



Service pressures

Welcome to the first *President's Newsletter* of 2017, which marks the start of the College's [25th Anniversary](#) of receiving its Royal Charter. The busy and productive programme of work across the College over the past 12 months has been set against a backdrop of severe financial and operational constraints across the whole NHS. I know from my own experience and the correspondence I have been receiving that the service is under huge, perhaps unprecedented pressure. As anaesthetists we are on the frontline of healthcare, as this week's heart-rending episode of [Hospital](#) demonstrated.

I was immensely proud to see the commitment and professionalism of the anaesthetic colleagues who featured in the most recent series, which portrayed our specialty in a very positive light. Our scope of practice in today's NHS goes well beyond clinical responsibilities – we are also educators, communicators and medical leaders with a 'can do' ethos, who always put the patient first.

However, in response to recent extraordinary demands on clinical services, which resulted in some anaesthetists in training being asked to work outside their usual scope of practice, and following discussions with Health Education England, the RCoA and the AAGBI last week issued a [joint statement](#) on the topic. With patient safety in mind, the statement outlines a number of important principles when redeployment of trainees in our specialty is being considered. These include that trainee anaesthetists should only be redeployed from their normal duties in exceptional circumstances and for the shortest possible length of time, and that anaesthetists in training should never practice beyond their competence, as defined by the GMC's [Good Medical Practice](#) document.

Importantly, the decision to alter a trainee anaesthetist's duties should be communicated by the Medical Director to the local Guardian of Safe Working, the trainee's educational supervisor, their College Tutor (who should inform the relevant RCoA Regional Advisor) and Postgraduate Dean at the earliest opportunity. The information provided should outline the circumstances that led to the redeployment being necessary; how long it will last for; and the actions that will be put in place to avoid a recurrence in the future.

The RCoA and AAGBI will continue to raise such issues at the highest levels.



25th Anniversary

With 2017 now well underway, I hope that you will have the opportunity to join in our anniversary celebrations. I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible as we mark this significant milestone.

As I mentioned at the Association of Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland's (AAGBI) Winter Scientific Meeting last week, the College's Anniversary events range from regional meetings to photography competitions and reflect the huge advances the RCoA and anaesthesia have made over the past quarter-century. The Oxford Deanery Anaesthetic Trainees meeting held yesterday was the first of ten regional events supported by the College with a 25th Anniversary bursary. Part of a competitive selection process, these events have been chosen based on diversity of topics, audience and regional coverage. The second supported [event](#) takes place in Newcastle on Tuesday 24 January.

The latest ARIES talk to be uploaded to the College's [YouTube](#) channel features [Colonel Peter Mahoney](#), who shares his insights from treating severely injured patients at Camp Bastion in Afghanistan. The next series of ARIES talks

take place in June and July and will feature Dr Kevin Fong, Mr Martin Bromiley and Professor Anthony Dickenson. More information on ARIES talks can be found [here](#).

As part of the lasting legacy from our Anniversary celebrations, the RCoA is participating in the [Inspiring the Future scheme](#). This is a free service that connects anaesthetists and anaesthetists in training with local schools and colleges. By pledging one hour a year in a school or college you can educate students and raise awareness of our speciality. In my view there is no better way to promote our speciality than to connect with young people and inspire the next generation of anaesthetists, and I would urge as many of you as possible to participate by signing up [here](#).

Our full 25th Anniversary programme of events can be found [here](#) and it includes activities in which members, patients and the public can get involved. If you have any suggestions or would like to contribute to the celebrations, please [let me know](#).

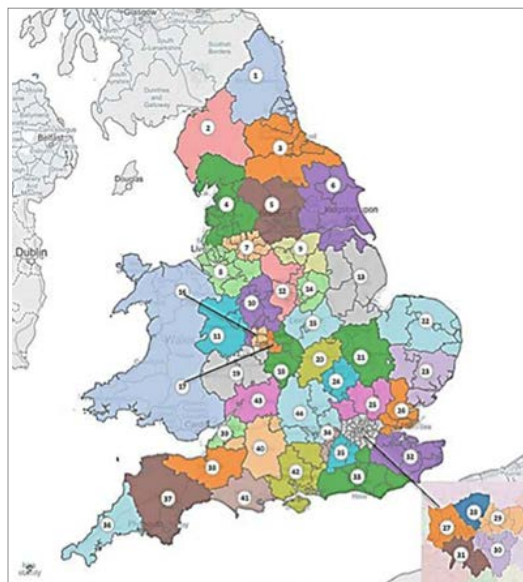
Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) update

It may be a new year but, as I mentioned in the [Guardian](#) last week, the breadth and scale of the demands facing all healthcare professionals across the NHS continue to grow. Spiralling demand, fuelled by the needs of patients with multiple comorbidities and an ageing population, without a commensurate increase in health and social care funding has led to the current crisis.

In [September's](#) newsletter, I wrote that NHS England's response to this significant challenge is the formulation of [Sustainability and Transformation Plans](#) (STPs), five-year blueprints covering all aspects of NHS care and spending.

Last year NHS England published a map of 44 STP 'footprints' - areas in which health and social care organisations have been asked to find potential improvements to the ways that their services are planned and delivered.

The three issues that each region was asked to consider are: improving quality and developing new models of care; improving health and well-being; and improving efficiency of services.



NHS Sustainability and Transformation Plan footprints
Source: NHS England

With all of the STPs now published, a period of consultation will take place to discuss the plans, some of which include controversial measures, such as the closure of services, to meet the remit set by NHS England. The plans will also need to be stress tested to ensure that they are credible and that the changes proposed can be delivered within the timescale and funding available.

The College welcomes any initiative that improves patient care and actively seeks to get involved to support that aim. However, we strongly believe that any decisions made around STPs must have patient care, not financial savings, as their primary focus. In addition, with such a complex framework of 44 health and social care footprints, it will be vital for neighbouring STPs to work in a coordinated way, to ensure that decisions taken by one STP area do not negatively affect a neighbouring area.

STPs will undoubtedly have far-reaching implications for the future of health and social care services in England. As a specialty crucial to the delivery of secondary and tertiary care, the impact on anaesthesia and our related disciplines is likely to be significant. Council and I will do all we can to represent the national view, but I encourage all of our fellows and members to scrutinise their local STP and engage in the consultation process, so that the views of anaesthesia, critical care and pain medicine can be clearly heard.



Anniversary meeting

The College's annual [Anniversary Meeting](#) celebrates the creation of the Faculty of Anaesthetists in 1948 and the award of the Royal Charter to the RCoA in March 1992.

I am delighted to announce that the Patron of the RCoA, Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal, will be joining us to hear more about the significant developments that have taken place in the specialty over the past 25 years. Having joined us last November at our Patient Safety Conference, where she [praised the dedication](#) of anaesthetists to patient safety, it will be an honour to have Her Royal Highness in attendance at an RCoA event once again in March.

With each year's Anniversary Meeting featuring lectures by renowned speakers on various topics, the 2017 meeting is particularly significant given the celebration of our 25th Anniversary of receiving our Royal Charter.

One of the many highlights will be the John Snow Oration by Professor Kate Leslie, a specialist anaesthetist and head of research in the Department of Anaesthesia and Pain Management, Royal Melbourne Hospital, Australia. Her talk is on the topic of growing the next generation of anaesthesia researchers and promises to be a fascinating session.

The overall focus for this meeting will be landmarks in UK anaesthesia. I hope to see many of you there; you can find further information and register for the Anniversary Meeting [here](#).



Listening Event: 30 January

I commented on [Newsnight](#) last week that healthcare professionals are finding it increasingly difficult to deliver safe and effective patient care, and about the impact of the current difficulties in the NHS on patients and clinicians alike. This view was reflected by the majority of anaesthetists in training at our first Listening Event last month. Our [next event will be on Monday 30 January](#) and I am looking forward to discussing a range of topics in a confidential and informal setting.

The Listening Events are part of a wider programme of work that the College is engaged in with our Anaesthetic Trainee Representative Group, which includes a [survey](#) for anaesthetists in training. The survey explores welfare at work, including reflections on feeling valued by employers and your thoughts regarding morale and working conditions. Thank you to those who have already completed the survey – please do share the link with colleagues to ensure a strong response rate.

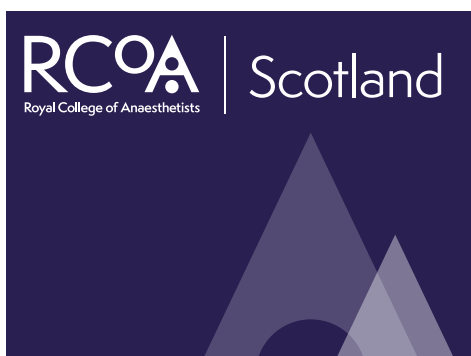
The survey will close at 23:59 on Sunday 22 January and your feedback will help the College to better represent your concerns.



Safety Update

The Safe Anaesthesia Liaison Group (SALG) has issued their quarterly [Patient Safety Update](#), containing important learning regarding reported anaesthesia-related untoward incidents.

[This update](#) contains anonymous case studies from July to September 2016 and includes items relating to surgical never events, drug errors and airway complications. The RCoA would like to bring these important updates to the attention of as many anaesthetists as possible, so please do read and circulate the document as widely as you can. More information on SALG can be found [here](#).



Bring in the new

Voting for election to the [RCoA Advisory Board for Scotland](#) closed on Thursday 12 January and I am pleased to confirm that Dr William McClymont was elected as the consultant member and Dr Graeme Brannan appointed unopposed to the board's SAS vacancy.

I would like to thank all the candidates for standing, as well as the 39% of fellows who voted. Congratulations to Dr McClymont and Dr Brannan, who will work with the Board to ensure that issues of relevance to Scotland can be addressed at local and national levels. The full results [can be found here](#). Terms of office commence in March 2017.



Make your mark

The RCoA has produced draft chapters for consultation for its 2017 Guidelines for the Provision of Anaesthetic Services (GPAS) document. The definitive UK anaesthetic service

reference, these chapters have been drafted using the College's NICE-accredited chapter development process. Please return any comments by Sunday 22 January by filling out and sending [this form](#) to gpas@rcoa.ac.uk.

The Clinical Quality and Research Directorate at the RCoA manages the provision of GPAS as well as all aspects of work relating to clinical standards, quality and safety in anaesthesia. Guidelines and standards are crucial to establishing and maintaining good practice and a high quality anaesthesia service, and I would like to highlight the following two vacancies to fellows and members:

GPAS Editor

The College wishes to appoint an Editor for GPAS, the definitive UK anaesthetic service reference, which underpins our audit and accreditation work. In 2016, the GPAS document for the first time contained chapters that achieved NICE accreditation, further raising its profile with national regulators. Expected to work closely with GPAS chapter authors to compile and edit sections of the document, the successful candidate will also provide senior clinical and academic support to GPAS. The role also involves leading the integration of GPAS with other areas of the RCoA's work to set, measure and promote standards of good anaesthetic practice.

Applications are invited before the closing date of 5pm on Tuesday 31 January 2017. For more information on the position, see the job description [here](#).

Clinical Quality Adviser

An important aspect of the College's work includes responding to clinical enquiries and the provision of up-to-date medical and anaesthetic advice to College Council, committees and individual anaesthetists. In addition to responding to enquiries, the role also involves representing the RCoA on various committees as well as assisting in the development of the Invited Reviews process.

Other duties include providing clinical advice to the College's Communications and External Affairs Directorate on public and media enquiries. The closing date for applications is 5pm on Tuesday 28 February 2017. More information on the post can be found [here](#).

HCAHealthcare uk

Chief Medical Officer Clinical Management Fellowship Programme

With our work crossing many boundaries, anaesthetists have a unique position in being able to see the big picture and having a broad understanding of healthcare delivery. We are natural leaders, which is why I would like to bring to your attention the launch of [HCA Healthcare UK's](#) Chief Medical Officer Clinical Management Fellowship Programme.

The Fellowship Programme will be launched by Professor Sir Bruce Keogh on Monday 23 January 2017 in partnership with Cass Business School. It is open to doctors in training from all specialties, with HCA Healthcare UK looking for eight new fellows to start the programme in September 2017.

Fellows will primarily be based at one of HCA Healthcare UK's flagship clinical sites, while also receiving training in healthcare management and leadership at Cass Business School. As part of the MSc, fellows will spend time developing their clinical leadership and management skills within HCA Healthcare UK, before completing the latter part of their training within the NHS.

The programme will be launched at Cass Business School on Monday 23 January at 6pm. Please email fellowship_launch_event@hcahealthcare.co.uk if you would like to attend and for more information on the Fellowship Programme.



Annual General Meeting 2017

The RCoA's Annual General Meeting will take place as part of the Anniversary Meeting, at 10.50am on Thursday 9 March 2017, at the Mermaid Conference Centre, London. A full AGM agenda will be available on the website in mid-February and linked to in the next [Bulletin](#).

As per College Regulations, I would like to invite Motions for consideration at the meeting, which should be submitted by Wednesday 1 February 2017 to ceo@rcoa.ac.uk. Submitted items will be considered for inclusion at the February Council meeting.

If you have any comments on any of the issues raised in this Newsletter or you would like to express your views on any other matters, I would like to hear from you. Please contact me via presidentnews@rcoa.ac.uk.

Best wishes, Liam