As a member of the **RCGP** you are:

- **always learning**
- **part of a community**
- **taking care of yourself**
- **shaping the future**
- **part of the conversation**

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A Note from Chair RCGPNI

Dear Colleagues

As I come to the end of my term as your Chair of RCGPNI Council, I would like to take the opportunity in this Annual Review to thank you for your support over the past three years and to update you on our achievements in the past year.

I find it hard to believe that in my three years in office, we have only had a Health Minister for six weeks! In my first letter to you, I had lamented the absence of an Assembly, but little did I think that we would have languished without political leadership for this length of time. The good news is that during the political hiatus, RCGPNI has worked hard to establish closer links with the Department of Health (DoH) and has built on its strength and influence with policy makers.

The solutions to the problems we face with day-to-day work are complex and need to be effective long term. We need more GPs on the ground to fill vacancies in practices and to feed our locum pools right across the region for holidays/sickness and importantly, to enable you and your representatives to engage with the Health and Social Care system to shape your future. To increase numbers, we need to address recruitment and retention issues, but this needs improvement in working conditions, morale and self-promotion, which in turn requires time and space for improvement. None of this is easy but with the appropriate support, we have the skills to create change.

Because of our unique role as a Royal College representing general practice but not as a union, we have access through many doors and we are often the only voice for general practice in the room. Your membership fee pays for all of this. Together, we support our profession. We do so much more than “just CPD.”

On behalf of our membership we have worked across all aspects of service delivery for healthcare now and into the future, including influencing the DoH on multiple aspects of undergraduate and postgraduate training, supporting sub-deanery developments at GP Federation level and shaping developments in QI. We have also worked hard at influencing the components of the multidisciplinary team (MDT) embedded in general practice to include mental health specialists, social workers and physiotherapists. We have worked towards a change in the curriculum at Queen’s University Belfast (QUB) to promote general practice as a career, and with the NI Medical & Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA) and General Medical Council (GMC) for improvement to ST1 and ST2 GP training in secondary care placements, resulting in the review of specialty training. We have also worked with the DoH to find solutions to recruitment of trainees to rural areas, working on primary/secondary care interface issues and more. In addition we have supported individual member’s issues, finding solutions at Health & Social Care Board (HSCB) and DoH level as well.

This Annual Review 2019 document summarises our achievements this year but we aim to inform members regularly of our activities and I would encourage you to read the weekly ebulletin and quarterly update as well as the other electronic communications that come from RCGPNI into your inbox. It is our only means of communication with you as members and it is essential to your understanding of current activity.

I take this opportunity to thank my GP partners and our staff in Bangor Health Centre for putting up with me and my exploits. I couldn’t have taken on this task without you. I will miss the challenges but most of all I will miss the fantastic RCGPNI team that have supported me here for the past three years. It has been tough at times and a joy at others, but sure that’s general practice for you!

Yours faithfully

Dr Grainne Doran
Chair, RCGP Northern Ireland
Dr Grainne Doran
Chair
Grainne provides strategic leadership for the College in Northern Ireland by directing the work of the NI Council, leading the NI Council Executive Committee and providing an interface between the College in Northern Ireland and the wider RCGP.

Dr Laurence Doran
Deputy Chair Policy
Laurence leads the work of the College in Northern Ireland in developing a College position on issues that affect general practitioners in Northern Ireland and ensures that the message is communicated effectively to the relevant stakeholders.

Dr John Goodrich
Deputy Chair Business & Finance
John leads the work of the College in Northern Ireland in relation to its financial and business affairs ensuring probity, innovation, good practice and value for money.

Dr Colin Fitzpatrick
Executive Member for Education and Professional Development
Colin leads the work of the College in Northern Ireland in relation to education and professional development in primary care.

Dr Peter Ryan
Executive Member for Membership
Peter leads the work of the College in Northern Ireland in respect to its relationship with, and services offered to members.

Dr Keith McCollum
Executive Member for Quality
Keith leads the work of the College in Northern Ireland in relation to quality standards in primary care.

Dr Rose McCullagh
Executive Member for Patients and Public
Rose leads the work of the College in Northern Ireland by ensuring the patient view is incorporated into decision making processes within RCGPNI.

Dr Siobhan McEntee
Executive Member Chairs Nomination
Siobhan provides support to the Chair of RCGPNI in all NI Council business.

Your local RCGP Representatives

RCGPNI Officer and Executive team 2018-2019

RCGPNI Council 2018-2019

BELFAST TRUST

SOUTHERN TRUST

NORTHERN TRUST

SOUTH EASTERN TRUST

WESTERN TRUST

SOUTHERN TRUST

Dr Philip Lusty
Dr Adrienne Keown
Dr Laurence Dorman

NORTHERN TRUST

Dr John Goodrich
Prof Frank Dobbs
Dr Frew Johnston

SOUTH EASTERN TRUST

Dr Paul Molley

WESTERN TRUST

Dr Caren Walsh

ADDITIONAL MEMBERS ON NI COUNCIL

Dr Jonathan Stewart
Dr Rebecca McGinley
Dr Emma Murtagh
Dr Laurence Doran

ADITIOANAL MEMBERS ON NI COUNCIL

AI T Rep
AI T Rep
AI T Rep

OBSERVERS ON NI COUNCIL

Dr Brendan O’Shea
Mrs Karen Mooney
Dr Claire Loughrey
Dr Brendan O’Shea
Prof Frank Dobbs
Dr Criag Loughrey

RCGPNI ANNUAL REPORT 2019

**NIMDTA - Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency**

*** NIGPC - Northern Ireland General Practitioners Committee
Shaping the future of general practice

As part of the UK-wide ‘future vision’ work that RCGP has taken forward, we were keen to ensure that our members were able to engage and feed-in to the development of the College’s UK wide ‘Fit for the Future’. Led by Dr Grainne Doran, six discussion groups were carried out with Associates in Training, First5s, medical students, rural GPs, NI Council members and Executive/Advocate representatives. Our findings were shared with the policy team based in London to inform the final vision documents and the subsequent road maps for delivering the vision.

At a local level we have used this information to help shape and inform our own vision document, ‘Support, Sustain, Renew- A Vision for General Practice in Northern Ireland’, which was launched on 14 November. Working over the past few months with local GP leads to develop a ‘Future Vision’ paper, we have set out a road map for achieving a sustainable and thriving future for GP services in Northern Ireland. Targeted at key stakeholders in health delivery and education, the document focuses on key priorities including workforce, workload, funding, technology, patient-centred care and out-of-hours with specific asks for:

- High-quality, accessible, patient-centred services for all.
- Enough GPs in Northern Ireland to deliver GP services, with an appropriate flow of medical students and all GP training places filled annually.
- A vibrant and holistic multidisciplinary care team embedded in GP surgeries.
- Manageable workload for GPs with a full suite of resources to deliver modern general practice services.

Six key enablers are outlined to make this a reality:

- Fully functioning GP Federations that will support GPs and their teams.
- Capacity in general practice to deliver increased training and education in the GP setting.
- Effective use of technological innovations to provide care and services to patients and to support GPs with treatment and diagnoses.
- Fit-for-purpose, modern GP premises to house GPs and the growing GP team and facilitate training of undergraduate and postgraduate students.
- Sustainable, safe Out of Hours GP services across the five HSC Trusts.
- Sufficient, recurrent resources allocated to general practice and primary care to deliver and sustain modern GP services in Northern Ireland.

Although there has been little visible movement on the HSC Workforce Strategy since it was launched by the DoH on 18 May, during this time, we have been very keen to ensure that GPs will be involved in the design of action plans for implementation. Andrew Dawson, Director of Workforce in the DoH, joined us in our Belfast office earlier in the year to discuss the objectives that we want to see delivered as part of the strategy. An important step forward has been the appointment of RCGPNI GP Advocate for Workforce, Dr Siobhan McEntee, to the regional Reference Group for the implementation of the Health & Social Care (HSC) Workforce Strategy. The College has been engaged in ongoing discussions with the DoH to urge for general practice workforce analysis to be prioritised as part of the review, and we met with Andrew again in October to reiterate our concerns. Andrew also visited Siobhan’s practice in October to see for himself the issues facing general practice at the coal face. We will continue our discussions with the DoH reiterating our position and following up on progression.

Work continues to examine the potential of streamlining the process for GPs from the Republic of Ireland to work in the UK. Considering Brexit challenges, the College is keen to determine how processes can be made more straightforward, to alleviate workforce pressures.

Leadership

As well as responding to the consultation on draft values and behaviours for the HSC Collective Leadership Strategy development, the College has had several meetings with stakeholders leading on the work including Strategy Lead, Myra Weir and HSC Leadership Centre Lead, Will Young. We continue to engage with them to find a way forward for better inclusion of general practice within implementation plans for the HSC Collective Leadership Strategy. Drs Dorman and McEntee have been highlighting the need to ensure that GPs and their teams are included in any baseline research that captures leadership information, explaining the unique need of GPs when it comes to engaging with training and leadership development. We have been assured that the team leading on the strategy work will fully include general practice needs within their work plans.

We have been actively supporting the Northern Ireland Health Transformation Leadership Forum as they develop future leaders in the healthcare system. Medical student Niambh Woods, President of the NI Healthcare Leadership Forum and Vice Chair of the National RCGP Medical Student and Foundation Doctor Committee, has also been incredibly active in this area. She has been a strong advocate for the College, reflecting our calls at a presentation to the DoH Transformation Implementation Group.

Developing new models of primary care working

RCGPNI has been a leading voice at the table in developing the regional model for the introduction of multidisciplinary teams in primary care. One of the main priorities for the College is to ensure that the new model of care in primary care working in general practice is rolled out across the entire region ensuring equity of support for GP practices, as well as equity of services for patients. In July, the DoH confirmed that two additional areas will now be funded to introduce the model, meaning five out of 17 Federation areas will see the introduction of multidisciplinary teams working in primary care. Unfortunately, as the political impasse continues, funds cannot be committed to increase medical school places without ministerial sign-off.

Tackling the Issues

Workforce

In early January, the Department of Health (DoH) published the long-awaited review of medical school places in Northern Ireland. This review was led by Professor Keith Gardiner who consulted with the College during the process. The report makes ten recommendations, including an immediate increase of 100 medical school places in NI, increased focus on promoting medical careers and assessment of teaching and training capacity in primary and secondary care. Unfortunately, as the political impasse continues, funds cannot be committed to increase medical school places without ministerial sign-off.

At a local level we have used this information to help shape and inform our own vision document, ‘Support, Sustain, Renew- A Vision for General Practice in Northern Ireland’, which was launched on 14 November. Working over the past few months with local GP leads to develop a ‘Future Vision’ paper, we have set out a road map for achieving a sustainable and thriving future for GP services in Northern Ireland.
Shaping the future of general practice

ensure full, regional rollout of the model to all 17 Federation areas as soon as possible.

The College is also working with strategic partners to explore how we can better introduce social prescribing in primary care. It is important to de-medicalise any model that is considered and ensure that other community roles, such as police officers, housing officers and teachers, are provided with the tools they need when they contact a suitable candidate for support.

Workload

Supporting the GP profession in terms of ensuring manageable workload and self-preservation has been a priority for RCGPNI this year. Supported by our Patient Group, we have been campaigning to highlight GP workload issues and encourage patients to use our health service responsibly and efficiently. Working with the Public Health Agency (PHA) and the HSCB we have been taking positive steps toward improved health understanding and how to best use the NHS.

On 28 January, the RCGPNI Patient Group launched its leaflet and campaign that aims to highlight GP workload pressures and inform patients as to how they can better use services. The leaflet was launched with a press release and social media campaign, building on the "BeforeGP" messages. Patient Group Chair Karen Mooney was also a speaker at an event in Enniskillen on 29 January that launched the revised nidirect online ‘A-Z Symptom Search’ tool. She shared the leaflet and highlighted the College’s core campaign messages regarding workload, multidisciplinary team working and use of other community resources including pharmacists for advice and guidance. A link has also been added to the ‘How to use your health services’ section of the nidirect website.

In addition, the leaflet was shared via community groups including the Community Development Health Network and Patient Client Council, and with support of the HSCB we were able to print and disseminate 50 copies to all GP practices in Northern Ireland. An infographic video clip to support the campaign has recently been developed and both the leaflet and video were shared with delegates at the RCGP Annual Conference in October.

Promoting the profession

The College has been actively calling on the DoH to do more to promote general practice as a profession. Last November, the Department held a first meeting to discuss taking this forward. While initial commitments were less robust than we would have hoped, it is promising to see the Department commit to this type of activity. The review of medical school places also called for action and we used this as an opportunity to reiterate our calls for an adequate response.

Considerable work has been done by the College membership team in London to provide materials to help support school children in their career decision-making process and we are currently assessing how best to promote this in NI. We also attended two schools fairs this year in Enniskillen and Londonderry, supported by local GPs.

In addition, Dr Grainne Doran met with medical student Niamh Woods early in the new year to discuss student challenges and perspectives. Our Undergraduate Champions Dr Rose McCullagh and Dr Ursula Mason have also been prioritising how we might better engage with young people and schools.

Interface

Dr Laurence Dorman is making considerable strides forward in our work to positively influence current challenges that are found at primary/secondary care interfaces. This is something that we can all identify with, both positively and negatively.

This programme of work has been hugely successful to date and has taken the College on a journey from a light touch social media campaign ‘#DearColleague’ to influencing the undergraduate curriculum and postgraduate training programmes across all specialties, and being adopted by the Academy of Royal Colleges for widespread use across the UK. On an international level it has also been of interest to Spanish, Chinese and Thai doctors, and this is being taken forward by the World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA).

Following the initial Twitter campaign Drs Doran and Dorman attended an event in November, hosted by the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, to discuss the clinical role in transformation. A core part of this discussion was framed around respect, interface and communication challenges. There were useful reflections on the RCGP led '#DearColleague' campaign and interface project.

Building on interface messages, Dr Grainne Doran was invited to present the GP perspective at an event hosted by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health in early January. This event brought together GPs, stakeholders, paediatric consultants and health officials to discuss child health challenges. Dr Doran gave an overview of the College’s interface work and focused on the issues that exist currently between primary and secondary care working. This generated good discussion and it proved to be a useful exercise in explaining the GP position on challenges relating to seeking advice, referral quality, waiting lists and patient relationships.

In March, alongside 13 other medical Royal Colleges, RCGPNI launched a set of ten interface principles. The principles aim to support colleagues from across primary and secondary care to respect each other, appreciate the pressures that others are under and maintain ownership where appropriate. Over 60 clinicians and stakeholders attended the launch event and there was an excellent response to the principles in terms of direct feedback and support on social media.

RCGPNI ANNUAL REPORT 2019
The launch of the Professional Behaviours and Communication Principles document.

The Principles were very warmly received by delegates at this year’s Northern Ireland Confederation for Health and Social Care (NICON) conference in May, where Dr Doran hosted a fringe session and a series of café conversations on the subject.

In June, representatives from several Colleges met with Queen’s University Belfast (QUB) for a very positive meeting, exploring and agreeing how the principles will be used to influence the development and delivery of the revised undergraduate curriculum. In September we met with representatives from NIMDTA to have similar conversations in relation to influencing Specialty Training programmes. The Principles have also had traction across health specialties and we were delighted that the lead for dentistry has already been in touch to let us know they are keen to use the principles in the undergraduate curriculum. In September we met with representatives from NIMDTA to have similar conversations in relation to influencing Specialty Training programmes. The Principles have also had traction across health specialties and we were delighted that the lead for dentistry has already been in touch to let us know they are keen to use the principles in the undergraduate curriculum.

Mental capacity
RCGPNI Council representative, Dr Louise Sands has been involved from the conception of the Mental Capacity Act (MCA), representing the College, and we would like to express our thanks for the work that she did on our behalf. Before standing down in her role, Dr Sands wrote a blog to all members in July to provide additional information on MCA developments and to encourage GPs to take an interest in the development of training materials and case studies that will help shape the content of DoH training delivery.

Dr Rose McCullagh has since taken over this work as an RCGPNI Strategic Advocate and in advance of the introduction of the Mental Capacity Act – Deprivation of Liberty (DoL), delayed until 1 December 2019, she has been feeding into the development of the code of practice on behalf of the College. Departmental officials joined us in the Belfast office in April to discuss the current state of play with regards to the Act and to hear our concerns and queries. The main challenges raised included the need to accurately communicate the importance of the Act, its introduction to GPs and their teams and issues with developing a training programme that will be accessible to the GP population. There had been considerable confusion as to the exact role that GPs might play in the new processes to determine DoL, and College emphasis was on ensuring training is appropriate and accessible for GPs. We have been in close contact with colleagues in the DoH, HSCB, NIGPC and NIMDTA to ensure clarity exists for the profession.

Mental Health
Dr Doran attended and presented at the launch event of the latest Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) report on mental health issues for children and young people. The College had worked with NICCY to help them develop a questionnaire for GPs to help inform the final report. The report highlighted some negative issues with general practitioners in terms of accessing services, knowledge of issues and support provided. While there is still work to be done to improve services in mental health, Dr Doran used the opportunity to publicly highlight some of the challenges in the system including GP pressures, the nature of the generalist role in specialist areas and the delays and process issues within child and adolescent mental health services in Northern Ireland.

Serious Shortages
The College has been engaging with the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer (CPO) and her team to ensure that GP issues and challenges are fully accounted for in the development and implementation of the Serious Shortage Protocol for medicines. We wrote to the CPO to flag concerns and Dr Doran has since met with the DoH to shape implementation and seek assurances regarding patient safety.

Duty of Candour
Following the recommendations in the ‘Inquiry into Hyponatraemia-related Deaths’, Dr Doran has raised issues of access to DoH officials with officials in the Belfast office to discuss the current state of play with regards to the DoH and to hear our concerns and queries. The main challenges raised included the need to accurately communicate the importance of the Act, its introduction to GPs and their teams and issues with developing a training programme that will be accessible to the GP population. There had been considerable confusion as to the exact role that GPs might play in the new processes to determine DoL, and College emphasis was on ensuring training is appropriate and accessible for GPs. We have been in close contact with colleagues in the DoH, HSCB, NIGPC and NIMDTA to ensure clarity exists for the profession.

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Shaping the future of general practice

Loneliness, isolation and social prescribing —
RCGPNI has been a leading voice in the public conversation around loneliness and isolation. As part of this work, we teamed up with several partners, including the Integrated Care Partnership team in the HSCB and the Community Development and Health Network (CDHN), to host a regional event on social prescribing. This event was held in Craigavon on 16 January, bringing together GPs, allied health professionals (AHPs), service users, MLAs, government departments and local councils. RCGPNI Deputy Chair Dr Laurence Dorman addressed attendees as part of an afternoon panel, covering issues such as the need to de-medicalise social support for patients, GP workload pressures, the RCGPNI loneliness action plan and the role of the new multidisciplinary team members. This was a good opportunity to reiterate our call for ensuring the MDT model is rolled out across the entire region quickly, to ensure equity of support for GPs and equity of service provision for patients.

In June, we joined colleagues from the British Red Cross to brief Sinn Fein MLAs and policy staff on loneliness and social prescribing in Northern Ireland, including the need to better support GP workload and patient care by investing in social prescribing, and community navigators in Northern Ireland. This briefing provided an excellent opportunity to answer questions and ensure understanding of the pressures on GP time to deliver holistic, physical, mental and social care support for patients, seeking additional support from other Multidisciplinary Team members to provide the best possible care.

Responding to consultations

RCGPNI responded to the following consultations during the year helping to shape local policy development:

- HSC Collective Leadership Strategy: Values and Behaviours
- Breast Assessment Services
- Information Sharing for Child Protection Purposes
- Diagnostic Radiography
- Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children & Young People - ‘Still Waiting’
- Regional Trauma Network – Service Delivery Model
- Reshaping Stroke Care – Saving Lives, Reducing Disability
- Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Consultation on New Clinical Response Model

Representatives on committees

In 2018-19 we have had representation on 45 external committees to influence policy and decision making on healthcare in NI.

GMC
- Advisory Forum

NIMDTA
- GP Speciality Training Committee
- Central Board of Management

DoH
- Education & Training in General Practice Stakeholder Group
- Primary Care Expansion Stakeholder Group
- Scaling up Innovative Practice / Improvement Institute & QI
- Development and roll out of Multi-disciplinary Primary Care Teams
- HSCQI Alliance
- Diabetes Network
- NI Cancer Strategy project
- Treatment & Support Advisory Committee
- Services Review - Neuroservices Team
- Workforce Strategy Reference Group
- Nursing & Midwifery Task Group
- NI Screening Committee
- NI Ambulance Service
- MORE Self Care Workshop
- MORE Nutrition Project Board

GPC
- NI General Practitioners Committee (reconstitution 2018-2021)
- NIGPC IT subcommittee

PHA
- Primary Care Nursing Steering Group
- Regional Dysphagia Steering Group
- Sudden Unexpected Death in Childhood Group
- Implementation of Skin Cancer Prevention Strategy and Action Plan
- Re-Programme Care Programme Board
- Outpatient Home Delivered Parenteral Antibiotic Therapy (OPAT)
- Regional Valproate in Women of Childbearing Potential
- Childhood Immunisation and Vaccination Group
- Regional Nursing Advisory Group
- Maternity Strategy Implementation Group (sub group RQIA home birth guideline group)
- Maternity Strategy Implementation Group (sub group pre-conceptual care group)
- Regional Healthcare-associated Infection and Antimicrobial Stewardship Improvement Board
- Cross border healthcare interventions trial in NI steering group

QUB
- Academic training pathways for GPs

HSCB
- GP Out of Hours Review Reference Group
- Regional GMS Clinical Governance Group
- Maternity Strategy Implementation Subgroup on Perinatal Mental Health
- Chronic Pain Forum
- Regional Opiate Substitution Treatment Forum
- Regional Bariatric Service Task & Finish Group
- RPP medical panel
- DoH District Nursing Framework 2018-2026
- General Practice Intelligence Platform (GPIP)
- Regional Nursing Advisory Group
- Perinatal Mental Health Group
- NI Frailty Network
Shaping the future of general practice

Influencing political decision makers

In the absence of a functioning Assembly, MLAs have limited capacity to influence change, but as elected representatives it is vital that they remain up to date with the current issues facing GPs and patients. Having already met with the health spokespeople from Sinn Fein, DUP, Alliance and UUP during the summer, then met with Mark H Durkan, Health Spokesperson for the SDLP in October who was keen to hear more about GP implications from GDPR, duty of candour and our loneliness action plan.

We have also continued to maintain our presence at the main political party conferences which has proved very useful in maintaining their knowledge, interest and support for our policy development.

In the public eye

Developing the College’s social media profile

Our Twitter and Facebook profiles continue to grow. As our main social media platform, Twitter continues to create excellent engagement with members and stakeholders on key issues. We now have over 2300 followers. In the past few months, our strongest engagements were generated by the launch of our interface principles, promotion of RCGPNI events and coverage from the schools’ careers fairs.

In the media

The College continues to be actively represented in the local media across national and local outlets including print, on-line, commercial radio and TV and the BBC.

Some of the main issues tackled have included:

GP workload

- The use of statistics which suggested an increase in GP headcount without acknowledging decreasing whole time equivalent rates.

Healthcare issues

- Abortion law in Northern Ireland.
- HPV vaccines for boys.
- The availability of flu vaccinations.
- The launch of the Daffodil Standards.

In addition, the Patient Group has also been well received via the local media on their ‘3beforeGP’ campaign as well as being picked up across the UK.

The promotion of general practice as a career

- The publication of the medical schools’ review and the denigration of general practice.
- Promoting the profession as a career on BBC National GP day.

Funding for general practice

- The budget and implications for general practice.
Growing and supporting a strong and engaged membership

Recruiting and welcoming new members
The 2019 New Members’, Fellows’ and Awards Ceremony took place on Saturday 19 October at the Titanic Hotel, Belfast. As well as welcoming almost 50 new members from across the UK and Ireland, and as far afield as Brunei and Canada, we also recognised the achievement of newly appointed NI Fellows.

Fellowship
Being the highest level of membership of the College, Fellowship is awarded in recognition of a member’s significant contribution to the health and welfare of the community, the science or practice of medicine, the aims of the College or to any organisation which directly or indirectly benefits general practice.

We also presented awards to medical students, associate members in training, GPs within their first five years of membership, GP of the Year and the Practice of the Year. We would like to congratulate all our winners.

Student Awards
RCGPNI facilitated voluntary fourth year student electives in general practice over the summer recess. In addition, all students across the province who were completing electives were asked to put into their own words their view of that experience. The Awards were presented by Professor Mayur Lakhani.

Runners up: Ross Johnston and Valerie Askin
Winner: Eimear Higgins.

RCGPNI Chair’s Award
This award marks the achievement of the Northern Ireland general practice trainee who has attained the highest combined AKT and CSA score this year.

This year’s winner is Dr Laura-Jo Hanna.

First5 Bursaries
The RCGPNI First5 Bursary is designed to provide GPs within their first five years of qualification the opportunity to enhance their knowledge by attending educational courses or providing support for research projects.

The recipients this year are Dr Jonathan Fee, Dr Christine Glendinning and Dr Margaret Pickles.

RCGPNI GP of the Year
Dr Mark Henderson, from Roe Family Practice, Limavady, who was nominated by Anne Love for the outstanding level of care that her husband has received.

‘The patience, understanding and compassion that our GP has shown us, alongside his professional judgements and guidance, are things that we will be eternally grateful for.’

Dr Grainne Doran, Dr Mark Henderson and Mrs Karen Mooney.

Patient-nominated Awards
The RCGPNI Practice of the Year and GP of the Year are both patient-nominated awards recognising the contribution that the recipient makes to ensure that their patients receive the best possible care. They are widely promoted via NI Libraries, HSC Trusts, HSCB and by Practice Managers who agreed to promote it via their social media accounts and staff newsletters.

Presented by Mrs Karen Mooney, Lay Chair of RCGPNI Patient Group (who have the difficult task of judging the awards) the winners this year are:

RCGPNI Practice of the Year
The Hill Medical Group Practice, Belfast, who was nominated by Marie Devlin for the outstanding level of care that her elderly parents have received.

‘The staff in The Hill are all extremely caring and compassionate. My parents are elderly with numerous health issues that can require a GP appointment at very short notice and the reception staff go above and beyond to make sure that my parents see a doctor without delay.’

Presented by Mrs Karen Mooney, Lay Chair of RCGPNI Patient Group (who have the difficult task of judging the awards) the winners this year are:

RCGPNI GP of the Year
Dr Mark Henderson, from Roe Family Practice, Limavady, who was nominated by Anne Love for the outstanding level of care that her husband has received.

‘The patience, understanding and compassion that our GP has shown us, alongside his professional judgements and guidance, are things that we will be eternally grateful for.’

Dr Grainne Doran, Dr Mark Henderson and Mrs Karen Mooney.
Growing and supporting a strong and engaged membership

We were delighted to have representatives from across the healthcare and education sector with us including Dr Nigel Hart (QUB), Dr Alan Stout (NIGPC), Professor Louise Dubras (UU), Jane Kennedy (GMC), Mark Lee (DoH) and Fiona Devlin (RCN).

Working with the next generation of GPs

Our Undergraduate Champions, Dr Ursula Mason and Dr Rose McCullagh have been actively encouraging medical students to consider a career in general practice, working with the GP Society at QUB and giving presentations. In addition, Dr Adrienne Keown delivered the Perry Harrison Lecture at QUB last November. As part of this, 11 GPs engaged with students in a ‘speed mentoring’ session. The whole event was a positive and enthusiastic display of all the great things about a career as a GP and we hope that students left feeling inspired and encouraged.

The College membership department in Euston Square, London are also engaged with student members at a local level and provide the opportunity for them to travel and meet with students interested in a career in general practice across the UK.

Developing local networks and communities

We are continuing our work to build and support local networks and member communities, and this year has seen some significant developments.

Associate in Training (AiT) Liaison Group

Wellbeing and a sense of community are priorities for our young trainees and we have been helping them to develop these areas of support.

We have been delighted to have had the opportunity to attend ST1, ST2 and ST3 NIMDTA induction days which has given us the opportunity to increase awareness of the work of the College and encourage young GPs to get involved. Dr Jonathan Stewart, AiT Representative at the time, delivered an introductory presentation to all three groups. On 28 June Dr Grainne Doran addressed the NIMDTA ‘Future Dr You’ event for finishing ST3s. The RCGPNI AiT Liaison Group held its first meeting on 17 February with six local trainees attending. Representation from the National AiT Committee included the AiT Chair Dr Amit Paik. Dr Katie Henderson has now taken on the role of AiT Representative and Chair of the group and she recently called into our offices to meet the team and to discuss how we can best support our trainees going forward.

Dr Laurence Dorman engaging with a group of AiTs at the ‘Life After VTS’ event.
Growing and supporting a strong and engaged membership

First5 Liaison Group
This year also saw the establishment of a First5 Liaison Group, chaired by Dr Nicola Topping, RCGPNI First5 Lead. This is an enthusiastic group of young GPs who have already established a successful Facebook page to network with and provide support to colleagues.

We are also hosting our inaugural First5 Conference in November with the support of the HSCB and NIMDTA, which will include wellbeing, CPD and professional development sessions.

Members’ Forum
Our Members’ Forum, chaired by Dr Liz Rea, has grown significantly and now has 12 members who engage with the College quarterly to provide a member perspective on UK and local College policy, CPD and support initiatives. They also provide a general practice perspective to the PHA on forthcoming public health campaigns.

Sessional and rural members
We are currently developing plans to better support other member communities, such as sessional and rural GPs. To help us, we have been working alongside Dr Miriam Dolan, Rural Representative, to develop a virtual RCGPNI Rural Forum as well as a virtual event early in December. In addition we plan to hold discussions with Dr Waqar Ahmed, Sessional Representative, to see how we can provide better support to sessional GPs. If you are interested in developing support for any of these areas, please contact your NI Representative directly or the RCGPNI team.

Another successful initiative this year has been a series of events designed to combine learning with the opportunity to network with colleagues and these have included telephone triage and haematology.

Later career and retired members
Further work with the NI Later Career and Retired Members Representative, Dr Michael Smyth, is also underway. Last February we held a retired members reception hosted by the RCGP President Prof Mayur Lakhani in Clifton House, Belfast and another event is planned for early 2020.

Promoting health and wellbeing
The health and wellbeing of our members is something that the College takes very seriously, and there is a growing awareness amongst our members that in order to meet the growing demands on their services they need to ensure that they also look after their own physical and mental health. To help support our GPs we have organised a health and wellbeing programme of activity which has included:

- Pilates
- Be the Best You
- Art & poetry workshops
- Mindfulness

This initiative was recognised by the College’s Vibrant Faculties Awards where RCGPNI were Main Award Finalists in the Wellbeing Series.

We are also keen to ensure that there is support for our members if and when required. We are currently carrying out a scoping exercise to assess what is available for GPs on the ground, what is available to other healthcare colleagues and what is needed.

Annual Conference
An enthusiastic delegation of GPs and students from Northern Ireland attended the RCGP Annual Conference in Liverpool this year. Chairs from each of the Devolved Nations joined Chair Elect Dr Martin Marshall to discuss the various general practice models of care in the four nations. Dr Doran focused on the developments in multidisciplinary team working in Northern Ireland.

Annual Conference
RCGPNI continue to provide a weekly email update to members including upcoming events, news and key information. Our new Quarterly Bulletin will replace our Annual Review and keep you up to date as the year progresses, so we would urge you to check your settings on your email account, as well as your RCGP account to ensure that you are not missing out.

Getting in Touch
RCGPNI continue to provide a weekly email update to members including upcoming events, news and key information. Our new Quarterly Bulletin will replace our Annual Review and keep you up to date as the year progresses, so we would urge you to check your settings on your email account, as well as your RCGP account to ensure that you are not missing out.
Ensuring GP education meets the changing needs of primary care

Education & training
The College has continued to strengthen its relationships with QUB. At the end of January Drs Grainne Doran and Laurence Dorman met with the new Vice Chancellor. They welcomed him to his post and provided an update on the GP landscape and current challenges with GP academia, the development of the new curriculum and denigration of general practice.

Dr Grainne Doran has been influencing the early stages of establishing a sub-deanery for medical education in Northern Ireland. With calls to increase the number of medical schools in NI and current work underway in QUB to increase exposure to general practice at undergraduate level with the new c25 curriculum, solutions must be found to delivering training and education within the GP community. We recently received confirmation that funding to pilot a new model for undergraduate training provision has finally been agreed, and GP Federations will be putting measures in place to make this a reality, with ongoing support from the College as required.

Continuing professional development
Attendance at our programme of clinical education and upskilling has been consistently high throughout the year. Feedback has been excellent, and we continue to engage with members, local education leads and general practice educational bodies to share best practice and event information for our mutual benefit and that of our members.

Partnering with local specialist bodies in healthcare we have delivered events including:
- Men’s Health in association with British Society of Sexual Medicine (BSSM)
- Cancer Workshop in association with Cancer Research UK
- Paediatrics in association with Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health

In addition, we have engaged high calibre speakers from a variety of backgrounds with a focus on general practice to deliver training on:
- Drug Dependence
- Frailty
- Men’s Health
- Dermatology
- CPR

Looking ahead to 2020, some topical areas we will be covering include
- Women’s Health
- Practical Ophthalmology
- Chronic Pain
- Liver Disease
- Safeguarding


We have also continued our programme to support the wider practice team. We held a pensions seminar for Practice Managers in May and another planned for early next year. A bespoke package devised by the HSC Leadership Centre will help them address the challenges they face with the introduction of multidisciplinary teams.
A fresh look at quality improvement

There have been huge strides forward during this year in putting structures in place to facilitate the development of quality improvement in general practice. Working closely with the DoH, HSCB and NIMDTA we have successfully secured GP accountability on the HSC QI Alliance. This is on a par with the Chief Executives of the Trusts, which will enable general practitioners to benefit from funding streams and initiatives to drive forward QI in primary care. In addition, significant funding has been secured for QI in general practice in NI, for the future development of the SHARE programme (which is offered to all GP practices in Northern Ireland and delivered by NIMDTA, offering the opportunity to identify and share a problem and consider ways to solve it), and a part-time strategy post to employ a GP lead on QI in the Federations. Four new Fellowship posts will link to HSC QI Hub projects.

Dr Keith McCollum, our representative on the QI Hub (which is the operational arm of QI delivery) has been meeting with the Clinical Director of the Hub, Mark Roberts and with Levine Lamb, Regional Patient Safety Advisor, to discuss the unique needs of quality improvement support in primary care. It is hoped that an RCGPNI representative will be able to take a seat at the PHA QI Leads meetings to ensure the GP voice is at the table.

A new Director of QI in the PHA took up post in October and we have arranged a meeting to drive forward the need for a primary care focus within the Hub, the establishment of a Lead for primary care and the development of a strategy which can be used by the Federations to develop QI within their areas. We have also been engaged in discussions regarding the ownership and responsibility for safeguarding within general practice, to determine where governance and training responsibility for safeguarding sits for the profession within the HSCB.

Dr McCollum also re-established our Quality Committee this year which will help to support our members and the wider quality agenda in general practice, and to ensure that members are aware of the QI support which the College can provide.

We would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the significant contribution Dr McCollum has made to QI in general practice in Northern Ireland over many years. He is demitting his post in November 2019 and will be a notable loss to the RCGPNI team.

International

This year we were delighted to host a delegation of Thai Family Doctors at our premises in Cromac Place, who were on a two week visit to Northern Ireland.

Organised by Monica Burns, Honorary Fellow of the College, they were here on a fact-finding mission to learn how general practice works in the province. We worked closely with Monica to develop a programme of meetings and activities for the visiting Thai delegates, who heard a series of talks and participated in workshops, as well as observing in practices across the province.

The visit was a huge success and was supported by our members, local GPs, key stakeholders from HSCB, DoH and various healthcare professionals.

In addition, Dr Laurence Doran was asked by WONCA to provide an ‘in my view’ article on his work with the other Royal Colleges in NI on developing a set of principles by which primary and secondary care can better work together to improve patient outcomes. The article and principles are also being translated into Spanish and Chinese.
The RCGP Northern Ireland Council held its AGM on 21 November 2018. Members were updated on the College’s activities over the past year and new NI Council members were elected and ratified.

During the period 2018-2019 items noted for information, or those under discussion and debate by NI Council have been covered in the preceding sections.

### Financial Report for the year 2018-2019 (as at 31 March 2019)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Expenditure for RCGPNI Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Officer and Governance Support</td>
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<td>Local initiatives</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenditure</strong></td>
<td><strong>374,506</strong></td>
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<td>Less income from local events</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total NI Expenditure</strong></td>
<td><strong>365,856</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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How the College works

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following organisations for their support throughout the year, without which we would not be able to provide the same level of support to our members.

British Medical Association Northern Ireland
British Society for Sexual Medicine
Cancer Research UK
Department of Health
General Medical Council
GP Federations
Health & Social Care Board
Health & Social Care Trusts
HSC Leadership Centre
Integrated Care Partnerships
Northern Ireland Ambulance Service
Northern Ireland General Practitioners Committee
Northern Ireland Medical & Dental Training Agency
Northern Ireland Confederation for Health & Social Care
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
Public Health Agency
Queen’s University Belfast
Queen’s University Belfast GP Society
Royal College of Nursing
Royal College of Midwives
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
Royal College of Psychiatrists NI
Royal College of Physicians
Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons Glasgow
Royal College of Surgeons London
Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh
Royal College of Ophthalmologists
Royal College of Radiologists
Royal College of Pathologists
Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland
Royal College of Surgeons of England
Royal College of Physicians of London
Royal College of Physicians of Ireland
Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh
Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
Royal College of Emergency Medicine
Royal College of Anaesthetists
RCGPNI Council
RCGPNI Executive
RCGPNI Members’ Forum
RCGPNI Patient Group
Ulster University

We would also like to thank Medical Defence Union, Medical & Dental Defence Union of Scotland and Alliance Pharma for their support of our CPD programme.