

## Minutes of the RCoA Northern Irish Advisory Board meeting

Tuesday 13 OCTOBER - 2 pm – 4.30 pm

### TEAMS MEETING

#### Present:

Dr Darrell Lowry	NIAB Chair, Southern Trust Representative
Dr Fiona Donald	RCoA Vice President
Mr Jonathan Bruun	RCoA Chief Executive Officer
Dr Richard Laird	Regional Adviser Anaesthesia
Dr Brian Kinirons	Co-opt Member, President, College of Anaesthesiologists of Ireland
Dr William Donaldson	Elected Consultant Member, Northern Trust Representative
Dr Mary Molloy	Deputy Head of School and Deputy RAA Anaesthetics
Dr Conor Farrell	Regional Advisor, PM
Mrs MaryLynne Smith	Lay Committee Representative – North West
Dr Bob Darling	Ex officio, South Eastern Trust Representative
Dr Raymond McKee	Regional Adviser ICM
Dr Cheryl Turkington	Elected Consultant member, Western Trust representative
Jonathan Whale	Committee Secretariat

#### 1. Apologies

Dr Emma Stiby	SAS Representative
Dr Killian McCourt	Elected Consultant Member, Belfast Trust Representative
Dr Neal Beckett	Co-opt Member, Association of Anaesthetists

#### 2. Introduction and Welcome

Dr Lowry welcomed all in attendance at the first meeting of 2020, and announced new appointments, noting that Dr Sinead McGuirk was elected as elected consultant member, Belfast Trust representative, and that Dr Cheryl Turkington was also elected as a new board member. Dr William Donaldson was re-elected as an elected consultant member, Northern Trust representative.

#### 3. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 October 2019 were circulated in advance, the following areas were highlighted:

*8(vii) Standardisation of cardiac arrest numbers to 2222* – it was noted that the project has been suspended due to the pandemic and will resume once appropriate.

No further amendments were registered and the minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

#### 4. President's Business

Dr Fiona Donald Vice President, RCoA, provided the Board with an update and highlighted the following areas of RCoA college work:

##### Elections

Following the completion of the 2020-2021 elections for President and Vice-Presidents, Professor Ravi Mahajan has been re-elected College President for a third year. Dr Fiona Donald has been re-elected Vice-President for a second year and Professor William Harrop-Griffiths has been elected Vice-President for a first year with effect from September 2020.

##### Examinations

It was agreed that all written examinations (FRCA, FPMRCA and FICM) will be delivered online by remote invigilation. The first exam held was for the Faculty of Pain Medicine (FPM), which took place on 26 August. The primary Multiple Choice Question paper (MCQ) examination

experienced technical difficulties during the delivery of the exam, however following a review process it was agreed to continue with TestReach the provider and work towards improving the service in all aspects. The online oral examinations will shortly take place and will include the FRCA examination, pilots are currently taking place to test and support this.

### **Recruitment**

Core recruitment took place before the lockdown, however, the only possible solution for ST3 recruitment was by issuing unverified portfolio scores. Work continues on new ways of using verified portfolio scores and by conducting interviews and ensuring contingency plans are in place to support recruitment going forward.

### **Events**

90% of college events for the remainder of 2020 have been moved to an online delivery method, with the final revision courses delivering online MCQs, providing videos, live webinars and a delegate chat room to support the course. There have also been a series of free webinars which have been well attended and at the end of 2019 RCoA launched their podcast to support education topics. The hosting platform for providing videos has also been enhanced, providing a back catalogue of over 150 lectures and talks, which can be accessed for any device.

### **Curriculum review**

The clinical content of the new 2021 curriculum has been published on the College website, along with the 'gap analyses' for core-Stage one and intermediate-Stage two. Work continues with the Lead Dean and local schools in conjunction with Health Education England (HEE), and devolved nation equivalents, to model the posts required in order to support the move to a three-year model, so that the new curriculum can be approved by the GMC, and ensure alignment with the Acute Care Common Stem (ACCS) programme, which is also due to commence with its new curriculum August 2021. Work continues on both the Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration CESR and examination syllabus in order to support the curriculum changes.

### **Anaesthesia Clinical Services Accreditation (ACSA)**

ACSA onsite review visits have been postponed until March 2021 at the earliest, in light of the impact of COVID-19 on anaesthetic departments.

## **5. CEO's Business**

Mr Jonathan Bruun, RCoA Chief Executive Officer, provided the following update to the Board:

### **Operations**

The college has effectively been closed since mid-March 2020, the facilities team have remained on site as appropriate, and whilst the college can be opened for core business it will remain closed apart for essential business. Staff have remained working from home. The college will continue to be guided by regulation but hopes that occupancy will resume in the New Year.

### **Finance**

Financially the college remains stable, though the College made an operational surplus against budget the value of the College's balance sheet decreased by £1.6m. It was noted that this loss of value was due to spend through our designated funds on research, technology, estate and unrealised losses on our investments. The College has set a deficit budget for 2020-21 and will carefully manage its budgets by conducting frequent reviews and monitoring its position during these turbulent times.

### **Communications**

The team have been particularly active during the pandemic supporting members, the government and informing and explaining to the public and patients about the roles of anaesthetists and intensivists. Thanks were also given to the clinical colleagues who have supported a large number of media enquiries during this time. The Covid-19 guidance hub, jointly produced with the Association of Anaesthetists, the Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine (FICM) and the Intensive Care Society, has provided current information and support to clinicians and continues to be updated as necessary until at least spring 2021.

## **6 Chairman's Business**

### **Administrative Support to the Northern Ireland Board**

The administrative contract with the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health has now ended and in the interim, Jonathan Whale, President's Office Manager, RCoA, is providing administrative support to the Board, whilst a decision is made about support for the future.

## **Terms of Reference and Elections**

An electronic version of the current Terms of Reference were circulated and noted the changes that were approved at RCoA Council in March 2020:

That under constitution that the Board shall, subject to the resolution of Council, comprise some or all of the following members:

- Up to five elected Consultant members being Fellows of the Royal College or the College of Anaesthesiologists of Ireland (CAI) working in Northern Ireland who are on the specialist register of the GMC, elected by Fellows and Associate Fellows working in Northern Ireland.
- One elected member being a Fellow or Member of the Royal College or the CAI working in Northern Ireland who is a Staff or Associate Specialist (SAS), elected by SAS doctors working in Northern Ireland if they can be identified, failing that Fellows, Associate Fellows, Members and Associate Members working in Northern Ireland.

Following this it was noted that Dr Sinead McGuirk, Consultant in Belfast does not have FRCA, but does have FCAI so she now becomes an elected consultant member. Dr Cheryl Turkington will shortly receive FRCA Ad Eundem and therefore becomes an elected Consultant member.

Dr Lowry notified the board that his term of three years as chair has come to an end and following an email to board members for expressions of interest, Dr William Donaldson expressed his interest and has therefore been elected as the new Chair unopposed. His term will commence in the New Year. As Head of School for Anaesthesia in Northern Ireland, Dr Lowry noted that he will continue to remain on the Ni Board as a co-optee. As a result there now remains a position for an elected consultant member. Rose Murphy, Head of the Executive Office, will suggest an election in early 2021 to elect up to 5 consultant members as part of the constitution.

It was further noted that Dr Emma Stibey is also standing down there will be a vacancy for an SAS representative.

### **COVID-19**

A report was circulated to RCoA council in July to update on the current situation in Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland reported 500 deaths and that the Nightingale Hospital was not required, however, in the last couple of weeks the infection rate has increased to approximately 1000 new cases a day. Guidelines continue to be updated to support the increase and Belfast City Hospital is now on standby as the Nightingale hospital to support the surge.

### **Publications from the Department of Health**

Two documents were circulated for information:

- *Establishment of Regional Service Delivery Model: Day Case and Elective Care Procedures in Northern Ireland* – The document sets out the DOH's policy statement for establishing a regional service delivery model for day case elective care procedures in Northern Ireland, which is currently being established in Lagan Valley hospital in Lisburn, regional centre to provide with a day case surgery.
- *Rebuilding, Transition and Transformation of Elective Orthopaedic Care, delivered by Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland* – the department commissioned this blueprint document to provide a programme of work to rebuild Orthopaedic care, provided by Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts and to address the aftermath of the first wave of the pandemic.

### **Workforce Priorities**

Dr Lowry noted the ongoing discussions and work with the RCoA on the future of the workforce. To date there has been little drive to introduce Anaesthesia Associates (AAs) in Northern Ireland. It was also highlighted that Northern Ireland has lowest percentage of SAS grades in the UK and discussions take place to review this. Dr Lowry continues to share discussions directly to the Northern Ireland Workforce Group of which he is a member.

### **The Magee Campus Medical School**

This is a new graduate school with a four year programme and will offer up to 70 places a year. Dr Richard Laird noted that discussions continue with the Dean about ensuring anaesthesia is part of the curriculum, and following funding there will be an emphasis on ensuring that both anaesthesia and Intensive Care Medicine (ICM) will be part of the ongoing developments.

## **7. Training, Recruitment and Manpower**

Dr Richard Laird provided an overview of the current training and appointments which highlighted:

- Dr David Lee has been appointed as the new Trainee Programme Director (TPD) for anaesthesia, it is likely that he will be approached to be a co-optee member of the NI Board in the future.
- **ST3 recruitment** – interviews were held online in September, of the six candidates all were appointable.
- **CT1 recruitment** – 31 candidates were interviewed over two days which was less than previous years. The school offered 16 posts, 12 CT1 posts and four ACCS posts, with all posts being accepted. One trainee is currently on maternity leave and will therefore start in August 2021. Planning for 2021 CT recruitment will take place in January 2021, the format has yet to be finalised.
- **Less than Full Time (LTFT)** – there are currently 11 less than full time trainees, with 14 trainees currently on maternity leave.
- **Out of Programme Training (OOPT)** - One trainee is OOPT with a second trainee cancelling their proposed OOPT to Australia, due to the pandemic.
- **Examinations** – The primary Multiple Choice Question paper (MCQ) was held in September 2020 and seven out of nine local candidates passed.
- **Teaching fellows** – Six clinical teaching fellows were appointed, two for the final FRCA, two for the Primary and two for the POEM course, all receiving funding for postgraduate certificate/diploma in clinical education either from NIMDTA or QUB.
- **Current Courses** – All courses have now gone online, the primary introduction held recently received positive reviews, an ST3 introductory course will be held in November 2020.
- **ARCP panels** – were held in June and conducted virtually with no technical issues, the college tutors were commended on the high quality of the ESSRs.
- **Training** - Some COVID-19 outcomes were issued for trainees who were shielding or who had to be re-deployed to Intensive Care Medicine (ICM). It was reported that one trainee had to have their training extended by three months.
- **Manpower** – There are currently 155 trainees at present, all trusts have now appointed Anaesthetic and Intensive Care Medicine (ICM) posts locally, with no outstanding job approvals at this stage.

### Other business

It was noted that an application has now been made to provide support with the expanding training numbers following introduction of new curriculum, the increasing LTFT numbers and with the delivery of anaesthesia requirements for ICM training and with cross links with ACCS EM.

### 8. Pain Medicine

Dr Connor Farrell updated the Board following the impact of COVID-19 noting that general services had been severely affected.

- There has been significant impact on training, particularly in relation to sign offs.
- A pain fellow has now been appointed and whilst the pain clinic is now becoming fully functional there is will be more scope for him to visit subspecialties in the future.
- Current access into national conferences and to teaching courses has been of benefit to training, and provision has therefore improved due to the digitalisation of the service.
- A pain consultant was recently appointed at Ulster Hospital with another trainee almost at completion.
- It was noted that the recent application for credentialing of Pain Medicine was rejected by the General Medical Council (GMC).

### 9. College of Anaesthesiologists of Ireland

Dr Brian Kinirons updated the Board on college activity to highlight that:

- The college remains open for business to fellows and members, with staff continuing to work remotely, adhering to government guidelines.
- **Project Ether - Enhancement through Electronic Records**, is a transformational project that provides a digital route, vision of the work being done at the college over the next five years. Currently in year two, it has allowed the college to pivot changes in order to integrate training, examinations and the professional competency scheme, with an aim to enhance and provide a much better service to trainees, trainers, examiners, examinees

and tutors. It will also continue to focus on improving services within the professional competency committee scheme.

- **Global COVID-19 Conference** – The College continues to support the RCoA and act as a sister college to the health conference planned in June/July 2021.
- **International Academy of College of Anaesthesiology** – is a collaboration between ANZCA, RCoA, CAI, the Hong Kong College and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, Canada. It will be a collaborate reliance, sharing experiences, ideas and resources going forward and will aim to work on areas of common interests, advocacy, education and training innovation research, safety and quality. It will also provide workforce to contribute to areas of common interest such as global health, patient safety, quality improvement, exam quality and insurance, curriculum development, competency outcomes, wellbeing for doctors, sustainability, diversity and inclusion. Work is currently underway on agreeing the terms of reference before launch.
- **Curriculum Development Project** – the e-curriculum was launched on Friday 9 October and will focus on competency based education and will remain in line with international best practice.
- **Training** – 240 trainees are appointed on the national programme, the yearly intake is normally 40 and funding has been granted to increase this year to 44 to support a run through programme. Recently the programme has instigated a year out scheme which can take place between the second and third year, this is an unaccredited year that the trainee may take out. In addition there is also a second year out being made available between year four and five.
- **Examinations** have been challenging but the changes made in a short time have been successful. Three online examinations have been delivered, with the joint FICM and a membership examination and a Fellowship examination. The Ether Project has continued to support this process.
- **Hospital Inspections** - this process has now gone on line with a virtual inspection taking place during October.
- **ARCP** - were moved online and in July an e portfolio was launched for trainees.
- **CCST fellowship Year** – funding is being sought for this post, which will allow trainees to engage in fellowships such as paediatric anaesthesia, converting the programme to a seven year one.
- **Collaboration with BJA** – Research collaboration continues with the BJA and CIA and this year it will provide 50K funding for a project/scientific collaboration to provide research in Ireland and UK.
- **Collaborate with Health Research Board** – there is a requirement to fund £1m for a 5 year programme in order to identify and promote training for academic leaders/ clinicians for the future.
- **Ether Day** – will focus on promoting the commitment to global health. It was reported that funding has been sought from Irish Aid in order to fund the College of Anaesthesiologists of East Central and Southern Africa in order for it to become a college that delivers both recognised training programmes and examinations that will support sub-Saharan Africa. The work is partnered with the global health sub-committee, RCoA Association and Noraid in order to support this project. The first examinations were held remotely within the region last week.
- **Webinars** – continued to be delivered online, the college has recently invested in a digital studio in order to support this work.

## 10. Intensive Care Medicine Update

Dr Raymond Mackee provided an update to highlight that:

- **Educational programmes** - are currently on hold but will be moved online shortly.
- **Recruitment** - was undertaken on the basis of self-scoring. There has recently been an increase in funding which has meant an increase of up to seven trainees. There are now a total of 25 trainees, with 18 dual training with anaesthesia.
- **Internal medicine trainees** – there has been an increase in trainees, in line with Internal Medicine Training (IMT) training. Trainees now undertake 11 weeks in a critical care environment. It was noted that both N Ireland and Wales are in a positive position by being able to secure these trainees.

- **Examinations** – The faculty exams moved online only with no MCQs being run at present. SoEs and OSCEs will be run via a zoom platform, with pilots taking place to prepare for these.
- **Career Progression** - There have been no delays due to examinations.

It was noted further that preparation for critical care need is underway to support the demand during the pandemic and elective care continues in the usual way which will support intensive care patients.

### **11. Lay Committee Representative**

Mrs MaryLynne Smith notified the board that Dr Carol Pellowe, the current chair will demit her post in March 2021 and Mrs Pauline Elliot will be her successor. New membership on the board currently consists of a lawyer and a senior police officer, however, there still remains a vacancy on the Board for a lay representative for Northern Ireland, in the interim Mrs Smith will attend the NI Board meetings until a representative is recruited.

Current work for the lay committee continues online, attending committees, it recently started representing the Ethics Committee and has now become involved in the ACSA process. The lay committee are looking at hosting a strategy day to review ways of working in the future and how the committee can be more effective. It also aims to review the committee's lack of diversity and how this will be addressed going forward.

### **12. Trainee Issues**

It was noted that Dr Jonathan McCarter has stepped down from his post as trainee representative. The current trainee rep is Dr Arijj Booley.

During the pandemic, trainees were redeployed to support demand in hospitals, feedback has been very supportive in ensuring they are recognised for their support and service during this difficult time. It was noted that the pass rate in the primary MCQ was good at 67%.

### **13. Any other business**

#### **Simulation Training**

The Board discussed Simulation training and how this will be embedded in the curriculum and how the colleges are supporting this: The RCoA noted that they have recently developed the Simulations Strategy Group, however there is currently no suite in the college, but face to face courses have continued to include simulation. The college will continue to look at developing resources to be used in other areas and review local level simulation training.

### **14. Date of the next meeting**

It is proposed that the next meeting is **13<sup>th</sup> April 2021**.