressing that this is contrary to the perception that A&Es are under pressure due to increasing demand. Dr O’Kelly continues to emphasise that a good learning environment is needed to encourage younger GPs to work in OOH.

Extended GP Training
Over the past year, the College has continued to highlight the need for extended GP training, advising that the objectives set out in the educational case in support of Extended GP Training (EGPT) are in close alignment with many of the objectives outlined in Transforming Your Care. Although the educational case for extending training to 4 years has been broadly accepted by the four governments across the UK, the issue of funding and the implications for clinical workforce planning remains a concern.
At a meeting with the Health Minister, Edwin Poots MLA, in November 2013, Dr O’Kelly noted that the College hoped that the additional year of training would be innovative and creative, allowing GPs to learn more about mental health, child health and Out of Hours. The Minister advised that he supported Professor David Greenaway’s recommendations, however he acknowledged that agreement was needed from the other UK governments and any proposed changes would need to be at as low a cost as possible.

**Returners**

The College has continued to highlight the issue of GPs wishing to return to work in Northern Ireland after a period of absence. The matter has been raised with the Health Minister, the Health and Social Care Board and the Chief Medical Officer.

**Revalidation**

Revalidation in Northern Ireland continues to go well, with the College liaising closely with NIMDTA and the Health and Social Care Board.

In September 2014 the College’s online Revalidation e-portfolio (ReP) became externally hosted by Clarity Informatics, in a College wide change. The hope is that this improved platform will provide a smoother and more efficient service for members.

**Workforce planning**

Dr John O’Kelly attended the GP Workforce Planning meeting, which also included representatives from the Health and Social Care Board, the NIGPC and the Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA). The College understands that the initial proposal is currently being drafted. It was agreed that the number of GP trainees should be increased to 85, which would enable the profession to stand still. Other issues being examined by the GP Workforce group include encouraging recruitment into General Practice, the feminisation of the workplace and work/life balance.

**Consultation responses**

RCGPNI responded to a number of RCGP led and local consultations throughout 2013/14 including:

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<tr>
<th>Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS)</th>
<th>Making it better through pharmacy in the community: Consultation on proposals for a Five Year Strategy for Pharmacy in the Community</th>
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<td>DHSSPS</td>
<td>Health and Social Care Information - Caring for You and Your Information</td>
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Party Conferences
RCGPNI attended key party political conferences during the year, including the Ulster Unionist Party, the Democratic Unionist Party, the Social Democratic and Labour Party and the Alliance Party. This provided the College with the opportunity to meet with their health spokespeople as well as other stakeholders within the healthcare sector to promote the views and concerns of our members.

Strategy Working Parties

Royal College of General Practitioners NI/NI General Practitioners Committee
The Royal College of General Practitioners NI/NI General Practitioners Committee have continued to meet regularly to discuss areas of mutual interest including TYC, OOH, extended GP training, workforce planning, GP waiting times and the GMS contract. The two organisations have continued to support each other on areas of concern to members.

Quality concerns around the privatisation of referrals
The RCGPNI and NIGPC met with the Health Minister on 26 November to discuss quality concerns around the privatisation of referrals. However, both organisations sent a co-signed letter to the Minister’s office in March to highlight that they felt their concerns had not been adequately addressed and that the service to patients had deteriorated since November. A meeting was then arranged in June between the RCGPNI, NIGPC, the Department of Health, Social Services and the Health and Care Board to discuss how the issues raised could be resolved.

On the back of the joint work between the RCGPNI and NIGPC, it was agreed that the Department would agree to a change in policy with regard to GPs being able to identify which patients would not be suitable for referral to the private sector, and that a six month trial and evaluation would take place. In relation to the need for triage prior to referral, the Department agreed on the need to look at possible solutions. They noted that this was an operational issue which needed to be addressed by the Health and Social Care Trusts.

Leadership Training
The NIGPC organised leadership training in September 2014 which was attended by RCGPNI representatives. A second joint leadership training day will hopefully be organised in 2015.

Following discussion with Queens University Belfast, RCGPNI have agreed to recruit a undergraduate Medical Champion from the RCGPNI membership to offer advice to Medical students and promote general practice as a career in order to help establish the GP leaders of the future.

Federations
The NIGPC, with the support of RCGPNI, have been developing three pilot federations across the province to test concepts and determine the best model to recommend. In response to the health and care needs of the local populations, the development of federations would have the potential to deliver effective, efficient and appropriate services.
The concept of federations have received support from the Chief Medical Officer and officials within the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Health and Social Care Board.

**Campaigns**
The RCGPNI and the NIGPC continue to work together to promote the ‘Put Patients First: Back General Practice’ and the ‘Your GP Cares’ campaign among both our members and key decision makers.

**Representatives on Committees and Strategy Working Parties**
RCGPNI is actively represented on numerous committees and strategy working parties hosted by the College and a variety of local government and health related bodies. During the past year these have included, among others:

- RCGP Rural Forum
- RCGP Scientific Foundation Board
- RCGP Editorial Board of Emma’s diary
- RCGP Clinical Workforce Group
- RCGP Devolved Council Chairs Committee
- RCGP Council
- RCGP Trustee Board
- RCGP First 5 Clinical Leads
- RCGP Research Ready Advisory and RCGP/PCRN Research Ready Steering Groups
- RCGP Research Paper of the Year Panel
- RCGP Task & Finish Group
- RCGP Child Safeguarding
- RCGP Equality & Diversity Advisory Group
- NIMDTA Educational Consortium
- NIMDTA Central Board of Management
- NIMDTA GP Specialty Training Committee
- NI DHSSPS Improving Support for People with Long Term Conditions
- NI DHSSPS Medicines Optimisation Steering Group
- NI DHSSPS Domestic Violence Regional Strategy Group
- NI DHSSPS Confidence in Care Steering Group
- NI DHSSPS Regional Respiratory Framework
- NI DHSSPS UK Rare Disease Strategy
- NI DHSSPS Group B streptococcal Steering Group
- NI DHSSPS Treatment & Support Advisory Committee
- NI DHSSPS Pharmaceutical Community Strategy Steering Group
- NI Public Health Agency Implementation of Skin Cancer Prevention Strategy and Action Plan
- NI Public Health Agency Childhood Vaccination and Immunisation Group
- NI Public Health Agency Medical Workforce Planning Subgroup on Paediatrics
- NI Public Health Agency Clinical Workforce Planning Group
- NI Public Health Agency Scientific Conference Planning Group
- NI HSCB Formulary Implementation Steering Group
- NI HSCB Local Advisory and Investigative Panel
Joint Liaisons

In addition to its relationship with the General Practitioners Committee/British Medical Association, the College in Northern Ireland has continued to develop its relationships with other professional bodies in the province. Throughout the year a number of discussions, meetings and events have taken place in conjunction with the following organisations:

- General Medical Council (GMC) Northern Ireland
- Patient and Client Council (PCC)
- Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
- Marie Curie Cancer Care
- Republic of Ireland Faculty
- The Irish College of General Practitioners
- Carers Trust
- Carers NI
- Royal College of Midwives
- Public Health Agency (PHA) Conference – Diversity
- Queen’s University Belfast
- Autism NI

RCGP Patient Involvement

RCGPNI Patients in Practice Group (PiP) consists of 3 GPs and 8 lay members who work on a number of local projects as well as promoting patient involvement locally. The group, Chaired by Dr David Keenan (lay representative), meet 4 times per annum.

Promotion of Patient Involvement Groups

The PiP Group continues to be engaged in the promotion of Patient Participation Groups (PPGs) across Northern Ireland. In March 2014, the Patients in Practice Group secured funding from the Public Health Agency and the Health and Social Care Board to develop a film encouraging public and patient involvement in General Practice. Filming took place at Ballymoney Health Centre, Ballymoney and Haughton Thornley Medical Centre, Manchester, which allowed us to promote the benefits of Patient Participation Groups’s (PPG) throughout the UK. The film was launched at RCGP Annual Conference in Liverpool during the Patient in Practice Group session entitled: Patient Participation in Primary Care: A Future Requirement Towards a Primary Service of Excellence. The film was very well
received and delegates have been in contact to receive hard copies of this film. It is also worth noting that this session was the first all patient run session at RCGP Annual Conference. The film will be disseminated to practices throughout Northern Ireland accompanied by the newly revised RCGPNI Patient Participation booklet.

**Building Relationships with Key Stakeholders**

The PiP Group have met with a number of healthcare organisations over the past year to ensure that the patient voice is continuously being heard. In December, the Chair, Dr David Keenan, met with the Patient and Client Council to discuss opportunities for collaborative working.

In January, Dr David Keenan met with Mr Martin Hayes (Integrated Care Partnership Project Director) and Ms Sinead Malone (Regional Integrated Care Partnership Business Manager) to discuss how Integrated Care Partnerships were promoting patient involvement.

The PiP Group have also invited external stakeholders to their meetings. Over the past year, they have received presentations from the Health and Social Care Board on patient involvement and also the Patient and Client Council, who spoke on their research findings on the ‘Access to GP Services’ report.

The patient group have also been involved in supporting the College’s ‘Put Patients First: Back General Practice’ campaign. In May, Dr Keenan accompanied the RCGPNI Chair to campaign meetings with the Alliance Party’s health spokesperson, Mr Kieran McCarthy MLA, and to a separate meeting with Alliance’s Judith Cochrane MLA. Members also assisted in promoting the campaign petition. In October, the Deputy Chair, Mr Michael Holden, accompanied the RCGPNI Policy & Public Affairs Officer to an MLA Practice Visit undertaken by DUP MLA and Health Committee member, Ms Pam Cameron, to Templepatrick Surgery.

**Working with the Devolved Nations**

The Group continues to engage with its counterparts in Scotland and Wales as well as the RCGP Patient Partnership Group based at College headquarters in London. This engagement largely takes the form of a quarterly teleconference, which provides the opportunity for information sharing and collaboration on joint initiatives, such as the conference.

**Consultation Responses**

The PiP Group also contributed to the RCGPNI’s response to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety consultation entitled ‘Caring for You and Your Information.’
Annual Excellence in General Practice Awards Promoting Excellence
Members of the Patients in Practice group and the Quality Committee judged the GP of the Year Award nominations, shortlisting the top nominations and making the final decision on the final 3 Awards recipients. The GP of the Year Award continues to attract significant levels of interest and the RCGPNI are thankful to the PiP Group and the Quality Committee for their continued help and input.

Initiatives and Projects

End of Life Care
The RCGPNI End of Life Care Working Group was made up of a number of GPs and key stakeholders involved in the delivery of end of life care to patients in Northern Ireland. The project to develop a Patient Passport, funded by the Public Health Agency, came to a close with the final workshop to launch the Passport, Patient Guidance and Project Report in January 2014. The Chair of the Group, Professor Max Watson, and the Clinical Lead for the Patient Passport project, Dr Aine Abbott, both spoke at the launch event as well as colleagues from the Rare Disease Plan and Barnardos. The audience also heard from Mr Michael Holden, Vice Chair of PiP, also spoke on the usefulness of the Patient Passport in the management of his own personal illness and from Lesley McGrann who updated the audience on the Key Information Summary initiative.

The launch event brought together many key stakeholders who had an interest in the work of the End of Life Care Group and the Passport itself. The Passport and all documents relating to the project can be found on the RCGP website in the Northern Ireland Council section.

RCGPNI Quality Programme and Initiatives
The RCGPNI Quality Committee is constituted of 3 GPs, 2 Practice Managers, 2 Practice Nurses and a lay representative, who work on a number of local projects as well as promoting the quality initiatives of the College locally. The committee, Chaired by Dr Keith McCollum, meets 4 times per annum.

Out of Hours Accreditation Programme with the Irish College of GPs (ICGP)
RCGPNI Council and the Irish College of General Practitioners Executive approved joint funding for this project at the start of 2013 which allowed both organisations to develop an Accreditation Programme for Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to a stage at which it could be piloted. A Service Level Agreement has been approved between the two parties and the planned accreditation programme will be self funding.

The RCGPNI steering group representatives are Dr David Johnston, Dr John O’Kelly, Dr Turlough Tracey, Ms Jackie Barr and Mr Mark Nolan. Dr Seamus Clarke is the RCGP ROI Faculty representative and the ICGP is represented by Dr Mick Tangney, Dr Margaret O’Riordan, Dr Sheila Rochford and Dr Martin Coyne.

The OOH Assessors are currently being recruited and a full training programme for them is being developed.
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Guidelines
RCGPNI Council asked the NI Quality Committee to seek funding and subsequently develop guidelines for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender patients in an effort to ensure that practices in Northern Ireland were inclusive and welcoming to all patients regardless of sexual or gender orientation. Following a successful funding bid to the Public Health Agency the Quality Committee established the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) working group to develop the guidelines.

Following a period of significant stakeholder engagement the working group made an informed decision to separate the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) guidelines from the Trans* guidelines to ensure patient needs could be explored in the most appropriate manner. The main sections featured in the LGB guidelines are: Terminology, Inclusive Clinical Environment, GP Consultation Issues, Social Issues, Mental Health, Drugs, Alcohol and Smoking, Health Screening, Sexual Health, Sources of information for GP’s and Patients. A portion of these section will be featured in the Tran* guidelines, but this document will be more specialised when it comes to Trans* specific issues. The documents are now in their final stages and following a further consultation process it is hoped that they will be launched in January 2015. Following the launch both sets of guidelines will be disseminated to all GP practices in Northern Ireland.

RCGP Quality Programmes
One practice in Northern Ireland is currently completing their mQPA programme, but no further practices are being enrolled. The RCGPNI Quality Committee are awaiting guidance from the newly established RCGP Quality Programme Board in relation to the future development and promotion of the Colleges quality awards.

Supporting Members

Members’ Forum
The Members Forum was designed to bring together representatives from across the membership spectrum in Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland to support members and act as the members’ voice. The primary aim of the Members’ Forum is to ensure that RCGPNI is engaged in open dialogue with its members so that it can be responsive to their needs.

The Forum is chaired by Executive Member for Membership, Dr Philip Lusty. In 2014 it was agreed to invite the newly appointed Educational leads, AiT and First5 representatives to attend Members Forum meetings to ensure their valuable input to College programming.

The Members Forum met in March, June and September 2014, including attendees from all levels of membership. The group continues to go from strength to strength.

The group conducted their own local survey of members, to better inform RCGPNI about members’ educational and professional needs. The group have been directly involved in the creation of several CPD events and conferences, sharing information on topics, speakers and areas of interest.
The group have been active in supporting the ‘Put Patients First: Back General Practice’ campaign, including undertaking practice visits, sharing ideas and promoting the Northern Ireland petition. The group are also collating a response to the 2014/2015 Campaign and policy priorities survey.

Other areas the group have been actively involved in discussing and supporting include the Revalidation e-portfolio (ReP), the Annual Excellence in General Practice Awards and member pricing for events.

**New Members Ceremony**
The Members Forum, supported by RCGPNI Council and the College in London, were supportive of the creation of an inaugural New Members Ceremony in Northern Ireland. Funding has now been secured and it is planned to run the ceremony in October 2015 in conjunction with the Annual Excellence in General Practice Awards to create a day of celebration for general practice.

**Associates in Training (AiTs)**
Dr Steven Kinnear was ratified as the RCGPNI AiT representative for 2013/2014 in November 2013. Dr Kinnear has assisted with the delivery of AiT events and the AiT annual report.

Following a further grant from the College in respect of developing AiT membership in NI, a series of events were held in 2013/2014. The events were agreed as a result of discussions with our AiT representative, members and the Members’ Forum. In November 2013, RCGPNI held a Telephone Triage and Identifying Sick Children workshop, with circa 40 in attendance. In March 2014, the popular ‘Life as a Locum’ event was staged, again with circa 40 in attendance. The event, which outlines what can be expected when finishing training and beginning work as a locum, is a staple of the RCGPNI calendar.

Two computer workshops were also held in June and August with over 40 in attendance across the two days. The workshop aims to help AiTs familiarise themselves with computer packages encountered in surgeries across Northern Ireland. An evening training session on CV and presentation skills is scheduled for November 2014.

**‘First5’**
Dr Alexander Murray was ratified as the RCGPNI ‘First5’ representative in February 2014. Dr Murray has assisted with opening and programming First5 events and the annual First5 report.

RCGPNI held its third educational event targeted specifically at ‘First5’ members in March 2014 in Belfast on the topics of Sexual Health, Problems in Pregnancy and Domestic Violence, in line with the Colleges clinical priorities for 2013/2014. Feedback on the event was positive and the College hopes to run another First5 event in March 2015, on a topic informed by the First5 members and Members’ Forum.
Travel Bursary
RCGPNI is delighted that following the success of the 2012/2013 Investec travel bursary we were able to provide it again for 2013/2014. The bursary was presented at the Annual Excellence in General Practice Awards in May 2014 and the recipients were Dr Neil Herron, Dr Suzanne McQuillan and Dr Janet McIlfatrick. The Bursary is available to help First 5 members with costs when undertaking educational training and is a real benefit to our members.

Fellowship Programme
The Fellowship Advisory Panel was constituted to actively promote Fellowship to RCGPNI members and ensure a wider distribution of Fellows throughout the College, to support members through the process and to be aware of and contribute to UK wide Fellowship and RCGP Council Fellowship Committee. The Panel is chaired by RCGPNI Chair Dr John O’Kelly. In September 2014, a number of our Fellowship Advisory Panel members shared written pieces on their experience of becoming a Fellow as part of a wider Fellowship awareness drive.

Since November 2013, a total of 7 Northern Ireland members have been approved for Fellowship with several other nominations being progressed. It is a pleasure to see the work of our members recognised and the College is keen to build on the success of this programme and would urge members to get in touch with the office if they would like to nominate a colleague for this prestigious accolade.

Support for Practice Based Staff
The Practice Managers’ Forum Google Group is a valuable tool for information sharing and continues to grow in size with roughly 250 members, which accounts for over 65% of the practice managers in the province.

RCGPNI continues to support the Practice Managers’ Educational Programme and a full day seminar on the Quality Outcomes Framework (QOF) was held in June 2014 in the Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown. The training was provided by Insight solutions and was attended by over 40 practice staff.

The next planned event is ‘Protecting your Practice’, a session on child protection, employment law and complaints handling open to both GPs and Practice staff to be held in early November 2014.
Continuing Professional Development
In addition to the College’s AiT, ‘First5’ and Practice Managers’ programme of events, we put together an extensive programme of educational events for 2013/14, including RCGPNI conferences, workshops and seminars across Northern Ireland.

These have been widely supported by our members and made possible through the continuing support of our sponsors. The series of events has been informed by member feedback through our surveys and previous events, the Members’ Forum and our newly appointed Educational Leads. Dr Raymond Ringland and Peter Ryan were appointed in early March 2014, in a voluntary capacity, to provide advice and support on our events and feed in to the overall quality assurance of our CPD programme. So far we have delivered:

• 6 CPR classes
• Introductory and Advanced Joint Injection classes
• 2 day Minor Surgery Course
• Paediatrics Update Day
• Protecting Your Practice

A number of additional events are planned for the first quarter of 2015 including a Paperlight Accreditation workshop, Problems in Pregnancy workshop and further AiT and ‘First5’ events. For details on upcoming events, to give any feedback or to assist with events programming for 2015/2016 please contact the office.

Publications

Controlled Drugs Register
The Controlled Drugs Register is still available to purchase via the RCGPNI office or through the college bookshop on the website.

NI Update
NI Update, the monthly, all member bulletin is now delivered online. It continues to provide a regular update on College activity in Northern Ireland, including the ‘Put Patient’s First: Back General Practice’ campaign and information on forthcoming events. In addition, it now includes a regular blog from the Northern Ireland College Chair, Dr John O’Kelly. Readership levels continue to increase and we look forward to building on this. We are always on the look out for contributors, so if you would like to be involved please contact the office.

Promoting Excellence

Annual Excellence in General Practice Awards 2014
The Royal College of General Practitioners Northern Ireland held its twelfth annual awards evening at the Galgorm Resort and Spa in Antrim in May 2014.

Dr John O’Kelly, Chair of the Royal College of General Practitioners NI, welcomed nearly 150 guests, including the former Deputy Chair of the NI Assembly Health Committee and
recently appointed Health Minister, Mr Jim Wells MLA, RCGP Vice Chair, External Affairs, Dr Tim Ballard, and the Chief Medical Officer, Dr Michael McBride. There were also representatives from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, the British Medical Association, the General Medical Council, friends and colleagues from the Republic of Ireland, GPs, practice teams and patients to help celebrate general practice.

Awards presented on the evening included the prestigious GP of the Year Award, won by Dr Claire Sweeney from Cityview Medical in Derry/Londonderry. General Practice Team of the Year was won by Dr Crawford and Partners, Bangor and the newly established Innovation in General Practice was won by Dr Keith McCollum and the team at Willowbank Surgery, Keady. Other Awards presented on the evening include a Quality Practice Award for Maple Group Practice, Lisnaskea and the ‘Dr Robin Harland Memorial Award’ for undergraduate teaching awarded to Dr Patrick Sharkey of Carryduff Surgery. Three Investec Travel Bursaries and College Fellowships were also awarded.

An enjoyable evening was had by all with dinner, dancing and celebration. We are currently planning our 2015 Awards ceremony and look forward to welcoming nominations in due course.

Planning for the Future

2022 Strategic Plan
The College continues to promote the strategy laid out within the 2022 Vision document promoting general practice a driving force in shaping and delivering change in primary care and realising the goals of providing better care for patients and a healthier population.

Devolved Council Planning and Development
Ms Jill Brennan, Manager RCGP NI & ROI, attended a series of meetings throughout the year with the other devolved nations to discuss areas of planning, development and implementation.

RCGPNI Operational Plan
The RCGPNI Operational Plan for 2013/14 was ratified by NI Council in February 2014. The implementation of this plan is monitored at the quarterly NI Council Executive Committee and NI Council meetings. Development of next years plan is underway.

RCGP Republic of Ireland Faculty
RCGP offices north and south of the border continue to work together to promote educational events and information to their members where appropriate. Ms Jill Brennan attended the Republic of Ireland AGM in Galway, to promote the work of the College to members, and the annual Winter Meeting in Dublin. The Faculty is also represented on the Out of Hours Accreditation Programme steering group for the Republic of Ireland and the Members Forum.
Financial Report for the Year 2013/14 (as at 31 March 2014)

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<tr>
<th>NI Council</th>
<th>April 2013 – March 2014 Actual</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Council expenditure</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Opening Balance</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th>Closing Balance</th>
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<td>(100)</td>
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<td>(13,191)</td>
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<td>Restricted** Funds</td>
<td>(37046)</td>
<td>(21,266)</td>
<td>44,594</td>
<td>(13,718)</td>
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</table>

*Designated Funds – Accumulated funds allocated for the use of membership development in NI
**Restricted Funds – External funding restricted for use on specified projects
Acknowledgements

RCGP Northern Ireland would like to thank all those members who have supported us throughout the year, giving their time generously to support initiatives for membership and continuing professional development. We would also like to thank members who have assisted the College in responding to consultations and in representing the College on numerous committees and at various meetings.

The College would also like to acknowledge the financial support which it continues to receive from companies and statutory bodies without which many of our activities would not be possible. Over the past year these have included:

- A.Menarini Pharma UK
- Bridge Medical Specialist Accountants
- Dermal Laboratories
- Ferring Pharmaceuticals LTD
- Galderma
- GlaxoSmithKline
- Health and Social Care Board
- Investec Wealth & Investment Ltd
- MPS
- Pfizer
- Public Health Agency
- Wesleyan Medical Sickness
The RCGPNI Team
The staff in the Belfast office would be happy to hear from you and if you have any queries or would like more information on any areas of our work please contact us.

The RCGP NI team is made up off:
Jill Brennan – RCGP NI & ROI Manager who oversees the work of the College in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland

Bronagh McCann – RCGP NI Council Administrator, responsible for:
- RCGP NI Council
- RCGP NI Executive
- RCGP NI Finances
- RCGP NI Representatives on Committees

Ashleigh Simpson – Policy & Public Affairs Officer, responsible for:
- Policy
- Campaign
- Political Engagement
- Consultations
- Media

Catherine Tumelty – Membership & Events Administrator, responsible for:
- LGB&/T Project
- Events
- PiP Group
- PiP DVD Project
- Quality Committee
- OOH Accreditation

Laura Orr – Membership & Events Administrator, responsible for:
- Members Forum
- Fellowship
- Events
- Practice Managers Forum
- e-bulletin
- RCGP NI website
The Royal College of General Practitioners (Northern Ireland) is a network of over 1285 family doctors working to improve care for patients. We work to encourage and maintain the highest standards of general medical practice and act as the voice of GPs on education, training, research and clinical standards.

Royal College of General Practitioners (Northern Ireland)
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Website: www.rcgp.org.uk/ni

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