



Royal College of  
General Practitioners

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# Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Plan 2020 to 2023



## Contents

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Plan 2020 to 2023 .....	1
Executive Summary .....	3
Professor Martin Marshall, Chair of Council .....	3
Dr Valerie Vaughan-Dick, Chief Operating Officer .....	3
Aboutus .....	4
Our Vision.....	4
Our Values .....	4
Our Governance of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).....	5
Reporting.....	5
Membership drivers.....	5
How will we deliver EDI across services delivered to members.....	5
Workforce drivers .....	6
How RCGP will deliver EDI for its workforce (staff).....	6
Governance.....	7
Events .....	7
Influencing Policy .....	8
Exams and Specialty Training.....	8
EDI Action Plan .....	8
2020 to 2021 .....	8
2021 to 2023 .....	12

Approved by RCGP Council 25 September 2020



## Executive Summary

### Professor Martin Marshall, Chair of Council



General practice is a diverse profession. Our College is a diverse membership organisation. It is important that every one of our members and every member of our staff is treated equally and inclusively, regardless of any protected characteristics.

As a College we have a responsibility to identify discrimination within our structures, to challenge it and to address it to improve the lives and experiences of our members and staff. I can assure you that this commitment begins at the most senior levels of the College.

I've co-Chaired the College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group, along with College Chief Operating Officer Valerie Vaughan-Dick, since I became Chair. As a College we are doing vital work to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion are priorities in every aspect of our work.

We have already done a lot as a College, but we recognise we need to do a lot more. This plan is just a starting point for what's to come, and I look forward, with Valerie, to leading this work.

### Dr Valerie Vaughan-Dick, Chief Operating Officer



Along with the Chair of Council I lead the RCGP Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Steering Group whose remit is to both promote change and challenge complacency in the College. This Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Plan sets out our ambitious targets for 2020- 21 and 2021-23 along with a commitment to progress lasting change.

These changes include monitoring and reporting on EDI data both for our staff and members but also examiners and examinees; creating a more diverse workforce of both staff and clinicians through more sophisticated recruitment techniques; increasing the diversity of our Faculties, Council, Trustee Board, Devolved Council and Senior Leaders; learning from our members and ensuring a diversity of influence is heard and acted upon at the College and ensuring we address EDI issues facing our members.

I look forward to the implementation of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Plan for 2021-23 when real change has been made and I can successfully report back on our progress. The next two years will be key in ensuring the RCGP retains the trust of our members and staff by transitioning to an organisation that can confidently use diversity as a strength.

### **Equality**

Everyone has equal opportunities to join and progress within our College. Everyone we work with is treated with respect and dignity.

### **Diversity**

Our College reflects the diversity of the General Practice profession. We are made stronger by having a diversity of experience amongst staff and members.

### **Inclusion**

We understand the experiences of different groups of staff and members and the specific issues facing them. We work to ensure that no one is excluded or ignored from the activities internally and externally.

## **Aboutus**

This Plan underpins the RCGP Strategy 2020-2021 that was approved by Council in February 2020.

## **Our Vision**

RCGP is firmly committed to making sure our organisation and the communities we serve are places of equality diversity and inclusion.

## **Our Values**

These define who we are and are as follows:

**Compassion** – for our patients, the populations we serve, our members, our colleagues and ourselves

**Inclusivity** – we value diversity as part of our community and treat each individual with equal respect

**Sustainability** – we look to the future and care about the long-term wellbeing of our members, our profession, our patients and the world around us

**Accountability** – we take responsibility for the results of our actions and continuously strive to be the best that we can be

**Integrity** – we are honest, open, ethical, just and fair

We aim to be an inclusive organisation where diversity is respected and encouraged. Actively increasing equality, diversity and inclusion is crucial for fulfilling our strategic objectives within our College Strategy 2020-2023.

We want to be an organisation that promotes dignity and respect to all members, employees, candidates, assessors, patients and examiners and where no form of discrimination, intimidation, bullying or harassment is tolerated.

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Plan commits the RCGP to actions we will take to promote and implement equality, diversity and inclusion.

## Our Governance of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

The **Council** is the governing body who are responsible for clinical and professional policy.

The **Chair of Council** is the clinical Officer and the **Chief Operating Officer** is the staff lead who co- chair the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group for the College.

Our **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group** is responsible for implementation of the strategy and providing leadership on issues across the College. The Group members consist of staff and clinicians.

Our **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Oversight Group** is responsible for overseeing the completion of actions and provide the Steering group with information, concerns and challenges from Staff and Stakeholders. This is chaired by the Chief Operating Officer with relevant staff.

### Reporting

Within this EDI Plan there are ongoing separate strands of work that focus upon areas defined within the Equality Act 2010. Our Plan is based upon a Ten Point Plan which is detailed in Appendix 1.

We expect to be held to account and to be actively challenged in how we progress our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Plan. We will report to the Trustee Board on progress and bring issues to the attention of Council annually, as part of the update on implementing the RCGP Strategy 2020-23.

### Membership drivers

#### How will we deliver EDI across services delivered to members

We will ensure all Members are supported and empowered to thrive within general practice.

We commit to creating an EDI framework which strives to:

#### Inspire by...

- Reinforcing and communicating our values
- Supporting and voicing the needs of members and the wider general practice community
- Ensuring access to strong and representative role models
- Leading the conversation on the importance of diverse leadership
- Providing clear pathways for underrepresented communities to seek leadership opportunities
- Delivering inclusive and accessible activities, resources and events with diverse representation among authors, speakers, panelists and attendees.

The RCGP Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan aims to address the nine protected characteristics

The protected characteristics are defined by the Equality Act 2010 and are shown below :

- Age
- Disability
- Sex
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race, ethnicity of nationality
- Religion, faith or belief

Equality legislation in Northern Ireland also includes political opinion and status as a carer into the protection of law.

## **Inform by...**

- Breaking down barriers and preconceived ideas through the delivery of high-quality learning, wellbeing and community group programmes
- Publishing our intent relating to equality, diversity and inclusion
- Adopting inclusive language and behaviours in everything we do.

## **Involve by...**

- Listening to our members and providing accessible channels to share their ideas and experiences
- Instilling a sense of belonging by putting members at the heart of everything we do
- Encouraging members to seek new opportunities and to act when barriers are encountered
- Ensuring our governance structures are representative of the membership they seek to serve
- Introducing a mentoring scheme which allows members to seek mentors according to their personal needs and expertise
- Fostering a culture of recognition and celebration to ensure the contributions of underrepresented communities and the diversity of Team GP are highlighted for all to see.

We have already undertaken work to address inequalities in our BAME and LGBT+ communities. The BAME Action Plan, which is being consulted on over the summer of 2020, and the LGBT+ Member Plan, where the Action Plan will be finalised during 2020/21.

## **Workforce drivers**

### **How RCGP will deliver EDI for its workforce (staff)**


#### **RCGP workforce priorities**

With just under 300 staff, the College is committed to achieving equality of opportunity in all aspects of our work. We believe that to provide equality of opportunity it is essential to recognise and enshrine equal rights and to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion matters are not treated as separate issues but are mainstreamed throughout the organisation.

We are ensuring that there are effective EDI activities related to College employees, therefore EDI is one of the main Workstreams in the College People Plan 2020-2023. Key EDI elements of the People Plan include a focus on recruitment – the techniques we use and how they can be improved to widen diversity; implement inclusive programmes that aim to reduce barriers between different groups of staff with varying backgrounds; actively look to promote conversations about diversity and divergent experiences; consistent application of assessments for all projects to ensure a fair and balanced approach to all areas of human resources work.

We are focusing on creating a culture and environment that allows every employee to flourish and that respects, values and rewards their needs and their contributions. Staff and member forums, such as the LGBTQ+ Forum, continue to share ideas on promoting an inclusive RCGP.

We also recognise that prejudice, discrimination and harassment remain part of everyday life in society for many people. We commit to countering any evidence of such behaviour and to doing all we can as an organisation to achieve a fairer, more equitable society that respects and recognises diversity of every kind.



We believe that transparency and measurement are critical components in achieving an effective EDI plan for the People Plan EDI Workstream.

## **Our additional responsibilities for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

### **Governance**

The meetings of UK Council, Devolved Councils and Faculty Boards have occurred out with the normal GP working week, either at the weekend or in the evenings.

There are likely to be a significant number of GPs who, by virtue of their professional and/or personal commitments are unable to become involved in the work of RCGP because of personal circumstances, such as family commitments, or alienation from the traditional formal meeting format. Consequently, this may limit the demographic – and thus, the representativeness – that RCGP has been able to achieve.

COVID-19 has transformed all meetings at RCGP to online virtual events, and this will be continued post the pandemic. There is the potential to widen participation with a wider demographic of GPs. Work that started pre-COVID-19 on assessing the membership and alignment of our meetings has accelerated with the aim of using this extraordinary and unprecedented time for long term changes to representation at RCGP.


Active measures are being implemented to ensure that there is an obligation to demonstrate that effective consultation and engagement has been undertaken instead of one person ‘representing’ a demographic or faculty. The development of Strategic Delivery Groups, led by a RCGP officer and Executive Director, that are tasked with delivering the business plan of the College Strategy 2020- 2023 will be flexible with co-opted and short-term members aligned to certain topics.

Work is ongoing to improve transparency at the College including publishing the declarations of interest for Officers and Trustees on the website and ensuring declarations of candidates standing for elections are included as part of the process.

### **Events**

It has been clear for many years that many events and conferences lack diversity, and this is certainly true of external health events and our own RCGP events. Whilst we have spent time focusing on how to improve this, it is now more important than ever to try and focus on ensuring our events are diverse and inclusive. By doing so we need to focus on those people speaking at our events and at our audience. Our aim will be to deliver diverse and inclusive events that represent our membership and audience, that are welcoming to all and deliver real benefit and improvements through their diversity and inclusion.

We will focus on some straightforward steps for the whole organisation to follow to ensure we have a common purpose and shared goals when putting on events and this will form an organisation-wide approach to planning diverse and inclusive events. This, we hope will be followed irrespective of the type of event, face-to-face, digital, large conference or a faculty meeting but will enable us to work towards diversity and inclusion as one College.



The organisation-wide approach will look to ensure diversity and inclusion across all nine of the protected characteristics. It will ultimately be a guide to ensure we are a welcoming college, enabling the inclusion of all our members, the wider primary care team and our customers within our event delivery.

### **Influencing Policy**

The RCGP will ensure that issues relating to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) are reflected in our external influencing when engaging with politicians and policymakers. For example, any policy reports published will consider the EDI implications of any calls of the respective Governments. We have already begun work to increase awareness of the challenges BAME doctors face in general practice, hosting two webinars via the RCGP Together LIVE brand on health inequalities, and how best to support BAME members in general practice.

### **Exams and Specialty Training**

The RCGP is committed to investigate, understand and resolve the issues related to differential assessment that are evidenced in the results from the MRCGP, but which we know are present within all medical assessments and training.

We will do this through research and investigations into our own exams – the Applied Knowledge Test (AKT) and Clinical Skills Assessment (CSA) as well as the new Recorded Consultation Assessment (RCA) - but also by working with our stakeholders, such as the GMC, Deaneries and trainee groups to better understand the underlying causes of this differential attainment.

Through training, engagement and campaigning, we will work to improve the examination and training experience for affected trainees and start to address the underlying causes of differential attainment.

### **EDI Action Plan**

#### **2020 to 2021**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Key Milestone</b>	<b>Indicative Timetable Headline Actions</b>
EDI Data	Monitor and report on the protected characteristics data for staff, members, examiners and examinees	Annual reporting to Trustee Board to be submitted in January 2021
Membership	Milestones include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence that our values are understood by our members</li> <li>- Leading the conversation on diverse leadership</li> <li>- Access to strong and representative role models</li> </ul>	Actions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Liaison with other organisations to ensure we collaboratively work to mitigate risks that affect BAME communities.</li> <li>- Ongoing from Q1 2020/21 and included as part of this BAME Plan with the creation of five workstreams that report into the EDI Steering Group.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clear pathways for underrepresented communities to seek leadership opportunities</li> <li>- Inclusive and accessible activities</li> <li>- Publication of our intent relating to EDI</li> <li>- Adoption of inclusive language and behaviours</li> <li>- Accessible channels to share ideas and experiences</li> <li>- Governance structures representative of the membership they serve</li> <li>- Mentoring scheme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improved use of communication including social media to promote values</li> <li>- Identification of existing role models and scope a 'role modelling' programme to prepare and equip a greater number of role models</li> <li>- All College Advocates to demonstrate College values and embody EDI best practice</li> <li>- All activity aimed at supporting career pathways has a dedicated stream that focusses on the needs and experiences of underrepresented groups</li> </ul> <p>Detailed evaluation of the types of events run by the College, including the demographic and experience of speakers, panelists and attendees.</p>
Workforce	Workforce (staff and clinicians) that reflect our diverse society	Enhanced recruitment techniques including anonymised selection.  Q4 2020/21
	Talent development and career progression for staff	Culture Change Programme to support staff who aspire to management positions.  Q1 and Q2 2020/21
	Develop new people policies and procedures to ensure we have appropriate measures in place to support the diverse workforce and to promote EDI.	Embed the relevant policies which were updated or introduced as follows:  Maternity Paternity Menopause (introduced) Homeworking (rewritten) Sabbatical Annual leave Special leave Transgender (reviewed) Flexible working (reviewed)  Q1-Q4 of 2020/21



	Raise awareness and provide training for staff and clinicians	Annual training including unconscious bias and EDI awareness  Throughout the year
	Create a culture where discriminatory comments, bullying and harassment are unacceptable	Central plank of Culture Change Programme launched in 2018.  Staff surveys in 2018 and 2019 identified reporting of such incidents was decreasing. Staff survey in 2020 delayed due to COVID 19. Pulse surveys are planned to be developed as part of the new People Plan Q4 2020/21
Governance	Increase diversity of Faculties, Council, Trustee Board, Devolved Councils and Senior Leaders	Promote flexible working; virtual meetings; review scope of eligibility for posts.  Q3 2020/21 and continuous.
	Ensure consistent application of impact assessment for all policy changes and projects.	We will continue to undertake an Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment before considering proposals for new work or significant changes to policies, projects, programmes and activities within the College. There will be a focus on embedding the Assessment throughout the College to ensure consistency of approach through communication, follow up and the use of external assurance mechanisms where necessary.
Events	Delivery of diverse and inclusive events that represent our membership and audience, that is welcoming to all and deliver real benefit and improvements through their diversity and inclusion.	New approach agreed and implemented College-wide by November 2020
Influencing Policy	Influence the UK-wide Governments to ensure that tackling health inequalities and supporting vulnerable patients is central to the redesign of the general practice landscape post-COVID-19.  Work with NHS England to shape the forthcoming national service specification on health inequalities	Influence ministerial working group on general practice after COVID-19 (Q2)  Tackling health inequalities is RCGP Scotland policy priority (2020-21)  Work with NHS England to shape the national service specification (Q3)

	<p>which will be a requirement for Primary Care Networks from April 2021.</p> <p>Lobby for regular updates on the progress of recommendations in the Fenton report into the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on BAME health professionals and patients, and for these to be made public.</p> <p>Ensure that the risk of infection for BAME staff and patients is addressed in NHS winter preparedness planning</p> <p>Influence Government to make it easier for overseas doctors to work in UK general practice</p> <p>'Diversity check' our College reports, guidance and media statements to ensure that all protected characteristics are considered.</p>	<p>Ongoing influencing work with NHSE, NHS Scotland, NHS Wales, HSCNI and the equivalent public health bodies across the UK (Q2-Q4)</p> <p>Influence winter flu/COVID-19 preparedness planning Q2 and 3</p> <p>Letter to Home Office on Tier 2 visas (July)</p> <p>Ongoing influencing of NHS international GP recruitment</p>
Exams	<p>Review and assess protected characteristics and differential attainment issues in RCA and alignment with issues raised about differential attainment in AKT and CSA exams</p> <p>Ensure concerns and issues of stakeholder groups related to the protected characteristics are considered within the future exam development.</p> <p>Continue to engage with Deaneries on differential attainment issues within training.</p>	<p>Review in early autumn 2020 once results for summer RCA are available. Compare with existing results and discuss at MRCGP exam leads group.</p> <p>Stakeholders meeting in Autumn 2020 results to feed into developments in 2021.</p> <p>Host meeting with Deaneries and key stakeholder groups in early 2021</p>

## 2021 to 2023

Our Plan for 2021/22 through into 2022/23 will depend upon the success of 2020/21, so the table below provides an indicative timetable that will be kept live and updated as progress is made.

Area	Key Milestone	Indicative Timetable Headline Actions
Membership	Milestones continue from 2020/21	<p>Explore development of a diversity 'kitemark' for practices who are exemplars in EDI</p> <p>Develop a leadership programme to nurture future College leaders with focus placed on supporting underrepresented groups</p> <p>Actions to continue from 2020/21 and to be kept under review.</p>
Workforce	To maintain fair and transparent recruitment. Explore how to implement anonymous recruitment ("blind recruitment") approach and develop a plan to introduce.	Enhanced recruitment techniques, including anonymised selection.
	Develop tools to undertake appropriate Equality Impact Assessments before considering significant projects and people policies.	To assess the potential impact on different groups of people through established EDI assessment tools.
	Following the Digital Maturity People Plan workstream activities, to develop our employees to ensure we have the capabilities in line with the EDI considerations.	Assess the impact of the Digital Maturity People Plan actions in relation to the Flexible Working and other related policies and procedures.
	To build a picture of the equality monitoring data through the effective use of the systems and collate data about the profile of our workforce in terms of age, disability, gender and race on an ongoing basis	To introduce an initiative in refreshing the people EDI data we hold on our systems. Developing tools to analyse the data effectively.
	Embed a culture where discriminatory comments, bullying and harassment are unacceptable. Provide our people with the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to progress equality, diversity and inclusion in their work.	Develop and deliver training on eliminating prejudice - 'Iceberg of Diversity' unconscious bias training.

Governance	Increase diversity of Faculties, Council, Trustee Board, Devolved Councils and Senior Leaders	A review of actions undertaken in 2020/21 and a focus on embedding initiatives such as recruitment undertaken.
	Use initiatives from other organisations to improve governance processes at the College.	Explore the 'Freedom to Speak Up Guardian' concept to see if this could be applied to the College under whistleblowing linked to EDI issues specifically.
Policy – Influencing	Milestones continue from 2020/21	Actions ongoing and will be adapted as the political environment requires.
Exams	Continued focus on examiner training and review of results to monitor and help understand any issues relating to differential attainment. Continued collaborative working with key stakeholders to address differential attainment in training. Continue positive focus on the amelioration of differential attainment in the further development of any new examinations or review of existing exams.	Ongoing.
	Continue to review the new Recorded Clinical Assessment.	Will depend upon the findings of the assessments undertaken during 2020/21
	Explore the impact of disability on the AKT to understand increased trends.	