



FACULTY OF PUBLIC HEALTH MEDICINE

ROYAL COLLEGE OF
PHYSICIANS OF IRELAND

2023

ANNUAL REPORT



Faculty of Public Health Medicine Conferring Ceremony, RCPI, No.6 Kildare Street, Dublin, 23 May 2023

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About the Faculty of Public Health Medicine

The Faculty of Public Health Medicine, RCPI, has been an integral part of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland since 1976. Its aim is to advance the science, art and practice of Public Health Medicine in Ireland, and to promote education, study and research in Public Health Medicine.

The Faculty achieves this aim through:

- Acting as an authoritative body for consultation on matters of educational or public interest concerning Public Health Medicine
- Representing the specialty of Public Health Medicine on international, national and regional councils or committees concerned with postgraduate medical education
- Obtaining and maintaining recognition for itself as the body responsible for advising on all matters concerning Public Health Medicine under any scheme for specialist training in Ireland
- Acting in an advisory capacity to key stakeholders such as Government and statutory bodies in all matters pertaining to Public Health Medicine
- Setting and maintaining standards for the Membership of the Faculty of Public Health Medicine examinations.

Supporting Functions

The Faculty is supported by the following administrative functions within RCPI:

- Head of Postgraduate Training and Examinations: Mr Colm Small
- Head of Education: Ms Janet Baret
- Head of Healthcare Leadership: Dr Trevor Duffy
- CTO & Digital: Mr Michael Hughes, Chief Technology Officer
- Head of Business Development: Ms Sinead Lucey
- Corporate Services: Mr Barry Quinlan, Chief Financial Officer
- Communications: Ms Siobhan Creaton, Head

All of the above are under the management of the CEO, Audrey Houlihan

A Message from the Dean

Prof Cecily Kelleher

06 December 2023

Dear Members, Fellows and Colleagues,



As 2023 draws to a close we mark again many significant highlights during the year. Progress continues on the agreed schedule of appointments to posts as Consultants in Public Health Medicine and the Slaintecare implementation framework at National and regional level continues to take shape. The six area based public health departments are embedding and the specialist workforce and inter-disciplinary teams are coming on stream. The aspiration to create an integrated evidence-based health care system responsive to need and

centred around the person, is becoming a reality and the new reforms should see us rise to the demographic changes and complex challenges to come.

There is no underestimating the global challenges we face in 2023. At the time of writing, the Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework convention on Climate Change, the COP summit in Dubai, is learning that this has been the warmest year ever recorded and climate change is being reflected in the daily experience of people and populations across the world. In RCPI it is not just our Faculty of Public Health Medicine that promotes the role of the modern physician in advocating for a better future. The St Luke's day theme this year was on climate change and I co-chaired a sessions with Dr Sheelagh O'Brien of FOM that showed cross-disciplinary engagement in presentations and discussion, led by incoming President of RCPI, Dr Diarmuid O' Shea.

We need a responsive cross sectoral approach to future pandemic preparedness as well as to what the WHO defines as the "new normal" where we recognise the lessons learned from unintended consequences of the pandemic across all services and not just crucial infection prevention and control, having seen increased morbidity and mortality and a disproportionate impact on the vulnerable and disadvantaged, including older people.

In addition to Slaintecare and Healthy Ireland and the ongoing transformative process in HSE, on 6th September the report of the Public Health Reform Expert Advisory Group, chaired by President of Imperial College London, Dr Hugh Brady was published. The outgoing President of RCPI, Professor Mary Horgan was appointed recently to lead on the design of a new

emerging threats agency. We in the Faculty of Public Health Medicine will continue to play a significant ongoing lead role in bringing about a state of the art surveillance and response structure into the future.

As we plan for the future of our Faculty, our governance review, co-chaired by Honorary Secretary Dr Paul Kavanagh and myself, is in train. We wish to serve the needs of all our faculty community across Ireland and indeed to provide an opportunity for International graduates of Medicine to take our examinations. In common with other faculties we are exploring means to create also a new opportunity for associate membership. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are values that are embedded in our work programmes and practices. The new FRCPI Fellowship process also came on stream from July 2023 and we encourage Faculty to consult the website and read further in this report on the application process.

Highlights during the year included:

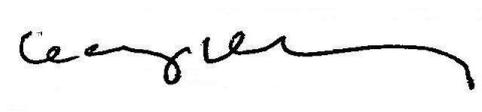
- A competitive interview process for inclusion in our HST that saw nine new trainees admitted in July
- An Aspire post CSCST fellowship awarded to Dr Eimear Burke and Dr Anne Dee as clinical lead
- Completion in September of our International Clinical Fellow in PHM, Dr Salama Alkalbani
- Ongoing roll-out of our three part membership examination programme including the new part 111 examination
- The Faculty winter and summer scientific programmes, meticulously planned by Dr Emer O'Connell and team, with the support of the RCPI in-house staff. Two IMJ supplements of proceedings published to date and a lively and varied programme of invited speakers, oral and moderated poster sessions
- Admission ceremony of 5 diplomate, 4 member and 2 Fellows on 23 May 2023, including our honorary secretary Dr Paul Kavanagh and Professor Noel McCarthy of TCD.
- Dr Fionnuala Donohue, Dr Zachary Johnson medal winner and Dr Orlaith O'Reilly, Dr Kevin Kelleher medal winner

This year indeed, we placed a special emphasis on all our prizes and awards. Dr Andrea Bowe receives the Valentine Barry award based on examination performance and Dr Karen McCarthy received the Dr Dorothy Stopford Price award at the RCPI Trainees day. We also will be inaugurating the Dr Emer Feely medal for Trainer excellence in the Republic of Ireland, commencing in 2024, the first inaugural award to Emer's family is planned for summer 2024.

This year we mark the departure of Ritika Sureka as Faculty Coordinator and thank her for her tremendous input as well as the other colleagues named in our report who contributed to our work and we welcome Brian O Murchu into the role. Finally, a special tribute to

Barbara Conneely Team Lead, Training & Faculties, who passed away on 25 November 2023. Barbara was an excellent colleague and stalwart supporter, of our faculty and of the wider RCPI, up to and including her work on the recently established Governance review group. We extend our condolences to Barbara's family, may she rest in peace.

May I wish you and yours season's greetings at the close of this year and a happy and prosperous 2024.



Prof Cecily Kelleher

Dean, Faculty of Public Health Medicine

Faculty Representation

Expert Group	
RCPI Training Committee	Dr Anne Sheahan
RCPI Research Committee	Dr Howard Johnson
RCPI Collegiate Membership and Engagement Steering Group	Prof Patricia Fitzpatrick
Working Group for Recognition and Regulation of Multidisciplinary Public Health	Dr Caroline Mason Mohan
The Forum of Postgraduate Training Bodies Health and Wellbeing Committee	Dr Mary Ward Dr Celia O'Hare
The Forum of Postgraduate Training Bodies Quality and Patient Safety Committee	Dr Caroline Mason Mohan
RCPI Trainees' Committee's Public Health Forum Representative	Dr Lucinda Ryan
The Public Health Reform Expert Advisory Group of the Department of Health	Prof Cecily Kelleher Prof Patricia Fitzpatrick
National Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme - Clinical Advisory Group Membership	Dr Fiona Cianci
Medical Council Consultative Forum on the Regulation of Education and Training	Prof Cecily Kelleher
National Immunisation Advisory Committee	Dr Mary Ward
Faculty in Northern Ireland (FINI)	Dr Lourda Geoghegan
Education and Faculty Affairs Committee (UK)	Dr Triona McCarthy
National Clinical Programme for Infectious Diseases	Dr Derval Igoe Dr Ruth McDermott
HIQA HTA on newborn screening for severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID)	Dr Caroline Mason Mohan

Business of the Honorary Secretary

Dr Paul Kavanagh

The Board met on 5 occasions between January and December 2023, on 25 January, 29 March, 14 June, 06 September, and 15 November. The names and attendance of the Board members are listed below in the accordance with Standing Order XVII (v).

The following members will be demitting from the Board upon completion of their term of office: Dr Lucinda Ryan. The advice and support have been much appreciated throughout the year.

Prof Cecily Kelleher served as both Dean and Honorary Secretary up to May 2023 until Dr Paul Kavanagh took over the role of Honorary Secretary.

Dr Anne Sheahan serves on the Board as an ex-officio member in her capacity as National Specialty Director (NSD). Great credit and thanks are due to Dr Sheahan and Dr Triona McCarthy, Deputy NSD, for their unflagging commitment in supporting the Higher Specialist Training Programme.

The Dean established a Policy and Advocacy Group within the Faculty Board, for a period of a year, to review of policy documents received by the Faculty. An interim Board meeting was held on 19 October to discuss correspondence received from the HSE Office of the Chief Clinical Officer in relation to Public Health Medicine consultant recruitment. The Board agreed to strongly endorse the rollout of phase 2 and 3 consultant post recruitments.

The Dean received a Discussion Paper on “Considering a Multi-disciplinary Public Health Workforce in Ireland” from the Institute of Public Health for review. A subgroup within the Faculty Board has been established to meet with the Institute to discuss the proposed considerations.

The Faculty governance review began in May this year. It was agreed that the Faculty’s Examinations Committee, Meetings Committee, Fellowship Committee and Specialty Training Committee will be part of this Review. The chairs of these committees have been asked to draft their committees’ terms of reference. The review group will also consider whether defunct committees need to be re-established and shall review whether further committees need to be established.

The Faculty admission ceremony took place in person at No. 6 Kildare Street on the evening of 23 May 2023 as part of the two-day Summer Scientific Meeting. During the ceremony, 3 Fellows, 4 Members, 5 Diplomate Members and 4 CSCST graduates were also conferred in person. It was an evening of celebration for all conferees.

Currently the Faculty of Public Health Medicine has 13 Honorary Fellows, 144 Fellows, 86 Members and 14 Diplomate Members.

The Board

The Faculty is governed by the Board, the Chair of which is the Dean of the Faculty. The Dean attended meetings of the College Executive Board on behalf of the Faculty.

Board membership for the 2022/2023 period, and Board attendance, was as follows:

Board member	Position	No. of meetings
Prof Cecily Kelleher	Dean	5
Dr Mary Ward	Convenor of Exams	2
Vacancy	NI Affairs Rep	
Dr Mai Mannix	Fellow	3
Dr Lucinda Ryan	SpR	4
Prof Alan Baird	External member	5
Ms Janis Morrissey	External member	5
Dr Anna Clarke	Faculty rep on Council	5
Dr Lourda Geoghegan	Fellow	5
Dr Anne Sheahan	NSD	4
Dr Kevin Kelleher	Honorary Treasurer	5
Prof David Weakliam	Fellow	4
Dr Anne Dee	Fellow	4
Dr Geraldine McDarby	Member	3
Dr Douglas Hamilton	Member	4
Dr Fiona Cianci	Member	4
Dr Paul Kavanagh	Member	4
Dr Keith Ian Quintyne	Fellow	5

I am grateful to Faculty Officer, our Treasurer, Dr Kevin Kelleher, for his support with finances during the year, and also to other Board Members for their invaluable input into the Faculty's work.

Sincere thanks also to the chairs of the Faculty's subcommittees, including Dr Anna Clarke, Chair of the Fellowship Committee, Dr Derval Igoe, Chair of the Public Health Medicine Examinations Committee, Dr Emer O'Connell, Chair of the Meetings Committee, for their tremendous contributions in the past year, and also to all those who participate in these committees, your dedicated time and expertise have been appreciated.

Special thanks to Dr Paul Kavanagh, Convenor Part I, Dr Lourda Geoghegan, Convenor Part III, and especially Dr Mary Ward, Convenor of Examinations and Convenor Part II, who have done an excellent job in holding examinations with such high standards.

I would also like to thank outgoing President Professor Mary Horgan, Ms Audrey Houlihan, and Ms Sheila Gallagher for their support and counsel. Acknowledgement and gratitude also to college administration staff, Mr Colm Small, Mr Louis Lavelle, Ms Cliona McHugh, Ms Barbara Conneely and most especially to Ms Ritika Sureka for their hard work and organisation during 2023. Thanks also to Ms Kate Healy, Marketing and Membership Manager, Mr Barry Quinlan, Finance Manager, Ms Hadas Levy, Health and Wellbeing Manager, Ms Hilary Copeland and Ms Mary Hernandez in the events team, Ms Niamh O'Sullivan, Communications Manager, and all RCPI colleagues for their ongoing support.

Honorary Treasurer and Finance Report

*Dr Kevin Kelleher, Honorary Treasurer,
Mr Barry Quinlan, RCPI Finance Manager,*

Income and Expenditure for Financial Year ended 30 June 2023 Commentary

General

A deficit of €3,616 was generated for the 12 months to end June 2023. This is a decrease of €13,907 (135%) on last year's surplus of €10,292.

Income

Total Income (excluding investment income) generated for the year-end June 2023 was €145,255. This has increased by €24,793 (21%) on last year and is mainly due to an increase in Event Fee income and HSE Main SLA Funding

Income is classed under three broad headings:

- Subscriptions and Admission Fees
- Event Fee Income
- HSE Grant Income

Subscriptions and Admission Fees

Receipts from Subscriptions were €25,914 in 2022-23 versus €23,347 in 2021-22, an increase of €2,567 (11%) on last year. Admission income was NIL in 2022-23 versus €9,680 in 2021-22.

In 2022-23, 94% of Fellows, 72% of Members, and 33% of Diplomats paid their subscriptions. In 2021-22, 87% of Fellows, 59% of Members, and 17% of Diplomats paid their subscriptions.

Event Fee Income and Sponsorship

Event fee income for 2022-23 was €38,443 compared with €19,437 in 2021-22. This is due to increased registration for the Winter Scientific and Summer Scientific meetings, plus some additional HSE HSPC income.

HSE Grant Income

This relates to the SLA to deliver training.

The amount of €80,898 is the proportion of the grant relating to the Faculty to cover cost of overheads and administrative running costs. This has increased by €12,901 when compared to 2021-22.

Investments

Investments held by the College at the end of June 2023 were €8,839,497, of which €182,653 was apportioned to the Faculty. The investments apportioned to the Faculty have increased by €4,458 in 2022-23, compared with a decrease of €7,371 in 2021-22.

Costs

Costs are categorised as follows:

- Direct Costs, which are attributed to staffing and administration costs,
- Overhead recharge, which is for rent, insurance, light, heat, etc., and to cover the provision of the services of Finance, IT and HR, etc.

Direct Costs

Direct Costs total €82,432 for the year, an increase of €27,775 (51%) on last year.

- Catering, which increased by €8,053,
- Wages and Salaries, which increased by €9,312,
- Travel & accommodation, which increased by €250,
- IT Costs, which increased by €12,705
- and other direct costs, which decreased by €2,544.

The higher spend in 2022-23, versus 2021-22, is due to overall increased event activity, especially increased AV requirements for the Winter Scientific and Summer Scientific meetings.

Overhead recharge

Overhead recharge of €70,897 has been charged to the Faculty of Public Health accounts for 2022-23, compared with €48,143 in 2021-22. The increase relates to overheads associated with events and general overhead increases throughout the year (support staff costs, utilities, insurance). This constitutes 0.9% of the overall College overhead.

Profit & Loss					
Company: Faculty of Public Health Medicine					
Financial Year Ending: 2023					
Calendar Period: 12 - June					
Dimension: Cost Centre Element: PHM - SLA, Public Health Medicine					
	Actual	Budget		Prior Yr Actual	
	30/06/2023	30/06/2023	€ Var	30/06/2022	€ Var
Income					
Fee Income	38,443	23,500	14,943	19,437	19,005
Subscriptions Income	25,914	19,073	6,841	23,347	2,567
Admissions/Conferring Income	0	2,000	-2,000	9,680	-9,680
HSE Main SLA Funding	80,898	68,836	12,062	67,997	12,901
	145,255	113,409	31,846	120,462	24,793
Direct Costs					
Direct Catering	-20,640	-17,000	-3,640	-10,607	-10,032
Direct Beverages	0	0	0	-1,980	1,980
Direct Wages & Salaries	-36,152	-35,501	-651	-28,542	-7,610
Direct PRSI	-3,995	-3,923	-72	-3,149	-846
Direct Pension	-1,964	-2,367	403	-1,345	-619
Direct Employee Benefits	-420	0	-420	-183	-237
Direct Professional Fees	-1,400	0	-1,400	0	-1,400
Direct Accommodation	-647	-4,000	3,354	-478	-169
Direct Travel - Other	-81	-7,300	7,219	0	-81
Direct Subsistence	0	-1,500	1,500	0	0
Direct Stationery	0	-320	320	0	0
Direct Photography	-1,722	0	-1,722	-800	-923
Direct Presentations, Gifts, Medals	-151	-900	749	-1,745	1,594
Direct Meeting Costs	0	0	0	-2,761	2,761
Direct IT Operations: IT Managed Service	0	0	0	-1,668	1,668
Direct IT Telecommunications: Data	-14,373	0	-14,373	0	-14,373
Direct Subscriptions	-120	-1,400	1,280	-1,400	1,280
Direct Bursaries	0	-10,000	10,000	0	0
Direct Miscellaneous Costs	-768	-17,900	17,133	0	-768
	-82,432	-102,111	19,679	-54,657	-27,775
Gross Profit	62,823	11,298	51,525	65,805	-2,982
Indirect Costs					
Overhead Allocation	-70,897	0	-70,897	-48,143	-22,754
Investment Income & Bank Interest Received					
Unrealised Gain/Loss on Valuation of Investments	4,458	0	4,458	-7,371	11,829
NET INCOME(LOSS)	-3,616	11,298	-14,914	10,292	-13,907

As the College finances are generally being reviewed, particularly the reserves, the Faculty only has a relatively small figure available for discretionary spending mainly as a consequence of fees.

The College and Faculties/Institutes reserves have been reviewed by an external consultant. Corrections have been made to the reserves of each Faculty/Institute to take account of the charities regulator reserves and the under allocation of College overheads for support costs such as Finance, Facilities, IT, HR, etc. from 2013 to 2023. This resulted in development reserves for the Faculty/Institute (subject to approval limits etc.). For year end 30 June 2023 income and costs have been allocated across the College and Faculties/Institutes. The plan is that the Faculties/Institutes will commit to a balanced budget.

National Specialty Director

Dr Anne Sheahan, NSD

Dr Triona McCarthy, Deputy NSD

Overview

Special acknowledgment and thanks are given to Heads of Departments and Trainers for the continuation of the important function of specialist training as Crowe Horwath Reform and Slatintecare is progressed. There has been a lot of movement of staff with the establishment of the wider domains of public health over the past year and this will continue to impact on management of the training programme over the next year. But it has provided huge opportunity for trainees to gain experience in all public health competencies.

Congratulations and all good wishes for the future to those who obtained their Certificate of Satisfactory Completion of Specialist Training since the last AGM: Dr David Kelly and Dr Robert Conway.

We welcome the trainees who started Higher Specialist Training (HST) in July 2023: Dr Shaunna Kelly, Dr Rachel McNamara, Dr Ciara Conlan, Dr Aine Varley, Dr Emer Liddy, Dr Helen Cooper, Dr Neil Hyland, Dr Tessa O’Gorman, and Dr Claire Sharkey.

With the above 9 trainees starting the Programme, there are 46 Specialist Registrars in Public Health Medicine.

Induction

The Faculty and RCPI support staff provided an in-person induction day on 07 July for incoming first year SpRs. The induction day was also attended by a number of trainees from years 2, 3 and 4 and trainers. The attendees were welcomed by the Dean of the Faculty, Professor Cecily Kelleher, who commented on the depth and wealth of experience brought to the Programme by these new trainees. They were also welcomed by the National Director of Public Health, Dr John Cuddihy who gave them background information on the reform of the public health service and outlined long term opportunities for them.

Presentations on the day outlined experiences of current SpRs on use of the ePortfolio, how to record progress and balancing the Master’s in Public Health course with other requirements in the first year of training. They also discussed their experience of identification and completion of Part II Public Health Reports. Dr Ian Quintyne gave an overview of the role of a trainer. Dr Declan McKeown who leads the Study Day education sessions gave an outline of the topics dealt with in the past and welcomed input on what areas of interest could be addressed during these sessions.

The latter part of the day focused on the business and HR processes associated with training, with presentations given by Edel Martin, HR Officer, and Ciaran McNamee, Business Manager in the Office of the National Clinical Director Health Protection.

A second induction session was provided virtually in July by Mariangela Esposito from the RCPI Education Department. The session covered information on the ePortfolio and also included a Q&A session. We are very grateful to all those who contributed to the sessions.

Curriculum Review

The new outcome-based Curriculum for Higher Specialist Training had been in place for one year and the incoming trainees are also using this. A training session for trainers and trainees was provided by Aisling Smith from the RCPI Education Department who continues to support this work. She has received feedback on the user experience from trainees and trainers and has incorporated changes into the ePortfolio.

Dr Niamh Bambury has been asked by the Board to lead on a review of the new curriculum. A subgroup has been convened and completed a review of the experience of trainers and trainees who have used the OBC over its first year. They will continue to review the updated OBC and address wider competencies such as professionalism and leadership. Membership includes 1st and 2nd year trainees, trainers who have used the new curriculum and members of the RCPI Education Department.

Study Hours

Thursday afternoons continue to be used as protected time for trainees. A schedule of study session topics and training days have been organised. Thanks to the speakers who have presented on a wide variety of topics at these study hours. A special thanks also to Dr Philippa White, former lead NCHD, and to the incoming lead Dr Catriona Kelly for organising the sessions.

A particular thank you to Dr Declan McKeown of the Public Health Intelligence Unit who has provided detailed sessions for many of the study sessions and has also facilitated other contributions.

Progress in Training

End of Year Evaluations with trainees and trainers took place in May and June this year. A small number of mid-year assessments must be completed. We thank the Extern assessor Dr Lourda Geoghegan, and special thanks also to RCPI support staff and to all trainees. The assessments were undertaken virtually.

Training Sites

Specialist Registrars in Higher Specialist Training are in training posts in regional Departments of Public Health and in specialty placements in the Department of Health, the National Immunisation Office, the National Cancer Control Programme, the National Screening Service, Global Health, WHO, Child Health, the Health Intelligence Unit and the Office of the National Clinical Director for Health Protection. Thanks to Prof David Weakliam who facilitated liaison with a division in WHO Geneva to agree to a two-year training programme, for four six-month placements, to work on Quality Systems and Resilience. A fourth trainee is now on this placement and it has now returned to in person attendance in Geneva. It had moved to virtual during the pandemic. We are working towards increasing the number of specialty placement sites for the Programme, particularly options based outside Dublin.

Training Site Inspections and Accreditation

Each site providing training has to undergo a site inspection process to determine its suitability to deliver Higher Specialist Training according to the requirements set out in the training curriculum. The inspection panel (NSD, RCPI Chair) carry out a detailed interview with trainers, trainees and management representatives, and an inspection of the facilities every five years and each new site has to be accredited.

Site inspections had been paused during the pandemic but was recommenced in 2023. The accreditation process took place during June 2023 with virtual meetings with each site and also with trainees. A number of site inspections have taken place and a number are planned in the coming months. This will include visits to new training sites including Child Health, National Social Inclusion, Office of the National Director of Public Health, Office of National Director for Health Protection and Institute of Public Health. The inspection panel has completed reports for each site and an overall report which has been shared with all training sites.

Trainer Development Project

The RCPI Trainer Engagement Project continues. A Refresher Course for all trainers approved pre-2019 was designed and launched in October 2022. This course is available on Brightspace. A repository of resources was created in The Trainer Hub, and also on Brightspace. The second RCPI Trainer Conference took place in November 2023. The project will proceed into 2024 to continue its aim of improving resource and supports for our trainers across all Training Bodies in RCPI.

Specialty Training Committee

The Specialty Training Committee (STC) meet on a quarterly basis. It is chaired by the NSD, with trainee representatives and trainers in attendance. The trainee representatives report

on key points arising from the Trainer-Trainee Subcommittee which is co-chaired by the Deputy NSD and a trainee representative. Thanks to outgoing trainee representative Dr Ciara Kelly for her contribution to this Committee.

Trainers have continued to be engaged with the Programme and will be provided with additional training on the new Curriculum. The Convenors of Examinations have been providing information to trainees, including sharing feedback from the Extern. They have provided sessions for both trainees and trainers on the format and the requirements for all three parts of the MFPHMI exams. Thanks to Dr Derval Igoe, Dr Mary Ward, Dr Paul Kavanagh, and Dr Lourda Geoghegan for their work. Having increased the number of training places, further work is required to expand training opportunities and to support trainees as much as possible to balance training requirements with personal responsibilities.

Acknowledgments

We wish to extend thanks to all our colleagues who contribute as trainers, Training Leads in their departments, as well as to trainers who have supported and evaluated the progress of trainees, including supporting them during exam preparation. We have several new trainers who are very welcome. Trainer courses run by RCPI are valuable for upskilling and for learning about the latest developments to provide training and support trainees.

Examinations

Dr Derval Igoe, Chair Public Health Medicine Examinations Committee

Dr Mary Ward, Convenor of Examinations and Convenor Part II

Dr Paul Kavanagh, Convenor Part I

Dr Lourda Geoghegan, Convenor Part III

Committee: Anne Dee, Anne Sheahan, Derval Igoe, Eibhlin Connolly, Fiona Cianci, Keith Ian Quintyne, Lois O'Connor, Lourda Geoghegan, Mary Ward, Peter Barrett, Regina Kiernan, Patricia Fitzpatrick, Paul Kavanagh, Sarah O'Brien, Zubair Kabir

Online and In-Person Examinations

In April 2023, the **MFPHMI Part I** was again successfully delivered online using remote invigilation, which means that candidates sat the same examination (structure, format and length), in a quiet, secure place of their choosing on a platform provided by TestReach. The Examinations Department are using this company for other College examinations and procedures will be modified if necessary, based on experience across the suite of examinations. In line with other written examinations across College, the MFPHMI Part I will now continue to be delivered online.

The **MFPHMI Part II** Public Health Reports (PHRs) examination were held in person this year in April and October.

There were two sittings of the **MFPHMI Part III** oral examination of professional competence (OEPC) this year in June and November. This OEPC was designed to test whether the candidate can apply their knowledge across the range of public health domains and communicate information on public health scenarios as expected of a public health physician practising independently.

Dr Derek Ward continued as Extern Examiner for the MFPHMI Examinations in 2023. He is a Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Applied Research in the University of Birmingham and has an honorary contract with Public Health England. He is also Chair of Examiners for the UK Faculty of Public Health Diploma Examination (equivalent to Part I MFPHMI).

Examinations Statistics

MFPHMI Part I				
Date	Candidates*	Pass	Fail	Pass rate
25 & 26 April 2023	9	6	3**	67%

*6 trainees / 3 non-trainees

**one candidate can bank Papers 1+2

MFPHMI Part II				
Date	Candidates	Reports	Pass (reports)	Pass rate for reports
18 April 2023	8	9	7	78%
3 October 2023	8	9	7	78%

MFPHMI Part III				
Date	Candidates	Pass	Fail	Pass rate
6 June 2023	3	2	1	67%
28 November 2023	4	3	1	75%

Changes to the Part II Forms

PHMEC underwent a review of the Part II Supplementary and Testimonial forms which resulted in their revision. From 2024 candidates will be required to reach a joint decision, in partnership with their Trainer and/or Advisor regarding what level of public access is appropriate for each PHR once accepted into the RCPI Digital Repository. Candidates will be able to choose from three levels of access to PHRs which will be a mandatory component of the examination process:

1. Members of the public subject to a one-year delay
2. Only MFPHMI members and Part II exam candidates (individuals who have passed the MFPHMI Part I exam or equivalent)
3. Only members of the Public Health Medicine Examinations Committee (PHMEC)

The updated Supplementary and Testimonial forms are now accessible on the College website.

Revised Criteria for the Valentine Barry Award

The Valentine Barry Award will be awarded every two years and it commenced at the Part III sitting in June 2023. The award will be for the candidate who has performed best among all candidates sitting Part III Oral Examination of Professional Competence during each two-year period. After two years, the Convener of Part III will review the shortlisted candidates' performance (marks, and brief descriptions) and will identify who has performed to the highest standard. The Convenor of Examinations will make a recommendation to the Board on who should receive the award. The decision to make the award rests with the Board.

Meetings Committee

Dr Emer O'Connell, Chair

Committee: Dr Mary T O'Mahony, Dr Howard Johnson, Dr Caroline Mason Mohan, Dr Declan McKeown, Dr Helen McAvoy, Dr Kenneth Beatty, Dr Laura Heavey, Dr Heidi Pelly, Dr Peter Barrett, Dr Ciara Kelly

Overview

The Committee was supported by Ms Mary Hernandez, RCPI Events Coordinator. Ms Hernandez is no longer with RCPI. We wish her well in her career and thank her for her expertise and guidance. Ms Roisin O'Donnell is now assisting us.

I am very grateful to the RCPI Events Team, our Dean Prof Cecily Kelleher, Ms. Ritika Sureka, Training and Faculty Coordinator, and the members of the Meetings Committee for their ongoing support to these meetings. Ms Sureka is also no longer with RCPI and we wish her well in her career and thank her for her expertise and guidance. Mr Brian O'Murchu is now assisting us. Dr Heidi Pelly is standing down from the committee, our thanks to her excellent contribution.

2023 Summer Scientific Meeting

The Faculty of Public Health Medicine welcomed a full house to No. 6 Kildare Street on Tuesday 23 and Wednesday 24 May 2023 for its Summer Scientific Meeting.

Health is better than wealth or as Gaeilge *Is fearr an tsláinte ná na táinte*, was the theme for the two day conference which featured guest speakers, as well as oral and poster presentations.

Frontline workers provided a series of presentations on health service utilization, the impact of respiratory viruses, health service improvement, and recent insights from health protection.

Dr Elise Crayton, Faculty of Brain Sciences Disability Equity Lead and Research Fellow at the University College London (UCL) Centre for Behaviour Change lead a riveting discussion on applying behavioural science frameworks to drive change in public health behaviours.

Later we heard from Mary O'Meara, Director of Public Health, National TB Lead, and Dr Emma Roycroft, Specialist Medical Scientist at the Irish Mycobacteria Reference Laboratory in St. James's Hospital. The explored TB clusters in Ireland, followed by a discussion chaired by Dr Anne Sheahan, Area Director of Public Health, Area D.

Dr Abigail Collins, National Clinical Lead, Child Health Public Health, and Jackie Austin, Director of Public Health Nursing, spoke about inequalities and inequities in child health, with a focus on children's screening services, and the impact of poverty.

Dr Ina Kelly, incoming Consultant in Public Health Medicine – Environmental Health, explored climate change and the public health impact in Ireland.

The event also featured a wide array of poster presentations.

The Faculty of Public Health Medicine welcomed three new Fellows, four Collegiate Members, and five Diplomate Members, and conferred three CSCSTs.

Congratulations to our newest Members and Fellows, who join our globally connected community of doctors learning together to improve people's health.

2023 Winter Scientific Meeting

The WSM 2023 took place on 6 December 2023. We received again a significant number of abstracts. There will be extended short oral presentations and active poster tours led by our Dean. The event promises an insightful and informative programme of speakers covering topics of mortality surveillance and health protection insights including:

- Dr Tracey Cooper
- Professor Breda Smyth, Chief Medical Officer, CMO
- Dr John Cuddihy, National Director of Public Health
- Professor Patricia Fitzpatrick, UCD School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sport Science

Faculty Events Report

RCPI Events Team

Summary Overview

The following report outlines the events activity for academic year 2022-23.

The topics covered were:

1. 23/24 May 2023 - Faculty of Public Health – Summer Scientific Meeting
2. 7 December 2022 – Faculty of Public Health – Winter Scientific Meeting

Survey Feedback:

1. 23/24 May 2023-

- Interesting and insightful presentations
- Congratulations on another wonderful Summer Scientific - so well organized and professionally rewarding to attend and partake in. I think it needs to be promoted more widely across regional Public Health Areas, so all multidisciplinary staff have an opportunity to submit content and contribute work that informs practice.

2. 7 December 2022 –

- Excellent conference with great variety of topics. Many thanks to all involved.
- Excellent Winter Scientific Meeting this year. Varied and interesting programme. Very high caliber presentations.
- One of the best events organised by RCPI this year.

Popular suggestions for the future:

23/24 May 2023:

- The mix of topic areas across the 4 domains of Public Health i.e., Health Protection, Health Improvement, Health Service Improvement and Health Intelligence is important going forward.
- More on health intel, health improvement, service improvement domains
- Change management, more on TB and also more on working with migrants and marginalized groups e.g. homeless (holistic -i.e. speakers from maybe social science aspects)

7 December 2022:

- Variety PH topics across the domains of practice., environment and health issues eg environmental noise.

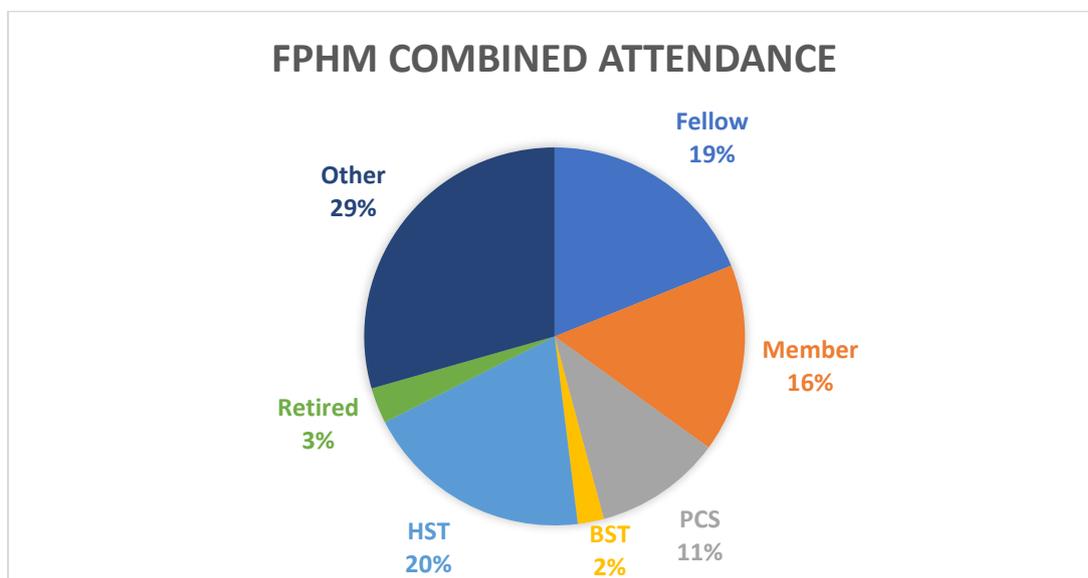
- I think a broad continuum of topics across the PH domains is the best thing, as otherwise it risks getting too sub-specialised.
- DOH PH Advisory Group review and recommendations. More on strategic direction for PH at time of reform.
- More diversity in how topics are delivered, e.g., workshops, small groups.

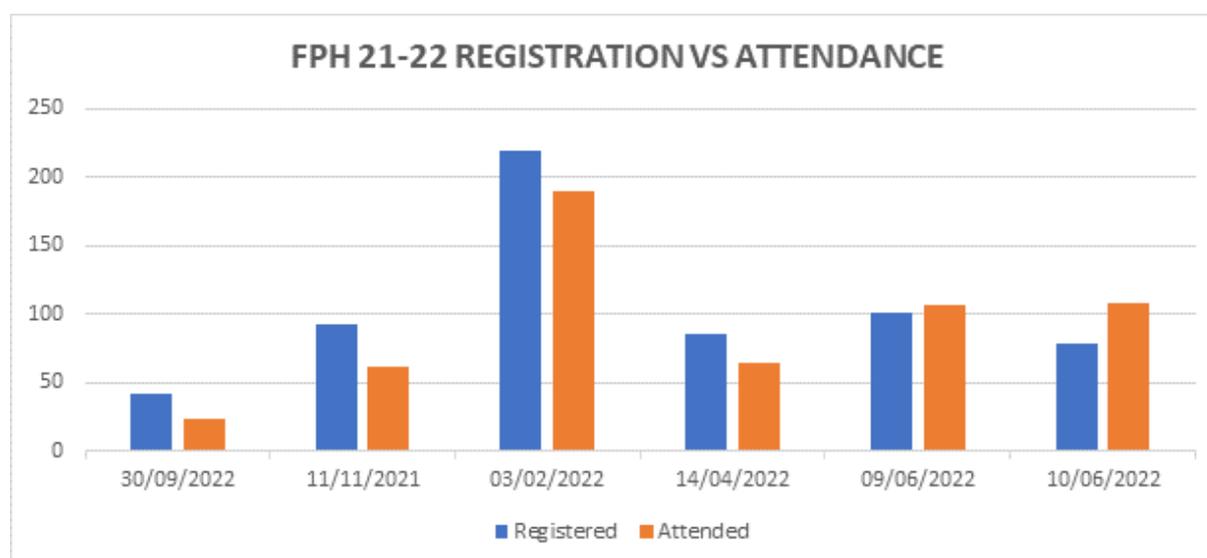
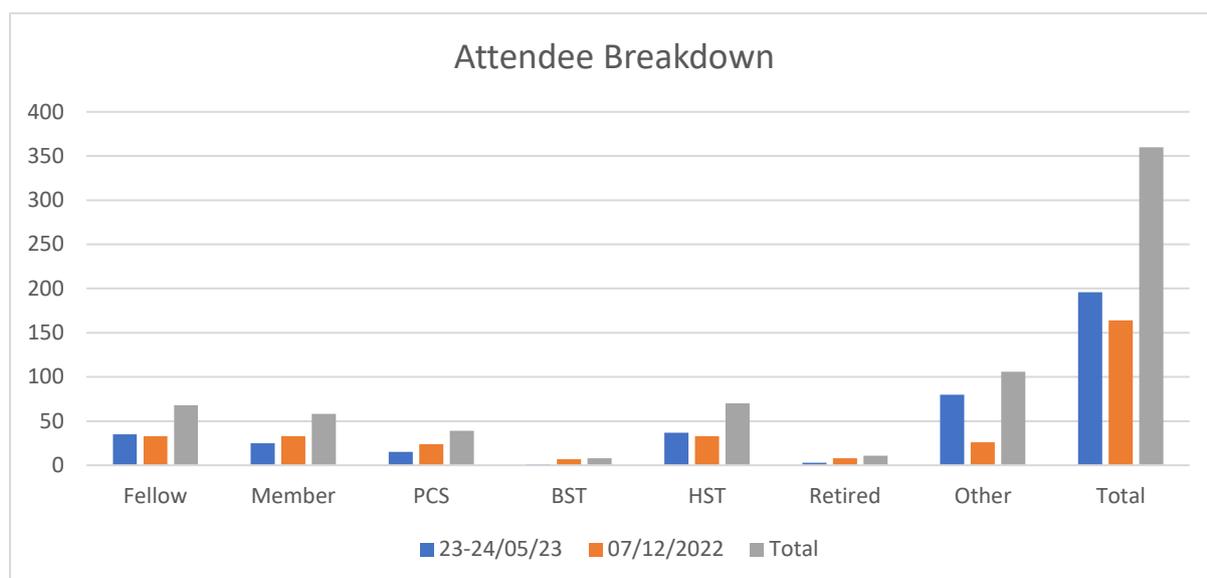
Webinars:

- More on legislation
- Public Health ethics
- more topics on policy, legislation, and law
- Managing health needs of migrants and those seeking international protection

Registration and Attendance

Date	Fellow	Member	PCS	BST	HST	Retired	Other	Total
23-24/05/23	35	25	15	1	37	3	80	196
07/12/2022	33	33	24	7	33	8	26	164
Total	68	58	39	8	70	11	106	360





- A total of 470 registrations were made for the three events, with a total of 415 attending (attendance numbers are higher than registration due to press watching online and link being shared externally). Both the Winter and Summer Scientific were split over two days.
- The most attended was the Summer Scientific Meeting on 23-24 May 2023 with 196 registrations.
- Fellows made up 21% and members made up 18% of total attendees.

Fellowship Committee

Dr Anna Clarke, Chair

Committee: Prof Patricia Fitzpatrick, Dr Margaret O Sullivan, Dr Orlaith O Reilly, Dr Lelia Thornton

The Fellowship Committee convened on the 24 March 2023 to consider applications for Membership as per Standing Orders and to make recommendations to the Board.

Membership Ad Eundem

There were no applications for Membership Ad Eundem.

Diplomate Membership

The committee nominated 7 applicants for consideration by the Faculty Board.

Fellowship by Election

No applications for Fellowship by Election were considered in light of new RCPI Credentials Committee who in future will consider all nominations for Fellowship of the RCPI.

The Committee convened again on the 30 August 2023 to discuss the changing role of the committee and to nominate an alternate to new RCPI Credentials Committee (in addition to Dr Anna Clarke who is the Faculty Representative on committee).

The Committee will in future consider Membership ad Eundem and Diplomate Membership applications. Option of Diplomate Membership needs to be promoted.

RCPI Credentials Committee

This is a new committee set up in the Royal College of Physicians in 2023. Its main role is to review, approve and make recommendations to Council for all applications for Fellowship and Honorary Fellowship and to oversee and regularly review the policies, procedures and processes around eligibility to Fellowship. Dr Anna Clarke has been appointed as Faculty Representative to this committee and Prof Patricia Fitzpatrick is appointed as alternate.

All applications for Fellowship now go through this committee rather than the Faculty Fellowship Committee (see Fellowship Committee Report). Its first meeting was held on the 07 September 2023 and second meeting was held on the 16 November 2023.

Finally, can I thank all members of the Committee and former Faculty Coordinator Ms Ritika Sureka for their support throughout the last year.

Postgraduate Training and Examinations

Mr Colm Small, Head of Function

Purpose

The overall aim of the Postgraduate Training and Examinations Function is to pursue excellence in all that we do as we support doctors. Key parts to that include the delivery and supports for training, examinations, accreditation, and quality assurance/ quality improvement, health and wellbeing and supports for RCPI's Faculties and Institutes.

The College and the PTE Function prides itself in being responsive and innovative.

Training and Faculties Office (TFO)

The purpose of the TFO is to support the key activities of the RCPI Training Bodies. It is responsible for providing high-quality administrative services to the Boards and various Committees of the six Faculties and Institutes.

The TFO is also responsible for the delivery of the RCPI postgraduate training programmes. The purpose of the office is to be a model for excellence and leadership in the development and delivery of postgraduate specialist training programmes, emphasising high quality service, efficiency, effectiveness and excellence in trainer and trainee engagement on behalf of the Faculty of Public Health Medicine and the other five Faculties and Institutes: Faculty of Paediatrics, Faculty of Pathology, Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Institute of Medicine and the Faculty of Occupational Medicine.

The office supports approximately 1,750 trainees and 1,300 trainers in the administration of our 29 training programmes. In terms of the Faculty of Public Health Medicine, this is the College's BST programmes and the four-year/four-and-a-half-year Public Health Medicine Higher Specialist Training scheme.

HST Completing Trainees

For the training year 2022-23, we were confident that trainees receiving a CSCST in Summer 2023 had met their curricular requirements.

BST Completing Trainees

Similarly, all final year BST trainees met their curricular requirements for awarding of BST certification. End of year assessments were undertaken on time during May and June 2023 to allow for career progression. Membership examinations, which are required for BST, were

successfully offered to all needing them over the last year – including written and clinical examinations.

Examinations Department

The purpose of the department is to develop, manage, coordinate and deliver the College's Membership and Licentiate examinations both nationally and internationally. The College's Membership and Licentiate examinations have a global footprint. The department also develops and maintains the highest professional standards of examinations which have relevant excellence in medical care and are held at an appropriate time in a candidate's training.

As well as leading in the development of virtual platforms and classrooms for education and assessment, RCPI was the first training body in Ireland or the UK to introduce high stakes written examination by remote invigilation. Others followed our lead such as the Royal Colleges in the UK. We have continued to successfully run our examinations by remote invigilation over the last year - the written examinations, ramping up to pre-pandemic examination candidate numbers from June 2020 onwards.

We are offering the same number of examination diets as we would normally have, and we continue to support our Public Health Medicine trainees in their career progression while at the same time looking after all our international and other examination candidates.

The Examinations Department would like to sincerely thank all our clinician colleagues involved in the Faculty's examinations. Serious work goes into these – the three parts to the MFPHMI.

Assessment and Programme Development

The Assessment and Programme Development Department has responsibility for the educational development of the College's postgraduate training programmes and the College's membership examinations as well as supporting their delivery. The work of the department includes the design and development of an extensive range of postgraduate medical educational programmes for doctors in training and for fully qualified specialists, the development of specialist training curricula and assessment methods, and the ongoing evaluation of all programmes and curricula. In a re-structuring in the College in Autumn 2021, this Department moved under the new unified Education Function, and this will enhance all the supports delivered therein and to the Faculty of Public Health Medicine.

Accreditation and Quality Improvement Office

As part of an overall approach to improving quality in postgraduate medical education and training, RCPI and its constituent training bodies are committed to a programme of continuous quality improvement. This Department leads out on these key projects as we support and develop the best training we can provide as a College.

Projects and initiatives are achieved through driving and developing standards in the quality of postgraduate medical education and training, ensuring improved standards are maintained, and delivering robust processes that will assure and engage the medical profession and the public about the standards and quality of postgraduate medical education and training in Ireland.

A key priority for this Department is our system of Training Site QAQI. This model works on a five-year timeline for each training site, and it is chaired by an extern from outside of Ireland. There are embedded annual quality checks.

The Department also supports the Medical Council accreditation for all of RCPI's postgraduate training bodies and programmes as well as the assessment of applications to the Specialist Division of the Register.

An example of successful projects worked on over the last year includes RCPI's Trainer Programme. This important project started in 2021 and saw the College's first ever Trainer Conference held in December 2022. In terms of the Institute, the Optimise project which started in the summer of 2022 is fundamentally reviewing how we can better deliver internal medicine training into the future. An Interim Report was produced in June 2023 with key recommendations.

Health and Wellbeing Department

The handover to the new Health and Wellbeing Manager has commenced. There are around 20 trainees who are transitioning to the new structure and will be under the remit of the new manager. For the month of October, Hadas Levy has been handing over the work of the Department to Maria Golden and the following to date has been complete.

- Handover of all active cases with the permission of the trainees
- Mentorship programme handover
- The Health and Wellbeing SharePoint folder with all relevant case information
- Developing a remedial plan for trainees with professionalism deficits
- Meeting and introduction to HSE Occ Med, referral and on-going management
- How to work with and refer to Practitioner Health
- How to work with and refer to the Health Committee of the Medical Council
- All H&WB policies
- Instruction & overview of SPSS & Excel database management & analysis/reporting
- Wellbeing mandatory courses overview

- Introduction to relevant RPDs, NSDs, Deans etc
- Suggestions of ongoing prevention and promotion of health and wellbeing

RCPI Regional Offices

The PTE Function currently manages the College's four Offices – Galway, Cork, Limerick and Dublin/Midlands. This is where we have an onsite presence. We are currently reviewing this model with a view to improvement and expansion is part of that.

Education

Head of Function

Education Projects:

OBE

Work has continued through 2022/23 to transition all institute of medicine curricula to OBE. The Development phase of the project will conclude in December 2023 with all curricula to going live in July 2024.

Mandatory Teaching Review

The new Teaching Programme for BST launched for year 1 trainees in July 2023 which will replace the generic mandatory courses. Trainees will be given access to online teaching components which will be released every quarter. Each quarter will round up with a 90-minute virtual tutorial to help consolidate that quarter's learning. Trainees will be allocated to Tutorial Groups and assigned a Clinical Tutor that they will stay with for the duration of their BST Training Programme.

Overview of Programme:



Part-time Clinical Tutors were recruited for the delivery and rollout of the new Teaching Programme. Due to the large number of GIM Trainees commencing in BST 23/24, three part-time tutors were recruited, and these will be supported by the Trainees pursuing the ICET programme next academic year.

The GIM tutors appointed are:

- Dr Mary Nwaezeigwe
- Dr Maria Gabriella Rizzo
- Dr Clare Miller
- Dr Laoise Griffin (ICET)
- Dr Karen Dennehy (ICET)

Exams

In examination development during 2022/23 the Part II written board focused on recruitment of new contributors. A Question development workshop was held in November 2022. Seven new writers were trained and over 100 new questions were developed for the General Medicine Bank.

The Part I board worked with Education to complete a review of the bank, review outstanding questions and question performance.

Agreement was reached to reset the standard for both written examinations and this work will take place in 2023/24.

Clinical QA has continued as usual throughout the year.

Simulation Governance Project

A Simulation Steering Committee had its first meeting in February 2023. The steering committee is the decision-making body in RCPI for implementation of a simulation strategy and for ongoing decisions relating to simulation-based education. All of RCPI's six training bodies are represented on the committee and includes BST and HST trainees. The committee is chaired by Prof Dara Byrne, RCPI Clinical Lead for Simulation and Dr Orla Crosbie is the representative for IOM.

The first RCPI Simulation Governance Steering Committee Train the Trainers Day is due to take place on 25 May in the ICAPSS simulation facility Galway University Hospital. A number of programmes for trainers in simulation are planned for 2023/24.

QQI

The first intakes of the newly QQI accredited Postgraduate Certificate in Quality Improvement Leadership in Healthcare commenced in September 2022.

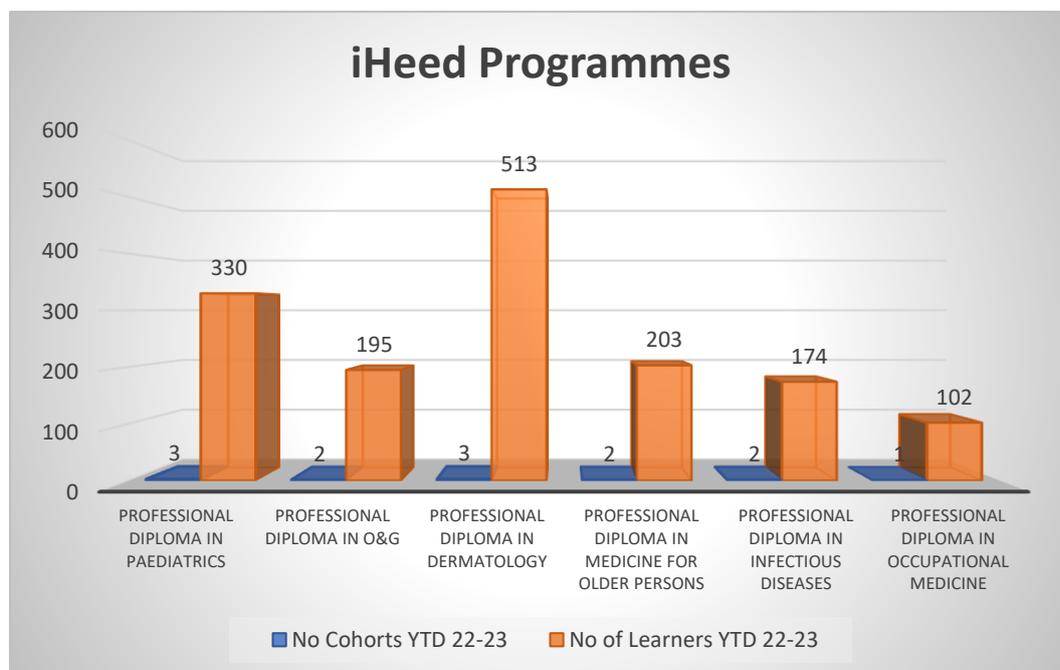
Two further programmes were validated by Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) as an NFQ Level 9 Postgraduate Certificate in 2022/23 - the PG Certificate in Obstetrics and Gynaecology and the PG Certificate in Cancer Genetics and Genomics.

iHeed/RCPI Partnership

The partnership with iheed continues to be a huge success in terms of programmes delivered and revenue generated. There are now six programmes launched – Paediatrics, O&G,

Dermatology, Medicine for the Older Persons, Infectious Diseases and Occupational Medicine.

The table below outlines the programmes which were run with iheed in 22-23. There were 13 cohorts of the six programmes with over 1,500 learners.



Revenues were strong with iheed this year a total projected income of € 1.49 million.

Quality Improvement

Twelve teams from HSE paediatric, maternity and acute adult medical and surgical settings and one self-funding private hospital team recently graduated from the 5th Irish cohort of the Situation Awareness For Everyone (SAFE) patient safety programme. In May, RCPI hosted an inaugural SAFE Sustainability Workshop to draw on the learning and achievements of SAFE 2018-23 Teams. Recruitment is currently underway for Wave 6 of the programme, funded this year by HSE National Quality and Patient Safety Directorate for HSE teams.

The QI Scholarship in Residence Programme took place with five scholars from a range of specialities including Obstetrics, Psychiatry and Gastroenterology. The programme helps specialist registrars develop as clinical leaders through mentoring and bespoke QI training.

NDTP Project Funding for 2023-24

NDTP project funding was secured for two education projects Paediatric Pocket Tutorials and Trainer Development Programme. Two further programmes - OPTIMISE and Analysis and feasibility study of Non-Training Scheme Doctors (NTSDs) are still under consideration for funding.

Education Delivery

New Course in 2022-2023

Certificate in Clinical Care for Residential Facilities launched in Sept 2022 and was designed for General Practitioners, physicians, Directors of Nursing, Clinical Nurse Managers and Persons in Charge who wanted to develop their expertise in the care of older people living in residential care and collaborate with other healthcare professionals and experts to drive improvements in this area. The programme covers clinical care of the older person, including the management of dementia, therapeutics, the prescribing and de-prescribing of medication where appropriate and end of life care. It also provides learners with an opportunity to gain an understanding of best practice when communicating with residents, families, and carers and when working as part of a multi-disciplinary team.

The Reflective Practice Guide was developed as an introduction to the theory of reflective practice and to provide practical examples of how to enrich your own reflective practice. The guide is beneficial to those with little or no experience of reflective practice and may also direct those seasoned practitioners into novel areas to use this skill. Reflective practice can be applied to many domains of a physician's practice, from clinical decisions, patient interactions and teamwork, to personal development and lifelong learning.

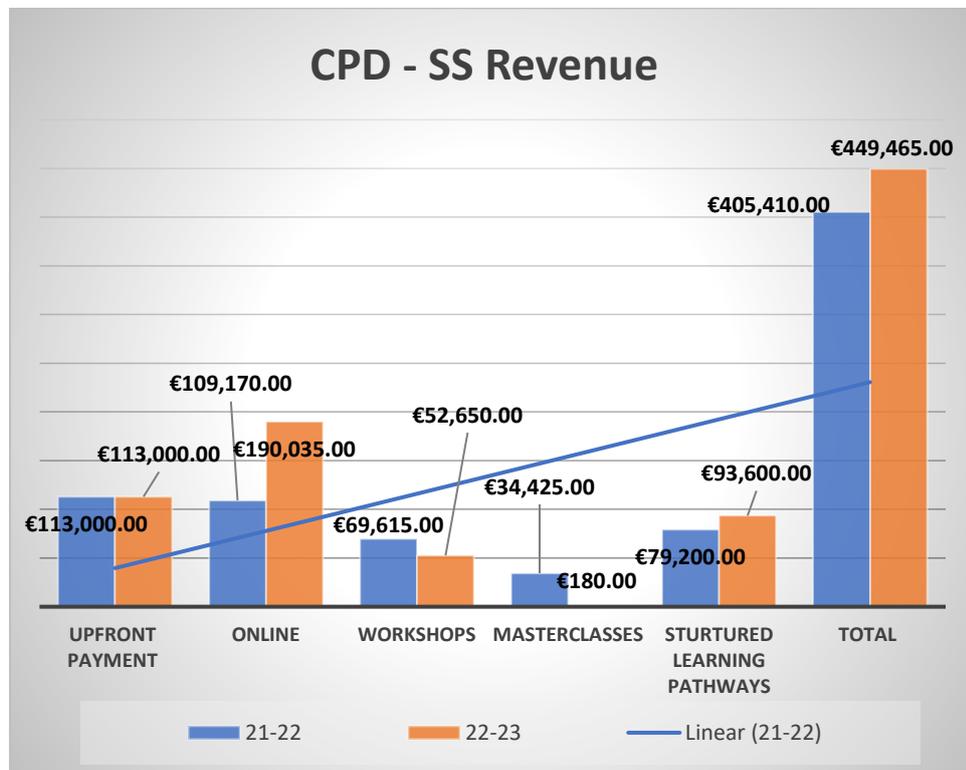
Introduction to Telemedicine and Digital Health module was launched in early 2023. The aim of the programme is to provide learners with foundational knowledge of Telemedicine and Digital Health and to enhance the outcomes of telemedical consultations for both patients and clinicians in Ireland.

Delirium Recognition and Response was redesigned and redeveloped in collaboration with colleagues from the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland. This online course is composed of six short modules designed to improve the screening and diagnosis of delirium, awareness of risks of developing delirium, management of patients with delirium, and arranging appropriate continuous care.

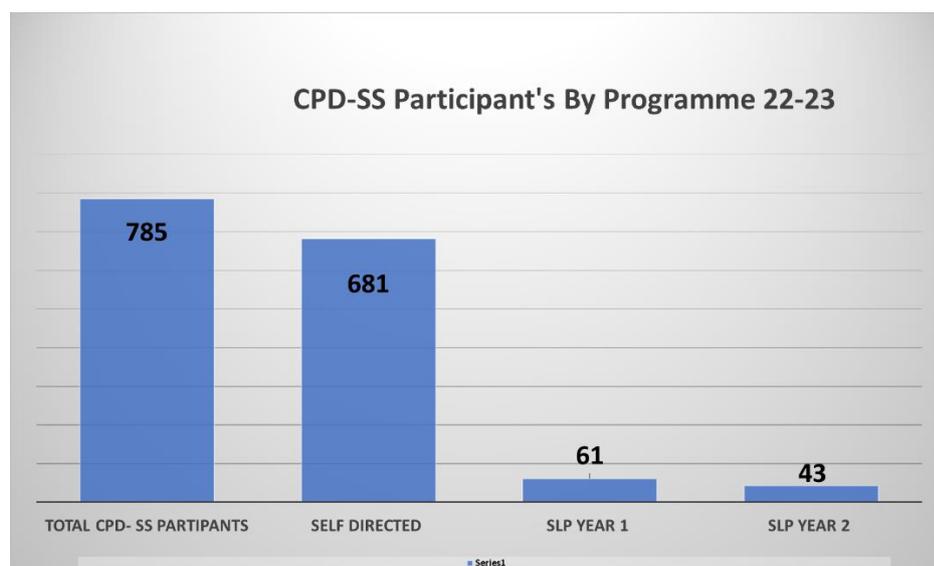
Endoscopy in Barrett's Oesophagus is a 45-minute online course which explores the recognition and management of Barrett's (Columnar Lined) Oesophagus using endoscopic images and videos. The course is aimed at Trainee Gastroenterologists, general surgeons, and nurse endoscopists training in upper GI Endoscopy.

CPD-SS

The CPD–SS programme continues to grow in terms of participants and in revenue year on year. The forecasted revenue for year end 2022-23 for CPD-SS is approx. €449K which is almost 10% increase on last year.

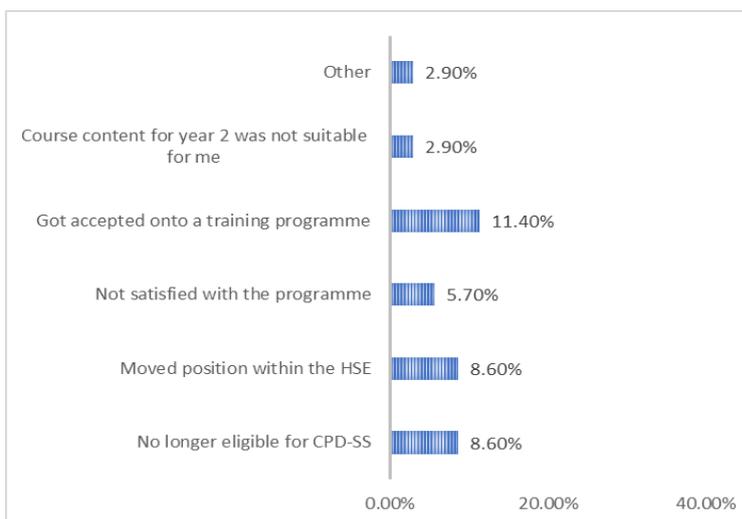


Total number of learners on the programme reached the highest intake for RCPI since the programme began with a total of 785 NCHDs signing up to our CPD-SS scheme.



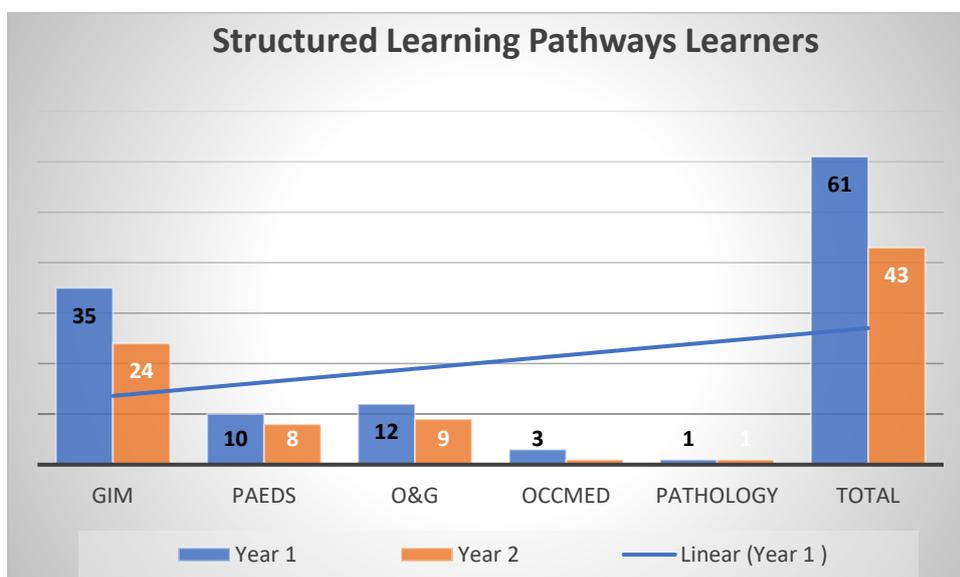
The structured learning pathways (SLP) programme which launched in 2021 - 2022 saw only approx. 50% of learners progress from SLP Yr1 to SLP Yr2. The reason doctors gave when surveyed as to why this was the case was varied. Of those who provided feedback, the most prevalent reasons cited included being accepted on to a formal Training Programme, moving position within the HSE and no longer being eligible for CPD-SS. One respondent noted that *“While the courses provided are very helpful and important, they may not necessarily meet every member’s needs and interests. The selection of courses was not optional I had to repeat some courses I have done in the past”* However, 71.4% did report that they would recommend the CPD-SS programme to a colleague.

Reasons for not progressing to Year 2 of the CPD-SS structured learning programme cited



Engagement to date on the programme in terms of completing online content and attending tutorials has been mixed.

The table below outlines the total number of learners on the SLP years 1 and 2



Learners used their CPD-SS vouchers for many RCPI workshops and online courses. This year we ran 12 virtual workshops between October and April.

- Ethics Foundation x2
- Ethics for Paeds x2
- Ethics for O&G x2
- Mastering Communication x2
- Leadership in Clinical Practice x2
- Wellness Matters x2

Research

Year on year research is conducted to assess learner feedback and educational needs, identify areas of good practice and barriers preventing CPD and lifelong learning, monitor outcomes and target interventions to improve engagement in CPD. It also enables us to contribute to the development of CPD in Ireland and throughout the world.

Research Strategy and staffing

In early 2022, a new research strategy focusing on internal institutional research, aligning with college and broader health research standards was produced. This set out a focus on research governance and forming a Research Committee to oversee this, with representation from across the college's institutes and faculties. The associated Research Committee, with oversight of research to be undertaken internally and overseeing implementation of the strategy, had its first meeting in June 2022, Chaired by the College Registrar, Prof Michael Keane.

Training Post Evaluation

The Training Post Evaluation (TPE) is an anonymous online survey of all trainees (BST and HST) rolled out by RCPI in 2016. The purpose of the evaluation is for trainees to harness feedback on each rotation trainees have completed over the past year. The most recent survey, conducted in June 2022, based on the 2021-2022 year, gathered feedback from doctors in Basic and Higher Specialist Training programmes in 86 training sites across Ireland. The majority of posts were in the Institute of Medicine who represented 67.8% of respondent BST Trainees and 55.6% of HST Trainees.

This data has been used throughout the year to inform site accreditation visits and provides an important source of confidential feedback from Trainees regarding their training posts. Additional data collection led by Research, in collaboration with colleagues in Quality Assurance and supported by colleagues in communications is due to take place for six weeks from the 14 June 2023. A cross-training body sub-group of the Training Committee was convened in 2022 and reviewed and amended questions and approaches for the 2023 survey, ensuring accuracy, appropriateness and utility of the survey for the future. Questions will broadly mirror those utilised in recent years but reflect these amendments.

Supporting engagement within RCPI's Professional Competence Scheme

This research project explores the compliance trends in RCPI Professional Competence Schemes (PCS) to identify factors contributing to meeting the PCS criteria and to improve the process and develop more appropriate Continuing Professional Development opportunities. The research team have supported the PCS team through analysis of annual data and compiling an annual report integrating information regarding RCPI PCS enrolees including members, fellows and non-affiliates and their PCS-associated behaviour in 2022. This report will be launched in 2023.

The research team also supported CPD Education Delivery in January and February 2022 by surveying registered CPD-SS enrolees. This had a 58% response rate, with the majority of respondents to the survey reporting to be working in a registrar role (N=30, 61%) and working in General Internal Medicine (GIM) (N= 29, 62%). When asked if CPD-SS learners wished to apply for a second year of the structured learning path, all but one respondent (98%) declared that they would. Respondents were also offered the opportunity to give feedback on the course and their experience to date. This was broadly very positive, with a recognition that this was a supportive initiative for NCHDs not in a specialist training programme. Suggestions included making the training more hands-on, clinical and practical, and more personalised.

Behaviour and attitudes towards mentorship for new consultants: a qualitative study

Much of the mentoring that takes place in medicine is traditionally informal in nature, and while valued by physicians and often extremely important and useful for their personal and professional development, the lack of a more formalised mentorship structure may codify inequality as regards opportunities for all interested physicians to avail of the benefits of mentorship. Formal mentorship programmes have been established in many countries and by various institutions and bodies for medical physicians at various stages in their career. The majority of mentorship arrangements, however, whether formal or informal, focus on the junior stages of the physician career. This focus group study aimed to investigate the understanding of and attitudes towards mentorship with the aim of informing the design and development of a pilot RCPI mentorship programme for new hospital consultants in their first two years of independent practice in Ireland. The study also aimed to gain further information on the factors that would facilitate effective and sustained engagement with a mentorship programme for new hospital consultants in the present-day Irish context.

Two focus groups, consisting of a purposive sample of RCPI faculty members, were facilitated by members of RCPI's Research Department between 26 October and 24 November 2022. Faculty members were recruited by the Programme Manager in Healthcare Leadership on behalf of Consultant Prof Trevor Duffy and the Research Department to represent a diverse range of specialties.

Findings were grouped into two core umbrella themes:

1. Perceived value of mentorship, and
2. Facilitators of participation and sustained engagement.

These have been used to inform the development of a pilot RCPI mentorship programme for new hospital consultants in their first two years of independent practice in Ireland, commencing in 2023.

Less than Fulltime Training and Geographical Rotations

In 2022, Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI) was engaged by HSE NDTP to conduct two strategic Trainee Projects aimed at exploring the opportunities to:

1. develop less than full time training positions
2. reducing cross-regional rotations for trainees

A nine-member Steering Group was established in August 2022 comprising representation across RCPI Departments of Research, Education, Medical Training and Healthcare Leadership. The group was Chaired by John Magner and met fortnightly for the duration of the projects. Clinical representation was ensured through membership of the Clinical Working Group, established in September 2022. All Faculties and Institutes were represented alongside three Trainee Committee nominees. This group met monthly from October 2022 to February 2023 and was Chaired by Prof Trevor Duffy.

The Research Department conducted a significant body of work, gathering, evaluating and synthesising evidence, including conducting national and international literature reviews, Trainer and Trainee views and attitudes surveys and focus groups, a survey of Medical Manpower personnel and consultation with other European Postgraduate Medical Education Bodies to inform this process in 2022. Based on evidence, the Trainee Projects Steering Group and Clinical Working Groups drafted recommendations for RCPI's Postgraduate Medical Education Bodies, the NDTP and Medical Manpower consideration.

RCPI Research Ethics Committee

RCPI's Research Ethics Committee met quarterly in 2022. This Committee was chaired by Dr Una Fallon until March 2022, when she stepped down after Chairing the Committee from its inception in 2013, having given a decade of her dedication and expertise to RCPI Research Ethics. Additionally, in June 2022, the Committee's Vice-Chair, Prof Kathleen Bennett, also stepped down from the Committee. Dr Fiona Boland was appointed as Vice-Chair of the Committee from June, and in practice led the Committee in 2022. Following an extended recruitment period, in March 2023, a new Chair, Dr Niamh Clarke, has taken up the role. The Committee reviewed 18 applications in 2022, with 17 of these favourably reviewed applications listed below.

Research reviewed by the Research Ethics Committee 2022:

1. RECSAF 169: Breastfeeding education in postgraduate training. PI: Dr Anne Doolan
2. RECSAF 170: An evaluation of the impact of plain packaging for tobacco products in Ireland PI: Dr Paul Kavanagh

3. RECSAF 171: Awareness, knowledge, practices and barriers in relation to annual seasonal influenza vaccination and appropriate infection prevention and control practices among individuals in regular contact with poultry or waterfowl in Ireland. PI: Dr Ellen Cosgrave
4. RECSAF 172: Understanding transitions in medical education: a qualitative study of first year Basic Specialist Trainees PI: Assoc Prof Mary Higgins
5. RECSAF173: Assessment of a New Education Intervention to Deliver Teaching on Paediatric Electrocardiogram Interpretation. V2. PI: Dr Niall Linnane
6. RECSAF174: Breastfeeding support for doctors on returning to work in Ireland
1. PI: Dr Ann Doolan
2. 7.RECSAF175: Behaviour and Attitudes study on new consultant Mentorship. PI: Prof Trevor Duffy
7. RCPI RECSAF 176: Royal College of Physicians of Ireland Mandatory Training Programme Redesign Evaluation Project. PI: Ms Janet O' Farrell
8. RCPI RECSAF 177: Irish Medical Trainees and Digital Health PI: Dr Lizeri Jansen
9. RCPI RECSAF 178: A prospective review of paediatric trainees' exposure to palliative care in Irish hospitals. PI: Dr Katie Flinn
10. RCPI RECSAF 179: Building an evidence base to define acceptable transfer times from home to maternity units for planned home births in Ireland. PI: Dr Paul Kavanagh
11. RCPI RECSAF 180: Evaluation of the outcomes-based curriculum for Public Health Medicine. PI: Dr Niamh Bambury
12. RCPI RECSAF 181: Meat processing plant COVID-19 outbreak – retrospective cohort study. PI: Dr Lucinda Ryan
13. RCPI RECSAF 182: Preparing Paediatricians for a career in Local Hospitals in Ireland. PI: Prof Nigel Fancourt
14. RCPI RECSAF 183: Peer Review and its Impact in Histopathology- a National Study. PI: Prof Niall Swan
15. RCPI RECSAF 184: Royal College of Physicians of Ireland: Perceptions of less-than-fulltime training and geographical rotations. PI: Prof Trevor Duffy
16. Chair review: RECSAF 185: Telephone Consultation in Occupational Medicine: opinions of Occupational Medicine Physicians. PI: Dr Abigail O' Reilly

Healthcare Leadership

Dr Trevor Duffy, Head of Function

Overview

This is a new function within the RCPI. Strategic Initiative 7 of the strategic plan is: to be the voice of physicians, shaping and influencing healthcare policy, at a national level. In partnership with a range of stakeholders, RCPI already provides leadership in areas such as National Quality Assurance System (National Quality Improvement), National Immunisation Advisory Committee, National Office for Traffic medicine and National Clinical Programmes.

New activities within the function include a strategic approach to gathering advocacy wishes and views of trainees, members and fellows. This will be backed up by an education programme, individual policy development and active advocacy, pushing the voice of RCPI out into the healthcare community. To strengthen current RCPI offerings of formal leadership education the Healthcare Leadership function will develop a programme of supports for doctors in their day-to-day role as leaders and will also continue to develop the college's own leadership role.

Healthcare Leadership Projects

Pilot Mentorship Programme for New Consultants

The project is ongoing. We have a number of mentees that have just commenced in consultancy posts that are beginning their mentorship sessions. We have new mentor volunteers for whom we are planning to run a training session.

Planning is underway for a peer networking event incorporating leadership training for the mentees. To support mentors, we plan to arrange a reflective learning session in due course. Funding applications will be prepared on completion of the pilot which would be required to scale the programme in the future.

RCPI Academy for Retired Doctors

Following the Academy event held during St Luke's there are increased numbers of retired Members and Fellows interested in getting involved in various activities of the College. We have a group of 22 doctors interested in participating in the committee for the Academy. We are in the process of agreeing a suitable meeting date with this group. The aim of the next meeting is to appoint a chairperson and discuss the plans for next years' Academy activities.

Through the work of the Academy, we endeavour to get more retired Members and Fellows involved in many activities of the College. Currently we have 14 mentors supporting early-stage consultants, six Examiners and six Reviewers participating in the verification process. Other Members are involved in education, Faculty and Institute Boards, RCPI Committees, volunteer work with EQUALs and College representation. Recently, a few volunteers participated in Membership graduation ceremonies. We will continue to seek opportunities to connect and engage this group of retired and semi-retired doctors through social and educational events encouraging them to participate in College activities. RCPI will provide ongoing support to the committee as this new College initiative evolves.

Leadership Forum

There are plans to create a Leadership Forum, for which there are three core objectives. Firstly, educating leaders by developing and offering newly designed leadership courses to Members. Secondly, providing adequate leadership support and knowledge of governance to Members in leadership roles, this would include Clinical Programme Leads, Chairs of Clinical Advisory Groups, RCPI Committees and external College Representatives. Thirdly, to create a network or community of Members interested in getting involved and participating in RCPI activities and perhaps taking on leadership roles in the future. This would be very valuable in identifying those Members interested in participating in RCPI advocacy agendas.

Plans are underway in the organisation of a leadership event for key stakeholders, we have a speaker confirmed and date will be agreed in the next week.

We are also working on a Leadership Survey that will help us understand what the most effective and beneficial way of supporting those currently in leadership roles is.

Professional Competence

Summary of Key Activities 1 November 2022 – November 2023

Scheme Enrolment

The numbers enrolled on our Professional Competence Schemes have been increasing year on year since they were first introduced in May 2011, with the highest number of doctors enrolled to date at the end of the 2022 – 23 PCS year. This included 1,053 new enrolments during the year.

Compliance with Scheme Requirements

The overall percentage of participants across RCPI's 11 Professional Competence Schemes who met the PCS requirements for the 2022 – 23 PCS year was 82%, an increase of 7% on last year. The individual Scheme compliance rates for the 2022-23 year ranged from 74% to 94%. The percentage of Participants in the Faculty of Public Health Medicine Schemes who

met the PCS requirements for the 2022 – 23 PCS year was 92% in the Specialist Division Scheme and 78% in the General Division Scheme.

Annual Verification Process (AVP)

The Annual Verification Process was undertaken for the 2020 - 2021 PCS year between July 2022 and April 2023. A random selection of 4% of all Scheme participants plus a further 4% of those who had not met requirements for 2021-2022, were chosen from each of RCPI's 11 Schemes. Detailed administrator and clinician reviews were conducted with a view to preparing constructive advice for the relevant doctors. Reviews were completed in March 2023 and at the conclusion of the process, 61% of doctors were verified with no further action required. Doctors who were Verified with no corrective actions received an annotation on their 2022-2023 Annual Statement.

The Annual Verification of the 2022 - 2023 PCS year commenced in July 2023. A total of 281 doctors were selected for review. Participants were notified of their selection on 4 July 2023 with a deadline to bring their ePortfolio up to date (if required) by 4 August 2023. Reviews of CPD and Audit activities are now complete. During the review stage, 13 of the selected doctors withdrew from their Scheme and 2 doctors were exempted due to ill health. Result reports were issued at the end of October 2023 with a deadline of 30 November 2023 to complete corrective actions.

Annual Statements

The Annual Statements issued in May 2023 were once again annotated to indicate that there may have been extenuating circumstances which may have prevented doctors from engaging in and recording the required CPD and Audit activities.

Medical Council Reporting

The following PCS Annual Reports were submitted to the Medical Council on Friday, 30 June 2023 on behalf of RCPI's six Training Bodies:

- Qualitative Report, which consists of:
 - Implementation Plan for new Maintenance of Professional Competence (MPC) Framework
 - List of CPD Activities Provided by RCPI
 - List of CPD Activities Recognised by RCPI
- Quantitative Report for each Training Body containing KPIs on their Specialist & General Division Schemes

New Maintenance of Professional Competence Framework Model

RCPI engaged with the Medical Council on their Public Consultation on the new Draft Rules and Guidelines for the Maintenance of Professional Competence. It is likely that implementation of the new Maintenance of Professional Competence (MPC) Framework will be deferred to 1 May 2025, and we are currently waiting on written confirmation from the Medical Council on this. The new framework will be more flexible and relevant to individual doctors, enabling them to plan, engage in and record required CPD activities relevant to their scope and stage of practice. RCPI will continue to collaborate with the Medical Council, RCPI's six Training Bodies and the Forum of Postgraduate Training Bodies Sub Committee with regard to the implementation of the new MPC Framework.

CPD Event Approval

RCPI facilitates a process of reviewing and accrediting external activities provided by both RCPI and other individuals or bodies for the purpose of awarding CPD credits.

Outlined below is a summary of activity for the period 1 November 2022 to 31 October 2023:

Type	Applications Approved	Credits Allowed
RCPI	306	2193
Non RCPI	491	2467
TOTAL	797	4660

National Specialty Quality Improvement (NSQI) Programmes

RCPI currently manages four National Quality Improvement Programmes in Histopathology, Gastrointestinal Endoscopy, Radiology and Bronchoscopy. The goal of these programmes, three of which are funded by the HSE National Quality and Patient Safety Directorate and Bronchoscopy which is funded by the National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP), is to optimise patient care through facilitating and supporting the use of evidence-based quality improvement in diagnosis and reporting. The data gathered via these programmes are available to report on locally and are also aggregated in annual national data reports by the NSQI programme management team, which can then be used to drive quality improvement in 50 participating public, voluntary and 14 private hospitals.

National GI Endoscopy QI Programme

The National GI Endoscopy Quality Improvement (NEQI) Programme published the 7th annual national data report in 2022 with 36 public and voluntary hospitals and 15 private hospitals contributing to the national dataset. This report was a retrospective review of programme activity from 2016 to 2021, with additional analysis on available data from 1st January to 31st December 2021. This year, the NEQI programme also began the development of a new key quality indicator, endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP).

National Radiology QI Programme

In 2022, the National Radiology QI (NRQI) programme published its 3rd national data report, outlining findings from analysis of data from 48 public and voluntary hospitals. The programme has also commenced a total turnaround time (TAT) pilot project which aims to investigate turnaround times at one pilot site and how to better capture the current patient journey and to explore how delays might be minimised. The programme is also liaising with the NTPF on work looking at waiting lists nationally.

National Bronchoscopy QI Programme

The working group was set up in November 2022, successfully recruiting 13 members from public and voluntary hospitals around the country. The engagement with this new programme has been positive and bronchoscopists are in agreement with the need to establish QI processes within the specialty to benefit patient care. The NBQI working group has begun the first phase of key quality indicator development focusing on sedation, the use of reversal agents, patient comfort score and complication rates.

National Histopathology QI Programme

The National Histopathology QI Programme launched the 9th annual national data report in 2022, with 21 laboratories in public and voluntary hospitals and seven private laboratories contributing to the national dataset. Two presentations were delivered at the United States and Canadian Academy of Pathology (USCAP) annual meeting; “The role of MDT Histopathology Review and Impact on Revised Reports” and “Persistence of Peer Review During the Pandemic, prepared by the National Histopathology QI (NHQI) programmes research group. The NHQI programme is also collaborating with the newly established Autopsy Quality Improvement Committee (AQIC), the aim of which is to improve the quality of autopsy practice in Ireland and gathering data from all autopsies carried out in hospitals and by coroners.

Data Sharing and Data Protection

The NSQI programme management completed a large body of work in increasing the standardisation and transparency of all policies across the programmes, including a large collaborative project on the information governance policy. This led to a robust data requesting process which was used four times in the last year, contributing to research

conducted by the NHQI programme, the Irish Cancer Society investigating the impact of COVID-19 on Irish cancer services, the NCCP and the National Acute Operations Endoscopy Programme. This ensures the high-quality data reported on by the programmes can be used to contribute towards improved patient care.

Advocacy

Advocacy priorities

New advocacy priorities for 2023-2025 were approved by Executive Board and Council in May 2023. These priorities followed consultation in late 2022/early 2023 with trainees, members, and fellows at three hospital sites, consultation with exec board, council, senior management and other staff and a survey open to all RCPI members fellows and trainees. This is the first time that RCPI developed advocacy priorities through wide consultation with its membership. The process also included a review of previous advocacy work and successes, and the new priorities will build on this work and existing collaborations. These priorities are:

- Patient Safety and Dignity
- Health Equity
- Prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases (with a focus on obesity, in particular obesity in children, also with focus on tobacco and vaping)
- Climate Change and Healthcare / Sustainable Healthcare
- Influencing Public Health Legislation

Advocacy Activities Nov 2022 to Nov 2023

Patient Safety and Dignity

To inform work under this advocacy priority, in Nov 2023, members were invited to participate in a poll on concerns regarding demand preparedness over the winter period. Results to be published.

Climate Change and Healthcare

[Climate Action paper](#) developed in collaboration with Irish Doctors for the Environment (IDE) and formally launched in Oct 2023 during the ST Luke's Symposium. The theme of Climate and Health running throughout the ST Luke's symposium events, including a successful [art competition/exhibition](#) reflect RCPI's commitment to action on climate and health, articulated in the paper.

Influencing Public Health Legislation

RCPI was represented at the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Assisted Dying in Oct 2023 by Dr Feargal Twomey, a consultant in palliative care.

Health Equity

A Masterclass - *Achieving Equity in Healthcare – More than just an appointment*” was held in March 2023 and included an overview of inclusion health –including inclusion health in paediatrics, presentation of real-life stories behind the statistics of social adversity, discussion of mismatch between service delivery and need and overview of work of the National Social Inclusion office and the Slaintecare Healthy Communities Programmes. The masterclass, developed by the advocacy department had a record number of registrations of 461, with total live attendance of 445.

Arising from the masterclass, RCPI published a [Report on Health Equity](#) which includes tips on inclusive clinical practice, principles for delivering trauma-informed care and recommendations for policy makers and healthcare leaders.

NCD Prevention

The Faculty of Paediatrics published a [position statement](#) on vaping and young people was published in October 2023. The statement called for introduction of legislation to ban disposable vapes to protect the health and wellbeing of children and young people.

The Faculty of Paediatrics and the RCPI Policy Group on Tobacco made submissions to a Department of Environment, Climate and Communications consultation on *Disposable Vaping Devices*. The consultation submission highlighted the harms caused to the environment and the disproportionate usage of disposable vaping devices among children and young people, and the associated health concerns.

As part of the ST Luke’s Symposium, a [public meeting with the theme “Healthy Planet – Healthy you”](#) was held on 23rd October. Speakers highlighted the dangers of disposable vapes, and offered practical advice on diet, exercise, and coping strategies for climate anxiety to the 390 attendees who joined the meeting online and in person at No. 6 Kildare Street.

National Immunisation Advisory Committee - Nov 2022-Nov 2023

The National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) plays an essential role in Irish healthcare. This expert group is a standing committee of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI) and comprises members nominated by a range of healthcare professional bodies and lay members. NIAC provides independent, evidence-based advice to the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) and Department of Health on vaccines, immunisation and related health matters.

NIAC experienced a significant transition in personnel in the past year, which included the retirements of Professor Karina Butler (Chair/Interim Clinical Lead), Drs Brenda Corcoran and Kevin Connolly (Special Advisors). Their dedication, wealth of expertise and significant contributions have been greatly appreciated.

NIAC welcomed the appointment of Dr Siobhán O’Sullivan as NIAC Chair following Professor Butler’s departure, however Dr O’Sullivan has since stepped down from the Committee. NIAC has recently appointed and is delighted to welcome Dr Edina Moylett as the new Chair. Dr Moylett has worked as a member of NIAC over the past number of years and her excellent understanding of NIAC’s work will ensure NIAC continues to deliver effectively on its remit. NIAC has also welcomed Dr Kevin Kelleher as Deputy Chair, with focus on NIAC’s upcoming transition to a designated National Immunisation Technical Advisory Group (NITAG). NIAC looks forward to working with Drs Moylett and Kelleher in their new roles.

Dr Bryony Treston served as Interim Clinical Lead following Professor Butler’s departure and has now returned to her role as Technical Researcher. NIAC welcomed the appointment of Dr Sarah Geoghegan as Clinical Lead. NIAC looks forward to working with Dr Geoghegan and continuing NIAC’s progressive trajectory.

NIAC has experienced numerous changes in membership with vacancies to be filled in the coming weeks. Such changes are expected to add further depth to the expertise and skillsets of the Committee.

NIAC’s workload in the past year has remained demanding and was regularly performed under considerable pressure. This has relied upon the dedication and availability of respected and experienced voluntary members, supported by an agile, skilled, and resilient Secretariat.

The provision of vaccine related advice has been and continues to be an important element of the national response to the COVID-19 pandemic. NIAC has also provided advice for topics including but not limited to: HPV vaccination, and the immunisation of children aged two months to five years of age. There are a number of ongoing activities, including the assessment of vaccine uptake, especially with regard to public health.

Governance and Operations

NIAC awaits an update from the Department of Health (DOH) regarding the transformation of NIAC to a National Immunisation Technical Advisory Group (NITAG), in line with recommendations from the World Health Organization (WHO). This formal designation will enable NIAC to operate more sustainably, with additional resources to support capacity building. The term NIAC will continue despite transition to a NITAG for purpose of public recognition and familiarity. An update from the DOH is awaited on hosting arrangements for NIAC in 2024 and beyond.

NIAC has continued to host Full Committee meetings on a bimonthly basis, with working groups meeting as needed to focus on specific work tasks. Weekly secretariat meetings ensure efficient and timely outputs.

Advice provided to the Chief Medical Officer and Department of Health

NIAC have produced recommendations through considered and timely decision-making, informed by reliable and robust evidence. This work was aided by regular meetings of working groups, participation in European Union NITAG meetings and engagement with global experts on vaccines. A total of 15 recommendations to the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) have been made since November 2022 (Table 1).

Table 1. Examples of NIAC advice issued to Chief Medical Officer since November 2022.

Date of Issue	Recommendation
12 December 2022	Bivalent COVID-19 vaccines
15 February 2023	Immunisation of children aged 2 months to 5 years of age
11 April 2023	2023 COVID-19 vaccination strategy (version 1.1)
17 August 2023	Letter re: Review of Autumn 2023 COVID-19 booster recommendations

NIAC has also been involved in updating the Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 vaccines for people with pre-existing allergic conditions, and Questions and Answers for pregnant and breastfeeding women about COVID-19 vaccination.

Immunisation Guidelines for Ireland

The Immunisation Guidelines for Ireland have been prepared and maintained by NIAC as a robust and reliable immunisation resource for healthcare professionals. Eight chapters (15 updates in total) have been updated since November 2022.

National Resource, Stakeholder Support and International Collaboration

NIAC has continued to serve as a trusted and respected national resource for healthcare professionals and the public. Over 100 queries have been received pertaining to immunisation and national recommendations in the past year. These have been addressed by NIAC or referred to the appropriate agency for response.

As a standing committee of RCPI, NIAC has profited from being sited in a collegial setting at the forefront of postgraduate medical education. This has facilitated critical inputs from the Institutes and Faculties of the College and supported dissemination of NIAC's outputs. At a time when trust in vaccination information is so important, NIAC as a committee of RCPI, is further validated because of that association as a trusted information source.

NIAC continues to benefit from its strong collaborative working relationship with stakeholders including the NIO, DOH, HSE, HPRA, and HPSC, among others.

NIAC has engaged with the wider international immunisation community and participated in the EU NITAG meetings as well as national and international meetings as appropriate (for e.g., EU NITAG, WHO Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on immunisation). NIAC continues to reinforce these relationships with regard to general immunisation practices through continued engagement, participation and advocacy.

Global Training Partnerships

Ms Sinead Lucey, Head of Business Development

International Medical Graduate Training Initiative – Sponsored

The International Medical Graduate Training Initiative continues to provide a route for sponsored overseas doctors to experience structured postgraduate medical training in the Irish public health service. It enables suitably qualified medical Trainees from the Gulf Cooperation Council (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates) to undertake a fixed period of training in clinical services in Ireland. Trainees participating within these programmes are fully sponsored by their governments for the duration of their training. Income generated through the programme is invested into improvement projects that benefit all RCPI training programmes.

RCPI offers two streams of training under this Initiative, Residency and Clinical Fellowship training, and interest in these programmes has been building steadily since their introduction.

International Residency Training Programme

Our International Residency Training Programme (IRTP) is offered to doctors upon completion of their Internship. This programme enables doctors to complete Residency training in Ireland before returning to their home country with a Saudi/Arab Board equivalent qualification and Membership of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland. It is currently offered in Internal Medicine and Paediatrics. Currently there are 7 graduates of the Internal Medicine programme and 11 in training. 22 candidates were shortlisted for interview in January 2023 and 15 have been offered a place to start in January 24 or July 24. The programme is going from strength to strength and its aim is to attract the best quality from Government Sponsored candidates.

International Clinical Fellowship Programme

The International Clinical Fellowship Programme (ICFP) offers structured, curriculum-based specialist training at a senior level for doctors who wish to pursue higher training in their chosen specialty or sub-specialty. These programmes are now available in 35 specialty areas, including Endocrinology, Gastroenterology, Respiratory Medicine, Rheumatology, Medical Oncology, General Paediatrics, Paediatrics Rheumatology, Paediatric subspecialties, Pathology, Public Health Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Palliative Medicine, Immunology and Occupational Medicine. In addition to offering Fellowship training in the general specialties, a new Special Interest Fellowship Programme has been launched, providing access to training at a sub-specialty level. This year, we have 24 trainees on this programme across IOM specialties. The total number of trainees across all RCPI faculties and institutes is 38.

International Medical Graduate Training Initiative – Scholarship

The College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan's (CPSP's) working relationship with the HSE and the Forum of the Irish Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies, continues to provide a Postgraduate Scholarship Programme in Ireland for doctors from Pakistan. This allows doctors who are enrolled with the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Pakistan to complete two years of their training in Ireland.

The Sudan Medical Specialisation Board (SMSB) has joined the CPSP in offering the programme in 2018 and their first cohort of trainees from Sudan completed their programme in 2020.

Increasing Contribution to Global Health Efforts under the EQUALS Initiative

Focus on Zambia: The EQUALS Initiative is a joint venture between RCPI and the HSE that support training and equipment needs in low to middle income countries and those countries experiencing humanitarian crises. Two further containers were shipped in February 2023 which took the total number of containers shipped in the 2022/2023 financial year to four. The equipment was tested pre and post shipment by clinical engineers of the EQUALS Initiative, before it will be distributed across the country to larger teaching hospitals and smaller health clinics.

Through the collaboration between RCPI and the Zambia College of Medicine and Surgery, RCPI continues to provide access to online courses to Zambian trainees on various specialist training programmes, which comprises part of their core curriculum. To date, RCPI have also delivered two Train the Trainer courses to faculty members of ZACOMS. A full report on the November 2022 Zambia trip has formed the basis for planning the future priorities of EQUALS. ZACOMS. There has been a period of significant growth and achievement and now ZACOMS requires support in underpinning existing programmes for quality. EQUALS plan to facilitate workshops and meetings in 2023 that can be used to develop a new plan and form the basis of a new MoU between EQUALS and the Zambian Ministry of Health. The outcome of this will be a 3-year programme of collaboration.

Plans for the signing of the new MoU between RCPI and HSE are underway. RCPI will host this MoU signing in June 2023.

Administration and contact details

Key personnel in RCPI who conduct work on behalf of the Faculty of Public Health Medicine include:

Faculty Coordinator:	Brian O'Murchu	fphm@rcpi.ie brianomurchu@rcpi.ie
Higher Specialist Training (HST) Coordinator:	Brian O'Murchu	brianomurchu@rcpi.ie
Faculty Manager at RCPI	Cliona McHugh	clionamchugh@rcpi.ie
Conferences and Events	Hilary Copeland	events@rcpi.ie
Examinations Administrator:	Marianna Kyjovska	MariannaKyjovska@RCPI.IE
Professional Competence Scheme (PCS) Administrator:	Lyndsey Campbell	ProfessionalCompetence@RCPI.IE

Other key departments are linked to the Faculty of Public Health Medicine page on <https://www.rcpi.ie/>