

MEETING OF 65th SCOTTISH COUNCIL
OF
ROYAL COLLEGE OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS (SCOTLAND)
17 February 2018
GP Workforce Paper

Background

Maintaining our *Core Values* and delivering the quality of care our patients deserve are key drivers for achieving the necessary resource for general practice in Scotland through the *Put patients first: Back general practice* campaign. A sustainable GP workforce is essential and the escalating challenges further reinforce the need to continue to promote recruitment and retention, to support the existing workforce through enhancement of the wider multidisciplinary team and to provide meaningful support for wellbeing. The critical position of the existing GP workforce was confirmed in the 2015 ISD National Primary Care Workforce Survey published in June 2016. The 2017 survey was disseminated to GP practices in August and the anticipated report, which will be published this year, will provide the current position as it has evolved over the two-year period since the last survey.

Update

Cabinet Secretary's announcement on GP workforce numbers

On 01 December, the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, Shona Robison MSP announced that the Scottish Government intended to increase GP workforce numbers by 800 over the next decade.

RCGP's own analysis shows that by 2021 Scotland will face a projected shortfall of 856 WTE GPs. While we publicly welcomed the Scottish Government's intention we have been clear that the additional workforce numbers must be WTE and work should be undertaken to ensure that these much-needed additional posts are filled at the earliest opportunity to ensure stability in the GP workforce.

GP Recruitment and Retention Advisory Group

Following a successful bid to Scottish Government for funding to support targeted activity as part of the College's GP Recruitment and Retention Programme. Although this project has now been completed, a key initiative arising from the Recruitment and Retention project has been the formation of the GP Recruitment and Retention Advisory Group, which is continuing to meet quarterly, with RCGP Scotland providing secretariat support. The group comprises of high level stakeholders spanning the GP education journey from school to established practitioner, including medical school Deans, academics, GP Directors and also representation from the GMC, Scottish Government and our P³ Patient Group. The group is currently chaired by RCGP Scotland Deputy Chair (Policy) and is an important forum to discuss and drive the changes needed to enhance recruitment and retention of GPs at all levels.

The GP Recruitment and Retention Advisory Group last met on 27 October 2017 and discussed a wide range of issues relating to GP recruitment and retention. The group discussed the high value placed on positive work experience and teaching within GP practice, however concerns were raised over the capacity for GPs to undertake this work and the funding available for training. Following the meeting, Dr Elaine McNaughton wrote on behalf of the group to the Cabinet Secretary and copied to Richard Foggo to draw to their

attention the Group's concerns regarding restrictions in terms of space within GP premises and request the support of Scottish Government in directing sufficient resources to improve premises development and deliver the resources required to generate capacity in the working day for GPs to teach. The group is currently awaiting a response to this letter from the Cabinet Secretary.

During the October meeting, the GP Recruitment and Retention Advisory Group also considered the Non-GP Speciality Trainee Survey, which highlighted the importance of undergraduate and foundation experience in influencing career choice and also showed that foundation doctors were picking up on the message that general practice was a difficult career. Following this discussion, Dr Elaine McNaughton, as then-Chair of the GP Recruitment and Retention Advisory Group agreed to write to Dr Duncan Henderson, Chair of Scottish Foundation School Board on behalf of the Group, ahead of the publication of the National Primary Care Workforce Plan part three to highlight the Group's concerns that Scotland continues to lag behind England in terms of the level of exposure of Foundation programmes. The Group received a response from Dr Henderson recognising their concerns regarding levels of general practice training posts in Scotland and commenting that the as recent expansion of undergraduate places feeds through the training system there may be a need to consider further growth of foundation programmes in Scotland, including general practice.

The availability and quality of work experience was also discussed during the October meeting of the Group, with Dr Elaine McNaughton providing an overview of the work experience resources developed by RCGP. As an action arising from the meeting, Elaine agreed to set up an initial meeting with representation from the Medical Schools Deans and appropriate undergraduate members of the Group to see how the work shadowing scheme can be best supported.

The Group also received an update on RCGP's work on CEGPR and international recruitment from Lisa Johnsen. The RCGP launched the guide for overseas doctors at the Annual Conference held in October, which would take the form of a live document on the RCGP website. The College is also looking at improvements to the process for doctors coming to Scotland from abroad through the equivalence programme, CEGPR, to make it less onerous.

The Group will next meet on 31 January, with Dr Alasdair Forbes taking up the Chairmanship of the GP Recruitment and Retention Advisory Group, in his capacity as Deputy Chair (Policy) RCGP Scotland.

Destination GP

RCGP, in conjunction with Medical Schools Council (MSC), published '*Destination GP: Medical students' experiences of perceptions of general practice*' in late 2017. This report was based on a survey carried out by the RCGP and MSC jointly commissioned a survey of medical students across the UK. The project aimed to build the evidence base on medical students' perceptions of general practice, and how and where they are exposed to misconceptions and negative views. The report sets out a series of recommendations where further work is needed to tackle the spread of misconceptions and negativity surrounding general practice.

In Scotland, five medical schools participated in the study with Edinburgh University submitting a very high number of responses. The study found that there was evidence of substantial denigration of general practice within university environments and highlights the impact that this has on students' choices when considering a career in general practice. The full report can be found here:

Following publication of *Destination GP*, John Anderson, Committees and Executive Officer, RCGP Scotland, circulated this to the members of the GP Recruitment and Retention Advisory Group. This has led to constructive dialogue opening up with NHS Education for Scotland (NES) on ways in which RCGP Scotland and NES can work together to build on the findings of *Destination GP*. NES have reassessed their recruitment efforts based on the findings of the report and it is hoped that the College and NES can work together to ensure that a positive image of general practice is being portrayed to potential trainees.

National Primary Care Workforce Plan (Part 3)

Following the approval of Phase One of the GMS Contract 2018 by GPs, the Scottish Government have indicated that they will release the third part of the National Primary Care Workforce Plan, which will set out how the Scottish Government intends to staff primary care and increase workforce levels, at the end of February.

Appraisal

Drs Carey Lunan, Alasdair Forbes and Elaine McNaughton recently met with NES to discuss problems with the GP appraisal process and how to make it less burdensome for GPs. This meeting was positive and sets a solid basis for discussions on appraisal going forward.

Action: *Members are asked to note the update.*

Responsible Officer:

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Date:

29 January 2018