Information for individuals considering applying for membership of P3.

Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP)

Royal College of General Practitioners Scotland (RCGP Scotland) is a professional organisation for general practitioners in Scotland. Part of a wider UK organisation, with headquarters in London, the Scottish office has grown from strength to strength since devolution. In addition to our Edinburgh office in Queen Street, we have five regional offices, known as Faculties, across Scotland.

RCGP Scotland is a network of over 5000 family doctors working to improve patient care. We work to encourage the highest standards of general practice and we act as the voice of GPs on education, research and clinical standards.

RCGP Scotland is engaged in a number of important projects, which focus on improving the quality of patient care through setting guidelines, disseminating good practice, and working towards improving health inequalities in Scotland. We also provide training and education for GPs, encouraging young doctors to join the profession and contributing to continued professional development. In addition, the College is engaged with key policy makers, the press and the Scottish Parliament by raising, commenting on and influencing issues that affect general practice in Scotland.

Patient Partnership in Practice

The RCGP has, for a number of years, held an interest in receiving public input into the development of its policy and decision-making processes. This is reflected in the growing instances of public representation on College working groups and the development of the Patient Liaison Group (PLG) at UK level in 1983 and the Scottish Patient Liaison Group (SPLG) in 1999, following devolution.
The initial purpose of SPLG was to provide the College in Scotland with access to the patient viewpoint, as well as to build on the success of PLG. Initially, the group was limited to five patient representatives and three GPs. Lay membership of the group has grown since then to a total of 10 lay representatives aged 18 or over.

Re-focusing of P3 in 2014 and beyond

Renamed ‘Patient Partnership in Practice’ (P3), the group’s focus has shifted towards specific outputs, strategic recommendations, championing the use of patient groups in General Practice and responding to consultations.

The principle aims of P3 are to:

1. Develop ideas and lead activities that encourage GPs to work in partnership most effectively with patients and the public.
3. Work together as a team to ensure that the activities of the College respond to patient needs.

Opportunities with P3

P3 is a dynamic working group of RCGP Scotland which meets to gather views from the public on the College’s contribution to the primary care agenda. It is also a sub-group of Scottish Council which is the College’s key governance committee. The Chair of P3 attends meetings of Scottish Council as an observer, provides updates to members of Council and feeds back relevant information to P3.

Membership of P3 comprises 8 lay and 3 GP posts. The length of tenure for members is usually 3 years. There are 3 meetings per year in March, June and October which all members are expected to attend.

Lay members are appointed as individuals and requested to contribute to the group from the patient’s perspective, rather than as a representative of an organisation. Ideally, lay members should have a broad perspective, have an interest in healthcare, and come from a variety of backgrounds and ages so that the group as a whole will be able to reflect a range of views from the breadth of the public at large. Members should be 18 or over when they join the group.
P^3 has three meetings per annum, usually held at RCGP Scotland offices at 25 Queen Street in Edinburgh. Travel expenses are paid by the College and in some instances, accommodation costs.

As a member of P^3, you will be expected to:

- Have an interest in primary care health issues in Scotland.
- Attend all meetings of the group (currently tentative as 28 January, 13 May, 31 October 2015).
- Readily correspond by email/post and phone outside of fixed meeting times.
- Contribute your knowledge and experiences to the group.
- Give your written views on issues when requested (e.g. relevant government consultations).
- Help inform and shape policy documents both orally and in writing.
- Be able to learn from others in the group and share this knowledge, where appropriate, within your local communities.

What you can expect from us:

- The opportunity for you to influence the primary healthcare agenda in Scotland and beyond.
- Administration support from staff to enable you to fully participate in the Group.
- Help with making arrangements for travel and accommodation (where necessary) to meetings.
- A chance to go on an exploratory visit to a GP practice.
- Have the opportunity to participate in topic-specific sub-groups.
- Have opportunities to have your say on developments in primary care, both at P^3 meetings and by responding to documents and/or attend meetings as a representative of P^3.
- There may also be opportunities to be involved as a lay member of other College groups and committees.

No previous experience is necessary.

Successful candidates will be welcomed with a comprehensive information pack and an introduction to the Chair and members of the Patient Group. RCGP Scotland staff will also assist, wherever possible, to help new members access information in areas of interest to them.

P^3 background information December 2013