



FACULTY OF  
OCCUPATIONAL  
MEDICINE

ROYAL COLLEGE OF  
PHYSICIANS OF IRELAND

# 2023 – 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



**Cover Image:** Faculty of Occupational Medicine Autumn Conference, Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, 6 Kildare Street, Dublin 2., September 2024. Back Row: Dr Enda McElduff, Dr Peter O'Callaghan, Dr Eoin O'Mahony, Dr Patrick Carr. Front Row: Dr Aoife Broderick, Dr Zara Togher, Dr Alex Reid, Dr Ruth McCullough, Dr Sheelagh O'Brien, Dean of the Faculty of Occupational Medicine RCPI, Dr Justine Fenn.

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## FACULTY OF OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE, RCPI

### Background

The Faculty of Occupational Medicine has been an integral part of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI) since 1976. The mission of the Faculty is to advance the science, art, interests & medical practice of occupational medicine and to promote education, study and research in the specialty. It is the authoritative body on all matters of educational, professional and public interest concerning occupational medicine.

The Faculty fulfils a wide range of complex functions including:

- Acting in an advisory capacity to governmental and statutory bodies in all matters pertaining to occupational medicine.
- Development and delivery of postgraduate specialist training and education in occupational medicine in Ireland.
- Setting and maintaining standards for Licentiate of the Faculty of Occupational Medicine and Membership of the Faculty of Occupational Medicine examinations.
- Assisting in the maintenance of professional standards for doctors with regard to the Professional Competence Scheme (PCS) in Occupational Medicine, including the delivery of dynamic educational events.
- Acting as a vital source of information for individuals practicing in occupational medicine.

### Faculty Board

The Faculty is governed by the Board, the Chair of which is the Dean of the Faculty. The Dean also serves on the Executive Board of the College. The Board ordinarily consists of a combination of 22 Fellow, Member, Licentiate, and Trainee representatives. Board membership for 2022-2023 was as follows:

BOARD MEMBER	TITLE
Dr Sheelagh O'Brien	Dean
Dr Alex Reid	Vice-Dean
Dr David Madden	Treasurer
Dr Grant Jeffrey	Convenor of Meetings
Dr Nuala Kelly	Fellow
Dr Martin Tohill	Fellow
Dr Oghenovo Oghuvbu	Fellow
Dr Sasha Hennessy	Fellow
Dr David Poots	Fellow
Prof Ken Addley	Advocacy Strategy Lead
Dr Justine Fenn	Trainee Representative
Ms Stephen O'Herlihy	Lay Person
Dr Sujil Jacob	Member Representative
Dr Martin Hogan	Co-Opted
Dr David Mills	NI Representative
Dr Lanre Ogunyemi	Chief Examiner
Dr Fiona Kevitt	NSD
Dr Thomas O'Connell	Dir Representative Comp

### Board meetings held since AGM 2021 were as follows:

13 December 2023, 07 February 2024, 10 April 2024, 06 June 2024, 06 September 2024 and 06 November 2024.

New/returning Board members will begin their tenures from the 2023 AGM, with their first Board meeting scheduled for 03 December 2024.

#### **Past Deans of the Faculty include:**

Dr J F Eustace	1976 – 1981	Dr J Gallagher	2004 – 2006
Dr J A Smiley	1981 – 1983	Dr K Addley	2006 – 2008
Dr L McElearney	1983 – 1987	Dr P Guéret	2008 – 2010
Dr R Pritchard	1987 – 1990	Dr M Hogan	2010 – 2012
Dr I E Eustace	1990 – 1993	Dr T O’Connell	2012 – 2014
Dr D Courtney	1993 – 1996	Dr D Whelan	2014 – 2016
Dr C E Dick	1996 – 1999	Dr B Hayes	2016 – 2018
Dr W A Eakins	1999 – 2002	Dr L Sisson	2018 – 2020
Dr J Malone	2002 – 2004	Dr R Ryan	2020 – 2022

### **Faculty Representation**

OBE Representative: Dr Fiona Kevitt

Simulation Committee: Dr Graine McNally

Global Health: Dr Mary McMahon

Forum Wellbeing Committee: Dr Mary McMahon

Guideline Development Group for Emergency Management of injuries & Post exposure prophylaxis: Dr Sujil Jacob

National TB Advisory Committee: Dr Zakiah Amir

Forum of Irish Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies for the Quality and Safety Subcommittee: Dr Zakiah Amir

RCPI Credentials Committee FOM representatives: Dr Deirdre Gleeson & Jacques Bronkhurst

Collegiate Membership & Engagement Steering group: Dr Anthony O’Keeffe

RCPI Smoking and Vaping Representative: Dr Sujil Jacob

RCPI Climate action advisory Representative: Dr Alice Quinn

Faculty representative on the RCPI’s REC: Blánaid Hayes

Influenzas representative: Dr Tom O’Connell

Working Group for the National Traffic Medicine Programme: Grant Jeffery

### **ENROLMENT 2024**

#### **Enrolment into Honorary Fellowship**

Ire Madan

Richard Heron

#### **Enrolment into Fellowship**

Khuloud Al Hammadi

Mutasim Mohamed

Lazaro Raul Venegas Perez

Niall Macnamara

Oghenovo Oghuvbu

#### **Enrolment into Licentiatehip by Exam**

Peter O’Callaghan

Pratheesh Paul

Asha Jayashanker

Romisa Mohieldeen  
Eoin O'Mahony  
Cliona Marie Kilmartin  
Joanne O' Brien  
Emil Latif Kazimli  
Elton Dorkin  
Elliot Zai Feng Eu  
Fredrick Amenuglo  
Aoife Lemasney  
Muhannad Almughthim  
Andrew Jones

**Enrolment into Membership by Exam**

Alvin Tan  
Hannorah Rooney  
Justine Fenn  
Martin Neary  
Partick Carr

## DEAN'S REPORT

### DR SHEELAGH O'BRIEN, FACULTY DEAN

This is my second and final Dean's message in the annual report as my tenure completes today. For me personally, it has been an absorbing and rewarding two years, and I hope I have served the Faculty well.

Reflecting on the past year it seems that life has moved more and more back to pre-pandemic norms, both in the health issues we are encountering in daily practice and in the ways our membership is engaging with the Faculty and the College. Thankfully we are seeing much less of Covid-related chronic illnesses impacting on fitness for work, but we are continuing to witness the emergence of neurodiversity as a challenge to workers returning to the traditional shared space workplace. I think it is fair to say that as doctors practicing in this speciality, we have had to educate ourselves on this topic and increasingly engage with our allied health professionals to provide the best advice to both the employee and the employer. It will be interesting to see how this progresses in the coming years and the changes to work organisation that ensue.

John Stearne, founder of this college, held the ideal that the college would be a place for doctors to meet and in modern language "network". While I think in-person attendance at our educational meetings in No 6 brings a particular richness to the discourse and offers a wonderful opportunity to meet peers and colleagues, it is clear is that members wish to continue to have opportunity to engage in educational meetings in a hybrid manner. Happily, the numbers attending our meetings in this past year, both in the room and on-line, continue to grow.

A key function of the Faculty is to advocate for the growth of the specialty itself and access to occupational health services for all those in the workforce. To this end, I am pleased to note that Dr Abigail O'Reilly has been appointed as the inaugural Faculty Advocacy Lead and will take up her role this month. Prof Ken Addley has stepped down as Chair of the Advocacy Committee and on behalf of the Faculty I wish to acknowledge the enormous contribution he has made over the past three years and thank him most sincerely for his contribution. It is not possible to overestimate the time and effort Ken has put into this role, but more importantly his expertise and passion for the subject at hand was of utmost importance. You will hear more details in his report a little later this morning.

Dr Ovo Oghuvbu has taken over the Chair of this committee as well as being the new Dean Designate. Ovo will have a busy two years ahead of him and I am fully confident that he will fulfil both roles to the highest standards. Ovo, I wish you well in the future.

Continuing in the vein of advocacy the Faculty believes that attracting the highest calibre of trainees to our HST and subsequently retaining this precious resource in Ireland to the benefit of the Irish working population is essential to the future of the specialty. In this regard, together with Dr Diarmuid O'Shea, President of RCPI, the Faculty is actively supporting the recognition of Consultant status for our colleagues working as Occupational Physicians in the HSE. Indeed, this matter is included in the college's manifesto, "Priorities for Health for the Next Government" which is available to members on the RCPI website.

As you will be aware RCPI has charity status. In order to better equip the board members for our individual and collective duties and responsibilities, in September we invited Mr Patrick Downes, Governance Ireland, to facilitate a full morning session. This was held in No 6 Kildare Street and was extremely valuable to us all. Given that a significant portion of the board will continue on the incoming board this year, this knowledge can be shared with new board members. I have recommended that governance training updates are considered on a rolling basis for all college board members into the future.

#### Finance

I would like to thank Dr David Madden for his work as Honorary Treasurer and steering us so adeptly in adapting to the new financial governance model within RCPI over the past two years. You will read in the

Treasurer's report that a surplus of €75,439 was generated for the 12 months to the end of June 2024. The Faculty is on sound financial footing into the future. To this end, I thank the members who are in good standing and encourage those members who have perhaps forgotten to submit subscriptions to do so at the earliest opportunity and be able to continue to avail themselves of the benefits of same.

### **NST**

You will see the detailed NSD reporting of the progress of our training scheme and our 13 SPR's. I would like to thank Dr Fiona Kevitt for her work in carrying out her NSD duties over the past year. NSD is one of the most demanding roles on the Faculty Board, and Fiona continues to do an excellent job in delivering a quality training scheme, and attracting very high calibre trainees. I recognise the tremendous support provided by Fiona to our SPRs, as indeed do the network of trainers working within our scheme.

Attracting international candidates to apply for the International Fellowship programme is an important element of the remit to provide training in occupational medicine to doctors from other countries. To date there has been only one doctor completing this programme. In recent years we have seen a problem with otherwise suitable candidates not achieving the LFOM examination prior to coming onto the programme; the LFOM is mandatory giving the doctor the best chance of achieving the MFOM within the two years on the fellowship programme. In order to support these doctors, we have been innovative in developing an additional one year in Ireland with the doctor being assigned to a training site for a clerkship part time, while participating in the IHEED diploma course and with all of the supports and study days available to the trainees on the HST scheme in preparation for the LFOM for the balance of their time. We will report on progress of this programme next year.

### **Examinations**

Dr Lanre Ogunyemi, Chief Examiner has provided a detailed report below, but I wish to personally acknowledge his dedication and work in his first year in post. He was ably supported by Dr Susan Hill and Dr Sasha Hennessy in their second year as Deputy Chief Examiners and I thank both Susan and Sasha for their efforts in putting together a very successful examination diet this year and for the work already done in preparation for next year. I would like to take this opportunity to invite any members who are interested in contributing to our examinations programme to contact the faculty with a view to participating in future examination question writing sessions. Training is provided and this is an enjoyable and collegial experience with the added benefit of CPD credits.

Our examinations continue to attract large numbers of candidates outside of this island, in the Middle and Far East and this is testament to the quality of the examination process and the value attached to a qualification from the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland internationally.

My report last year made note that the longstanding collaboration with the ICGP in delivering the LFOM preparation course was paused by the ICGP during the 2022-2023 academic year. I can now update the membership that this course will not be re-launched and instead we are working with our colleagues on the IHEED Diploma course to explore the feasibility of expanding this course to prepare candidates for the LFOM. The LFOM remains the Faculty's recognised baseline qualification in occupational medicine and the basis for applying for the membership examination (MFOM).

I wish to acknowledge the contribution of the Examination Office, in particular Marianna Kyjovska & Lorna Furey and Keith Farrington who ably assisted in the SBA writing blitz in September.

### **Education**

You will see the report of our Education Committee, chaired by Dr Grant Jeffrey. Grant and the committee have delivered a diverse, high quality and relevant series of meetings throughout the year. This last twelve months saw a return to core medical topics and these were delivered to an excellent standard and very well received. I am so grateful for the hard work that Grant and the committee, puts into creating and delivering this program. The meetings continue to be held in hybrid format and I while acknowledge and concur with

the views expressed by those attending in person that the personal contact is very important in our small specialty, it is also clear that with a hybrid model, participation rates are higher than at any time when in-person only meetings were the norm. Therefore, in line with other college educational meetings, a hybrid format will continue to be the norm.

Following on from last year's annual report on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> May the winner of the Faculty's inaugural Arthur Eakins Award was Dr Cormac Duff for his presentation "Hit the Ground Running: Improving NCHD Induction at Children's Health Ireland". We look forward to an increase in applications for this award in the coming years and encourage Occupational Medicine trainees to participate fully.

I will leave it for all members to read the reports relating to the college support functions. I wish to draw your attention to the Connect Project as part of the overall transformational change in the college. We should all start to see the benefits of the project in the coming months.

### **The Future**

As we head into 2025 the Faculty will begin to plan for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our faculties founding in 2026. Some of us will remember the excellent 25-year celebrations which took place in Dublin Castle. The Education Committee will be putting together a subcommittee to work on suitable celebrations in the coming year and welcome input from all those interested in getting involved in this. More news will follow throughout the coming year.

The Faculty also recognises the professional support we receive from the College and it is appropriate to recognise that we would not be capable of delivering on any of our core activities without this. I invite you to read the contributions from Mr Colm Small, Head of Function for Postgraduate Training and Education; Ms Sinéad Lucy, Head of Business Development; and Dr Trevor Duffy, Director of Healthcare Leadership. Their scope of activity and the support they provide to the Faculty highlights the interdependence and connectivity between the Faculty and the college and the tremendous support we received from them as individuals and from the teams they manage. On a personal note, Mr Colm Small has very recently left RCPI to pursue other interests after 5 years with the college. We wish him the very best in the future.

Finally, just a few personal thank yous.

I would like to say a special thank you to Dr Alex Reid who takes over as Dean shortly. Alex has been a great support to me over the last two years. Alex, I wish you the very best in your tenure and look forward to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2026.

I would like to recognise the tremendous work that is done by the Faculty Board, the contribution they make in so many ways and the wise counsel they provide in all matters. In particular I would like to take this occasion to thank the following who are demitting this month as scheduled: Prof Ken Addley OBE.

I would also like to recognise the assistance of our Faculty Officer John Hunt. John keeps all of us Board Members on track with our tasks at hand and provides administrative support to me as Dean without which this role simply is not possible. Thanks also to Darragh Whelan, Faculties Manager who has been a very valuable source of knowledge and sound common sense.

At this time, we also think of the late Barbara Conneely who passed away almost a year ago today. Barbara was remembered at a lovely ceremony in the college earlier this year and she will long be remembered with fondness.

It would also be amiss of me not to mention others who support the Board from the college, and I know that by naming them I will almost inevitably overlook someone, for which I apologise. Notwithstanding this risk I would like to say a particular thank you to Siobhán Creaton, Head of Communications whose knowledge and wise counsel is greatly appreciated, Jemma Smith and her team in Events for their patience and attention to

detail in putting together all our scientific events and ceremonies. And last but not least Orla Loughrey who supports the work of the Dean at Executive Board level. A sincere thank you to all.

We admitted 26 new fellows, LFOM, MFOM, etc this past year, we welcome you to the Faculty and look forward to the contributions you make over the years.

## HONORARY TREASURER'S REPORT

### DR DAVID MADDEN, HONORARY TREASURER

#### General

A surplus of €75,439 was generated for the 12 months to the end of June 2024. This is €39,156 (108%) higher than last year's surplus of €36,283.

#### Income

Total Income (excluding investment income) generated for the year-end June 2024 was €212,064, an increase of €8,775 (4%) on last year.

Income is classed under three broad headings:

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

#### Subscriptions and Admission Fees

Receipts from Subscriptions were €65,840 in 2023-24 versus €67,495 in 2022-23, a decrease of €1,655 (2%) on last year.

Faculty admissions totalled €15,580 in 2023-24 versus €435 in 2022-23.

In 2023-24, 66% of Fellows, 55% of Members, and 32% of Licentiates paid their subscriptions.

By comparison in 2022-23, 72% of Fellows, 46% of Members, and 34% of Licentiates paid their subscriptions.

#### Event Fee Income and Sponsorship

Event fee income for 2023-24 was €46,130 compared to €39,730 in 2022-23. This was due to much larger attendance for the Autumn Conference and Spring Conference, (albeit reduced attendance for the Smiley Lecture). The Faculty received no LFOM course fees from the ICGP in 2023-24, compared with €13,396 received in 2022-23, as these are received every two years.

#### HSE Grant Income

This relates to the SLA to deliver training.

The amount of €84,514 is the proportion of the grant relating to the Faculty to cover cost of overheads and administrative running costs. This has increased by €2,281 when compared to 2022-23.

#### Investments

Investments held by the College at the end of June 2024 were €9,771,185 of which €432,678 were apportioned to the Faculty of Occupational Medicine. The investments apportioned to the Faculty increased by €41,256 in 2023-24, compared with an increase of €9,553 in 2022-23.

#### Costs

Costs are categorised as follows:

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

#### Direct Costs

Direct Costs total €105,777 for the year, a decrease of €115 (0%) on 2022-23.

Included under direct costs are:

- room hire & catering, which increased by €936
- wages and salaries, which increased by €3,305

- Professional Fees, which decreased by €12,303
- travel & accommodation, which increased by €7,235
- IT infrastructure, which increased €1,143
- Subscriptions and other admin costs, which decreased by €201

There was a significant increase in travel & accommodation costs in 2023-24 due to an away meeting in Belfast. This was offset by no advocacy consultancy costs (professional fees) in 2023-24 compared to 2022-23, meaning no significant change overall in direct costs.

**Overhead recharge**

Overhead recharge of €72,104 has been charged to the Faculty of Occupational Medicine accounts for 2023-24, compared with €70,897 in 2022-23. The small increase relates to overheads associated with rent, utilities, and insurance. This constitutes 0.8% of the overall College overhead.

**Profit & Loss**

Company: Faculty of Occupational Medicine

Financial Year Ending: 2024

Calendar Period: 12 - June



	Actual 30/06/2024	Budget 30/06/2024	€ Var	Prior Yr Actual 30/06/2023	€ Var
<b>Income</b>					
Fee Income	46,130	47,500	-1,370	53,126	-6,996
Subscriptions Income	65,840	63,137	2,703	67,495	-1,655
Admissions/Conferring Income	15,580	0	15,580	435	15,145
HSE Main SLA Funding	84,514	59,162	25,352	82,232	2,281
	<b>212,064</b>	<b>169,799</b>	<b>42,265</b>	<b>203,288</b>	<b>8,775</b>
<b>Direct Costs</b>					
Direct Catering	-25,343	-24,100	-1,243	-24,381	-962
Direct Beverages	0	0	0	-26	26
Direct Wages & Salaries	-40,931	-38,418	-2,512	-37,705	-3,225
Direct PRSI	-4,523	-4,245	-278	-4,156	-367
Direct Pension	-1,227	-2,561	1,334	-1,550	323
Direct Employee Benefits	-438	0	-438	-402	-36
Direct Professional Fees	0	-1,700	1,700	-12,303	12,303
Direct Accommodation	-8,329	-5,140	-3,189	-2,950	-5,379
Direct Travel - Mileage	-1,261	0	-1,261	-45	-1,216
Direct Travel - Taxis	-444	0	-444	0	-444
Direct Travel - Flights	-1,545	0	-1,545	0	-1,545
Direct Travel - Other	-1,073	-8,500	7,427	-2,473	1,400
Direct Subsistence	-52	-1,500	1,448	0	-52
Direct Design & Publication Costs	-231	0	-231	0	-231
Direct Stationery	0	-1,740	1,740	0	0
Direct Courier Costs	-128	0	-128	0	-128
Direct Photography	-1,384	0	-1,384	-1,230	-154
Direct Presentations, Gifts, Medals	-2,840	-2,300	-540	-2,068	-773
Direct IT Infrastructure: Hardware	-654	0	-654	-1,255	600
Direct IT Telecommunications: Data	-13,654	-13,653	-1	-11,911	-1,743
Direct Subscriptions	-1,700	0	-1,700	0	-1,700
Direct Miscellaneous Costs	-21	-23,000	22,979	-3,207	3,186
	<b>-105,777</b>	<b>-126,858</b>	<b>21,081</b>	<b>-105,662</b>	<b>-115</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>106,287</b>	<b>42,941</b>	<b>63,346</b>	<b>97,627</b>	<b>8,660</b>
<b>Indirect Costs</b>					
Overhead Allocation	-72,104	0	-72,104	-70,897	-1,207
<b>Investment Income &amp; Bank Interest Receive</b>					
Unrealised Gain/Loss on Valuation of Investm	41,256	0	41,256	9,553	31,703
<b>NET INCOME(LOSS)</b>	<b>75,439</b>	<b>42,941</b>	<b>32,498</b>	<b>36,283</b>	<b>39,156</b>

## NSD REPORT

### DR FIONA KEVITT, NSD

#### Clinical posts in Ireland 2024-2025

There are currently 12 funded Posts, all funding is now allocated through the WHWU, to ensure trainees are on NCHD contracts.

3 First Years\*

3 Second Years

3 Third Years

4 Fourth Years\*\*

\*1 first year is being funded by HSE WHWU for 1 year only; they will occupy one of the exiting trainee posts for 2025/2026

\*\*1 fourth year is occupying a funded post but is on maternity leave. in order to complete their remaining 4 months of training.

1 SpR has returned from long term absence and is phasing back into work. This post is being funded by HSE WHWU on a 0.5 WTE basis for 12 months initially.

#### Trainees in Research

No trainees are currently in formal/out of scheme research.

#### Trainees outside of Ireland

N/A

#### Recruitment and Selection

- Applicants: 4
- Shortlisted: 4
- Interviewed: 4
- Appointed: 3

#### HST Interviews

Interviews were held on the 09 February 2024 in person. Dr Fiona Kevitt and Dr Sasha Hennessy took part as panel members and Ms Anne-Marie Taylor was independent chair on the day. Unfortunately, Dr Kevitt was unwell and had to attend virtually. Four candidates were interviewed, and three candidates were appointed.

#### Evaluations

Evaluations took place on the 03 May 2024. All assessments were held online through Zoom. Dr David Mills acted as Extern for all PYEs. The breakdown of evaluations is below:

- 11 EYE
- 2 PYE
- 1 SpR was on maternity leave

#### CSCSTs Awarded

Four CSCST awarded in July 2024

#### International Clinical Fellowship Programme 2025/2026

There were 4 applications to the international fellowship programme for 2025/2026. 2 were shortlisted and interviewed remotely via Zoom and onsite in Dubai on 24 September. Dr Fiona Kevitt and Dr Sheelagh O'Brien took part remotely as panel members and Professor Stephen Patchett attended in person as independent chair. The interviews went very well and both candidates were deemed appointable.

The programme for Occupational Medicine will be a 3-year programme going forward, with successful candidates commencing an online training course in their home country, then coming to Ireland to complete a clerkship, in order that they have a greater chance of passing the LFOM exam, prior to commencing the 2-year Fellowship properly.

### Training Site Inspections

RCPI have transitioned to a structured site accreditation model and away from hospital/site inspections. In all, 3 new training sites have applied for recognition as a training site. These assessments will take place in the autumn. One site will be re-assessed following implementation of recommendations from previous assessment. One site due to be assessed in November 2023 alongside the wider hospital accreditation to which they are attached. This leaves a potential total of 20 training sites available for the 2024/25 intake.

### Study Days

29/09/2023	FOM Autumn Conference	
18/10/2023	Toxicology Zoom	Dr. Martin Hogan
10/11/2023	WSV: Ardee Ambulance Depot	Dr. Fiona Kevitt
17/11/2023	Smiley Day	
28/11/2023	LFOM/MFOM Portfolio Lecture	Dr. Alan Bray
20/12/2023	Toxicology 2 Zoom	Dr Martin Hogan
26/01/2024	WSV: Shannon Zimmer Biomet	Dr. David Madden
01/03/2024	WSV: Roscrea Abbatoir	Dr. Deirdre Gleeson
12/04/2024	Critical Appraisal Lecture in RCPI	Dr. Hubert Lam
19/04/2024	Spring Conference	
22/04/2024	WSV: Birdseye Naas	Dr Deirdre Gleeson

All study days/site visits have reverted to in person events, although some stand-alone tutorials and teaching sessions will remain virtual.

### STC Meetings

There were four STC meetings held between July 2023 and July 2024. The following is a summary of some of the discussions:

- The RCPI Trainer Project
- Specific tutorials for SpRs
- Training course for SpRs
- Proposed Study days
- Training site accreditation
- International Clinical Fellowship Programme

### SDR

For the period July 2023 – June 2024 there were no applications received from the IMC for our review.

## EXAMINATIONS REPORT

### DR LANRE OGUNYEMI, CHIEF EXAMINER

The Faculty has successfully transitioned to a new leadership team for examinations whilst maintaining the post- acute Covid 19 pandemic expansion of clinical exams. The LFOM exam continues to be wholly virtual whilst the MFOM exams continued to be delivered in a mixed format, combining online and in-person components. Written exams were conducted via remote invigilation (TestReach), portfolios were submitted online, and the LFOM portfolio viva was conducted via Zoom. The MFOM OSPE took place over two days at Beaumont Hospital in Dublin, where three live patients were sourced, marking a return to pre-pandemic standards. The MFOM Viva, introduced last year, was again held in person, alongside Day 2 of the OSPE. Day 1 being the report writing and critical appraisal sections of the OSPE.

The use of live patients in the MFOM OSPE is a vital step that allows candidates to demonstrate their clinical skills, particularly in identifying diseases and assessing their implications in the workplace. I consider that it greatly enhanced the quality of the OSPE, and I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Dr Sasha Hennessy in overcoming numerous challenges to achieve this.

The Examinations Committee, with the invaluable support of the College's specialist staff, has continued its work on improving assessment processes across the board. Formal meetings of the Examinations Committee were held quarterly, either in Dublin or remotely, usually coinciding with the FOM Board meetings.

On 13 September 2024, we held a productive question writing session in Dublin, where 12 writers generated 68 new SBA questions, currently under review by our Educational Specialist and a dedicated sub-group. I am especially grateful to Dr Susan Hill and Keith Farrington for leading on this and greatly appreciate all who took the time to participate in the exercise.

A revision of the exam regulations this year incorporated more information on plagiarism, alongside a new six-year time limit for completing both the LFOM and MFOM exams. Candidates now have up to six attempts per component within this timeframe. Plans are also underway to move the LFOM and MFOM portfolios to Brightspace, a key component of the RCPI Connect Programme, which aims to modernize examination processes and integrate them with the College's digital infrastructure.

I would also like to highlight a gap analysis currently being conducted on the IHEED diploma. This analysis will assess whether the IHEED course can be expanded to align with the LFOM. The project may very well result in substantial expansion of candidate numbers for the LFOM, with resource implications for that examination.

#### Examination Statistics

##### LFOM Examinations 2024:

Exam	Number of Candidates:	Pass Rate %
LFOM Written	44	32%
LFOM Portfolio Viva	15	93%

\*18 candidates for LFOM Portfolio submission, pass rate 78%.

##### MFOM Examinations 2024:

Exam	Number of Candidates:	Pass Rate %
MFOM Written	41	29%

MFOM Portfolio Viva	9	100%
MFOM OSPE	9	56%

\*12 candidates for MFOM Portfolio submission, pass rate 75%.

The overall numbers enrolling in our exams are similar to previous years. Irish trainees and non-trainee candidates continue to perform better than their international counterparts in the written exams. The pass rate for the MFOM Written Exam has improved from 13% in 2023 to 29% this year. This pass rate is nearer the usual percentage pass for preceding years. A detailed review of the difficulty level of SBA questions is planned.

Looking ahead, we plan to blueprint the non-SBA components of the exams to enhance structure and clarity. Resource permitting, the other quality assurance projects intended for the next year include structured feedback systems for both candidates and examiners and bias training for examiners.

Additionally, efforts to revive international examinations remain a priority, though these will be addressed following the successful implementation of the other earlier mentioned initiatives.

### **Acknowledgements**

I extend my sincere thanks to the Deputy Chief Examiners, Dr Susan Hill and Dr Sasha Hennessy, the Occupational Medicine Examination Committee and to the entire Examinations Team for their hard work and dedication. Special recognition is also due to the RCPI Examinations Department for their continued support. I am grateful to my predecessor, Alan Bray and to Marianna Kyjovska & Lorna Furey for helping to ensure a particularly smooth transition. Particular thanks to Lorna for our regular meetings that ensure smooth progression of our oversight function. Through their efforts, we are maintaining high standards in our examinations while continually seeking improvements.

This has been a year of progress and consolidation, and I look forward to continuing our work in the year ahead.

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE

### DR GRANT JEFFERY, CONVENER OF MEETINGS

The following report outlines the hybrid event activity for the academic year 2023-24. There were three completed Occupational Medicine events at the time of providing this update.

Events, Themes and Topics:

#### **15 November 2023: Jack Eustace Lecture**

##### **Theme and Topic**

- "Transforming Occupational Health & Wellbeing - the An Garda Síochána Experience" delivered by Dr Oghenovo Oghuvbu.

#### **17 November 2023: Faculty of Occupational Medicine Smiley Lecture**

**Topics Covered:** 2 SpR presentations, Smiley Lecture

- Dr Mary Teresa O' Neil - "Impact of Menopausal Symptoms on Work and Careers: A Cross Sectional Study"
- Dr Lena Murphy - "SARS-CoV-2 testing strategies to limit community transmission, morbidity, mortality and associated costs"
- Smiley Lecture - "The Management of Traumatic Stress in the Workplace", Professor Neil Greenberg

#### **19 April 2024: Faculty of Occupational Medicine Spring Conference**

**Theme(s):** Cancer, Bowel Disease, Respiratory Disease, and Measles.

**Topics Covered:** Immediate and Long-term Impact of a Breast Cancer Diagnosis, Cancer Treatment and Occupational Medicine: Starting a Conversation, Inflammatory Bowel Disease in the Workplace, Tuberculosis: Still a Global Threat, Silicosis: a Clinical Perspective, Occupational Asthma, Measles, 2023 Updates to Chapter 4 of NIAC Immunisation Guidelines for Ireland, and To Test or Not to Test: The Role of Post-Vaccination Serology in Assessing Responses to the HBV & MMR Vaccines.

##### **Event Evaluation:**

- 196 registrations received. 181 attendees (59 in-person, 122 virtual)
- 27 attendees would recommend, 1 attendee would not recommend.
- Suggestions for topics included: Cardiology, blue light driving, neurological conditions, dermatology, hearing loss, neurodiversity, occ health law and ethics, remote working, functional capacity assessments.

#### **27 September 2024: Faculty of Occupational Medicine Autumn Conference**

**Theme(s):** Neurological Conditions and Work, Bones, Groans and Moans, and Hot Topics.

**Topics Covered:** The Role of Clinical Neuropsychology in the Workplace, Cognitive Ageing vs Cognitive Impairment: Insights and Updates, Mercury neurotoxicity: a Zimbabwean neurologist's experience, Multiple Sclerosis: Diagnosis, Symptoms, and Treatments, How people with rheumatic disease can thrive in the workplace, Performance, Prevention and Rehabilitation: Bridging Sports Medicine and Occupational Health, HIV in 2024: a lot done but more to do, Diversity Issues and Challenges in Providing an Inclusive Occupational Health Service to Staff, MPOX: Epidemiology and clinical updates for 2024, MPOX Vaccines: Where do we stand.

##### **Event Evaluation:**

- 171 registrations received. 171 attendees (66 in-person, 105 virtual)
- 48 attendees would recommend.

- Suggestions for future topics included: AI in occ health, cardiology, noise and hearing loss, blue light driving, returning to work post cardiac interventions, dermatology, personality disorders, occ health law, employment law, ethics, remote working, off-shore working, hazards of vaping, radiation, toxicology, functional capacity assessments.

#### **Event Attendance by Membership Category:**

##### **15 November 2023: Jack Eustace Lecture – In-person only**

- Fellow - 5
- Member – 5
- BST – 0
- HST - 0
- BASE – 4
- Retired – 2

##### **17 November 2023: Faculty of Occupational Medicine Smiley Lecture - 97 Registered, 81 Participated**

- Fellow - 33
- Member – 23
- BST – 3
- HST – 9
- BASE – 9
- Retired – 1
- PCS – 3

##### **19 April 2024: Faculty of Occupational Medicine Spring Conference**

- Fellow 29
- Member 24
- BST 2
- HST 6
- PCS 11

##### **27 September 2024: Faculty of Occupational Medicine Autumn Conference**

- Fellow 14
- Member 8
- BST 1
- HST 11
- PCS 4

#### **Conclusions & Key Insights for the academic year 2023-24:**

- Positive feedback received for the Smiley, Spring and Autumn Conferences.
- Hybrid events remain extremely popular, and preferred option for attendees. However, interaction with remote presentations can be challenging.
- Return to core clinical medical topics remains welcome. However, better linkage to the speciality needs to be considered.
- Introduction of a “Hot Topics” session to the Autumn Conference was considered extremely valuable and welcomed new format to the conference.

#### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank the Education Committee; Dr Grainne McNally, Dr Niamh Byrne, Dr Mary McMahan, Dr Dingani Moyo, Dr Aoife Broderick and Dr Zara Togher for their dedication and commitment.

## ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

### PROF KEN ADDLEY OBE, CHAIR FACULTY ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

#### Members

Prof Ken Addley OBE (Chair)  
Dr. Sheelagh O'Brien (Dean)  
Dr. Alex Reid (Dean Designate)  
Dr. David Mills  
Dr. Eoin O'Mahony  
Dr. Ovo Oghuvbu  
Dr Nuala Kelly  
Dr Tom Brannigan  
Ms Niamh O'Sullivan (RCPI)  
Ms Mairead Heffron (RCPI)

The work of the committee continued to be largely focused on the implementation of the Faculty Advocacy Strategy that was launched in November 2022. The aim of the strategy is to enhance understanding of what Occupational Health is and its importance and relevance to the health and well-being of the nation. It is apparent that advocacy is an extremely important area of activity for the Faculty and aligns with the College's strategic theme of Healthcare Leadership.

The Advocacy Committee met on a number of occasions during the year and regular updates were provided to Faculty Board Meetings. The following represents the key points for 2023/24:

- **FOM Advocacy Lead:** this was a major recommendation from the Faculty strategy. A job specification was agreed with the Faculty Treasurer and the College finance department which included a remuneration package. An open competition was held and an interview panel convened. Following the interview process, Dr Abigail O'Reilly was appointed as the new Faculty Advocacy Lead. Dr O'Reilly will agree the starting date with the Dean – likely to be either October or November.
- **New Chair of the Advocacy Committee:** Dr Oghenov Oghuvbu has been appointed as the new chair of this committee with effect from August 2024.
- **Advocacy Publication List 2023/24:** The following were published during the year on the RCPI website:
  - The impact of work and employment on health inequality.
  - Occupational Medicine – What is it? [with thanks to Dr Eoin O'Mahoney]
  - The Arthur Eakins Occupational Medicine Award [with thanks to Dr Patrick Carr]
- **Advocacy News:** I was invited to speak on the Faculty Advocacy Strategy at two meetings: Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation, OH Nurses Section Annual Conference in Limerick and the ICOH 2024 Congress in Marrakech, Morocco [28 April – 3 May 2024]. There was a good audience response at both meetings with interesting points made on the general theme of OH advocacy.

In conclusion, after nearly two and a half years involved with the Faculty's advocacy work it is time for me to stand down. From drafting and then launching the strategy in November 2022 through to the implementation phase it has been a pleasure to work with many colleagues on this important topic. I have no doubt that advocacy for OH in Ireland will be a major area of work going forward. I would like to thank all of my committee members, the Dean and Dean Designate and John Hunt our Faculty Coordinator for their support over the past two years. Also, I would take this opportunity once again to thank Dr Zoe Healey for her support of the development and launch of the Faculty Advocacy Strategy. I wish my successors Dr

Oghenovo Oghuvbu [Chair of Advocacy Committee] and Dr Abigail O'Reilly [Faculty Advocacy Lead] the very best for the future.

## **RCPI SUPPORTING FUNCTIONS: POSTGRADUATE TRAINING AND EDUCATION COLM SMALL, HEAD OF FUNCTION, POSTGRADUATE TRAINING AND EDUCATION, RCPI**

### **Background**

Over the last year there have been two organisational restructurings which has involved the Postgraduate Training Function (formerly known as PTE). In January 2024, the whole Examinations Department moved from PTE to sit under the Director of Business Development.

Secondly, the RCPI as part of the Connect Project is going through transformational change. As part of that and after significant consultation and engagement with staff and stakeholders over several months in the first half of 2024, there was substantial organisational change implemented from 01 July 2024. As part of this, a new Operations Department came into being. In this re-organisation, the vast majority of the work of the previous Training and Faculties Office (TFO) in PTE has moved into the new Operations Department. This Department has a Head of Operations, Múríosa Prendergast and they report to the CFO.

### **Overall Purpose:**

The overall purpose of the Postgraduate Training (PGT) Function is to pursue excellence in all that we do as we support all those involved in our Training Programmes. Key areas include: our accreditation with the Irish Medical Council, cross-college projects and individual initiatives related to training and quality improvement, quality assurance / quality improvement as it relates to our training sites, supports in health and wellbeing and developing best practice in that area, and a range of strategic areas as they relate to training,

### **Accreditation and Improvement Projects Department**

As part of an overall approach to improving quality in postgraduate training, RCPI and its six constituent training bodies are committed to a programme of continuous quality improvement. This Department leads out on some 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.

Current projects include the Optimise project (Internal Medicine) and previously the Trainer Project as major examples.

A key priority for this Department is our system of Training Site QI. This model works on a five-year timeline for each training site and it is chaired by an extern from outside of Ireland with a final overall report with generic and speciality recommendations. There are embedded annual quality checks and follow up procedures for issues identified at the visits.

The Department coordinates and supports Medical Council accreditation for Occupational Medicine and all of the RCPI's postgraduate training bodies, and programmes, including new programmes, and management of the Annual Return of key data. The Department also assists in tracking and managing key areas of improvement identified within these processes.

The Accreditation and Improvement Projects Office is also responsible for the management of Specialist Division of Register (SDR) applications of the Medical Council.

**Health and Wellbeing Department**

Our health and wellbeing service is a key support for those trainees who are experiencing challenges or difficulties or just need a little support during their training programmes. Apart from supporting individual doctors, this office is very proactive with various initiatives and projects related to health and wellbeing and projects and initiatives to help improve the training experience overall. It is also supporting a number of trainers in challenges they may have or supporting them with trainees.

In supporting trainees via a number of pathways(e.g. reasonable accommodation), we deliver an infrastructure to back up trainees and those who support them (e.g. NSDs, RPDs, Deans, Directors of Education and Training, RCPI staff). The Department also ensures that there is excellent communication transfer between the RCPI, hospital sites, the HSE NCHD Hub (this sits under the Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit) and the HSE National Doctors Training Programme to ensure that supports are maintained throughout the individual's training programme. Appropriate referrals for additional care are advised to the HSE as the employer.

## GLOBAL TRAINING AND PARTNERSHIPS

### SINÉAD LUCEY, HEAD OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, RCPI

#### **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 in 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 training streams under this Initiative: Residency and Clinical Fellowship training. All programmes are supernumerary, meaning they do not occupy places or reduce opportunities for national trainees.

#### **International Residency Programme**

The International Residency Training Programme (IRTP) is designed for doctors who have completed their internship. This programme allows doctors to do their Residency training in Ireland, enabling them to acquire a qualification equivalent to the Saudi/Arab Board and become members of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland. Currently, this programme is available for Internal Medicine and Paediatrics. Two additional programmes will be launched this year: the International Basic Specialist Training in Histopathology and the International Residency Programme in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. Both of these new programmes will follow the same duration and curriculum as the National BST.

#### **International Clinical Fellowship Programme**

The International Clinical Fellowship Programme (ICFP) offers structured, curriculum-based specialist training for post-Residency doctors to pursue higher training in their chosen speciality or sub-specialty. Now in its tenth year, a hundred and eighty-two trainees have graduated from the programme and returned home to embed their newly acquired knowledge and skills in the health services of their home countries.

There has been a limited number of trainees in Occupational Medicine joining the International Clinical Fellowship Programme. This is largely due to the specialty being in its early stages of development in the Middle East, making it difficult for trainees to gain the necessary exposure and training required for eligibility. Additionally, many have faced challenges in passing the LFOM exam, a prerequisite for joining the programme. To date, there has only been one international fellowship graduate in Occupational Medicine.

In response, an International Pathway to Fellowship has recently been approved. This programme will include an LFOM exam preparation component, integrated with the Iheed Occupational Medicine Diploma, and combined with a part-time clerkship in an Occupational Medicine clinic. The aim is that this offering will attract high-quality applicants to the two-year fellowship programme.

#### **EQUALS Initiative**

RCPI and HSE agreed to jointly assist in funding the 5 year strategy development plan for the Zambia College of Medicine and Surgery (ZACOMS). As well as providing funding, resourcing support for planning and workshop delivery was given. Dr Diarmuid O'Donovan (HSE) and Ann O'Shaughnessy (RCPI) travelled to Zambia in April 2024 for the workshop to develop this plan.

In February, June and August 2024 three more 40ft containers of equipment were shipped to Zambia. This will take the total number of 40ft containers sent to Zambia since 2013 to 17. The equipment was tested pre

shipment by clinical engineers of the EQUALS Initiative and on arrival it will be distributed across the country to larger teaching hospitals and smaller health clinics.

Through the collaboration between RCPI and ZACOMS, RCPI continues to provide access to online courses to Zambian trainees on various specialist training programmes, which comprises part of their core curriculum. ZACOMS invited delegates from EQUALS Initiative to attend the 2024 graduation ceremony for their trainees in June. Donna Wrightson (RCPI) attended on behalf of EQUALS. Whilst there she met with key stakeholders, including the Irish Embassy in Zambia.

### **Global Health**

In August 2024 we conducted a survey to find out about the Global Health initiatives and projects our members, fellows, trainees and learners are involved in. The results of the survey will be collated and analysed to help us better support further engagement in these activities.

### **Membership and Fellowship**

A recruitment campaign for Fellowship began in July 2023, with targeted invitations being sent to eligible candidates. From the invitations sent from the Faculty of Occupational Medicine, 31 candidates were approved for Fellowship in September 2023. They were then invited to confer at the Faculty Autumn Conference. The campaign remains ongoing, with each Faculty and Institute deciding who they would like to invite annually.

The Collegiate Membership and Engagement Steering Group Report was completed and approved through Council in June 2024. As per one of the recommendations, Trueology have been commissioned for an updated research piece on our members and fellows database. Trueology last completed this research on our behalf in 2019/2020. This updated state of the nation aims to find out more about the changing needs of our members since COVID, and what impact the changes the college has made in that time have had on our engagement with our members and fellows. This work began in July 2024 and is due to be completed by December 2024.

A new dedicated membership section on the website launched in July 2024. This is an area where members and fellows can find information relating to their membership, including benefits, what's happening, FAQs and further ways to get involved with the college. The plan is to expand this area with further offerings as we get more feedback on what members would like to see more of.

## RCPI EDUCATION

### DIARMUID BREATHNACH, HEAD OF PROFESSIONAL AFFAIRS, RCPI

The Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI) continues to play a crucial role in providing avenues to training and upskilling, allowing doctors and other healthcare professionals to evolve as part of an innovative health sector.

Equipping professionals with the tools to provide world-class healthcare to patients, RCPI delivers a range of lifelong learning and education opportunities.

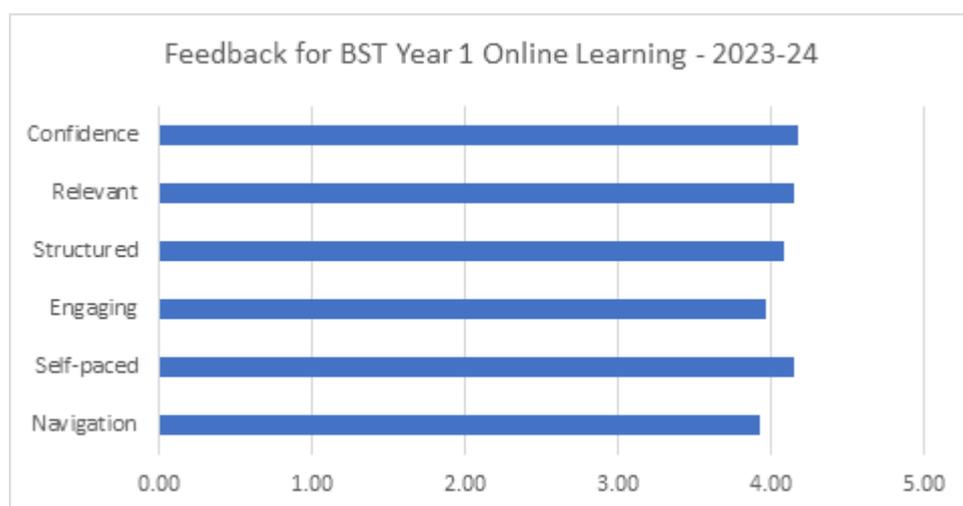
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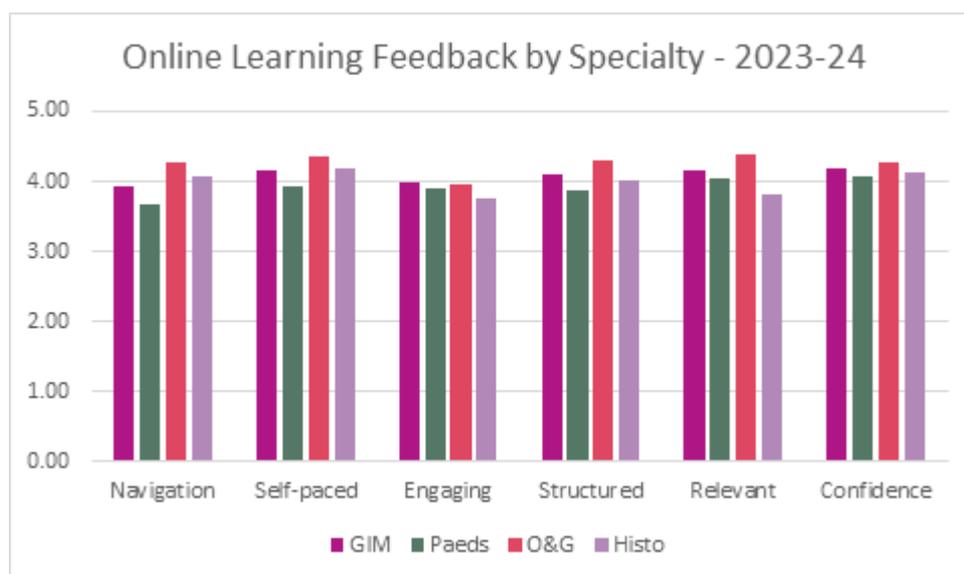
- Over 11,700 learners accessed Brightspace
- 134 tutorials and workshops delivered
- 6,299 attendees at 58 CPD events
- 5,811 total attendees
- 81% of participants across 11 Professional Competence Schemes met the PCS requirements
- 1,086 new enrolments across 11 Professional Competence Schemes
- 2,335 participants on RCPI Courses
- 2,043 participants on RCPI iheed programmes

#### TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

In the 2023-24 college year, RCPI’s BST programmes moved away from a model of mandatory courses into a new Taught Programme consisting of modular elements wherein curriculum components are provided at correct, relevant stages of training.

Trainees were asked to complete a feedback survey each quarter. From a total of 951 responses, feedback was positive, with participants articulating high levels of confidence in the programme. Relevance, structure and the self-paced nature of the programme were also scored highly.





In the 2024-25 training year, Taught Programmes will be rolled out to Year 2 of BST and Year 1 of Higher Specialist Training (HST).

### IRISH CLINICIAN EDUCATION TRACK (ICET)

In the 2023-24 college year, RCPI piloted a new Irish Clinician Education Track (ICET) through Higher Specialist Training. This innovative programme, appealing to Trainees seeking professional development as clinical educators, provides to doctors on a HST programme funding towards two years of out-of-clinical-programme experience (OCPE), wherein they'll be involved in supervised teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Two Trainees participated in the ICET pilot in the 2023-24 training year: Dr Karen Dennehy (HST Geriatric Medicine) and Dr Clare Kennedy (HST Obstetrics & Gynaecology).

Four more Trainees joined the programme in July 2024.

### STUDY DAY PROJECT

From October 2023-May 2024, RCPI conducted a new Study Day project, reviewing current Study Day models and making recommendations for improvement.

A survey assessing stakeholder needs received a significant number of responses across the college's institutes and faculties.

Following analysis of data, emerging themes and key issues were identified and reports written to summarise findings and form extensive recommendations to help support the delivery of this essential component of BST and HST programmes.

Among those recommendations was the alignment of RCPI Study Days with national guidelines on best educational practice, and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Study Day events in meeting the educational needs of Trainees and supporting their professional development.

### MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT FELLOWSHIPS

RCPI's Management Consultant Fellowships, created in partnership with PwC Ireland and EY Ireland, offers Trainees on a HST programme the opportunity to work full-time for a one-year period as a management consultant to gain practical business and management experience in a healthcare context.

In its third year, the Management Consultant Fellowships were awarded to six Trainees, a 50% increase on its first cohort in July 2001: Dr Claire Connellan (HST General Paediatrics), Dr Claire Mc Ateer (HST Geriatric Medicine), Dr David Tansey (HST Endocrinology and Diabetes Mellitus), Dr Jane Noble (HST Endocrinology

and Diabetes Mellitus), Dr Patrick Coughlan (HST Respiratory Medicine); and Dr Sarah Kyne (HST General Paediatrics).

### **ASPIRE FELLOWSHIPS**

Doctors awarded a Certificate of Successful Completion of Training (CSCST) on completion of their Higher Specialist Training may apply for a RCPI Aspire Fellowship.

Created by RCPI in partnership with HSE National Doctors Training & Planning (NDTP), this 12-month Fellowship offers exceptional individuals high-quality training and exposure to speciality training and advanced clinical skills, in addition to a Specialist Registrar (SpR) salary for the duration of the fellowship.

RCPI had 23 doctors on its Aspire Fellowships in the 2023-24 training year.

### **NEW CONTRACT WITH TEST REACH**

In June 2024, RCPI entered a new remote invigilation supplier contract with its ongoing delivery partner Testreach. As part of the partnership, the college plays a role providing feedback on product development and design, to ensure that TestReach's services continue to provide innovative and best-in-class tools to run high-stakes, online medical examinations, now and into the future.

### **NATIONAL EDUCATION DAY**

The Annual National Education Day, organised by RCPI Trainees' Committee, took place on 24 May 2024.

Under the theme "Inclusion & Diversity in Medicine," this year's event featured a series of compelling talks from a diverse group of speakers capturing key themes in medical training, to presentations by finalists for the Trainee Awards.

The event included the Trainee Awards prize ceremony, highlighting outstanding achievements from within the RCPI Trainee Group.

### **ENHANCING OUR EDUCATION OFFERING**

RCPI's Postgraduate Certificate in Cancer Genetics and Genomics, accredited at QQI Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualification, was launched in September 2023. It had 25 learners registered to the programme in the 2023-2024 training year.

The past 12 months have been marked by a series of impactful activities and new releases, underscoring RCPI's commitment to excellence in medical education. Central to our progress has been the consolidation of the Education Development team and the establishment of online learning as a core delivery mode:

- *Health Economics*
- *An Introduction to Medicolegal Report Writing*
- *An Introduction to Medical Consent*
- *Effective Teaching Skills: Workplace Based Assessment (WBA)*
- *Effective Teaching Skills: Directly Observed Procedural Skills (DOPS)*
- *Effective Teaching Skills: Giving a Lecture*
- *Effective Teaching Skills: Mini Clinical Evaluation Exercise (Mini-CEX)*
- *Effective teaching skills: Techniques for effective bedside teaching*
- *Physicians as Trainers: Clinical Supervision*
- *Physicians as Trainers: Conducting Skills Training in a Clinical Setting*
- *Seven new Obstetrics and Gynaecology "practical scenario" modules provide practical information regarding specific pregnancy and delivery issues that Obstetrics & Gynaecology Trainees face during their training.*
- *Family Planning*
- A simulated training course Intrapartum Simulated Obstetrics Training (ISOT) has been developed to support RCPI Obstetrics and Gynaecology BST Trainees as they transition to Junior Registrar year.

**CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT SCHEME (CPD-SS)**

A total of 983 Learners were enrolled on the *Continuous Professional Development Support Scheme (CPD-SS)* in the 2023-24 training year, representing an all-time high for RCPI – a 25 per cent increase in enrolments on last year.

**QUALITY IMPROVEMENT (QI) PROGRAMMES**

Since 2011, RCPI's Postgraduate Certificate in Quality Improvement Leadership in Healthcare has been making significant strides. This year marked the 26th intake of the programme, welcoming 10 teams from various healthcare settings nationwide. To date, over 750 healthcare professionals have been trained in Quality Improvement (QI) through this initiative.

So far, *Situation Awareness for Everyone (S.A.F.E.) Collaborative* – a programme designed to build a safety culture, funded by HSE National Quality and Patient Safety Directorate – has been delivered to over 70 clinical teams representing 37 hospitals and more than 280 clinical staff from medical, nursing, ambulance service, administrative, psychology, dietetics, physiotherapy and pharmacy backgrounds. Nine clinical teams completed the programme in the 2023-24 training year.

A new course *Embedding QI*, designed to deliver bespoke QI tools to a specific cohort of clinical staff, had 24 learners, coming from Critical Care Outreach Advanced Nurse Practitioners (CCO ANP). A second cohort, dedicated to CCO ANP and CCO colleagues as project partners, is funded for 2024-25 by the HSE National Quality and Patient Safety Directorate (NQPSD).

*QI in Action*, a virtually delivered course designed to provide quality improvement methodology that can lead to measurable outcomes, had 20 learners from medical, nursing and HSCP backgrounds.

**IHEED PARTNERSHIP**

Under RCPI's ongoing, successful partnership with iheed, 2,043 Learners participated across our six programmes in the 2023-24 training year, an increase on 1,973 in the previous year.

RCPI and iheed currently offer; *Professional Diploma in Paediatrics, Professional Diploma in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Professional Diploma in Dermatology, Professional Diploma in Medicine for the Older Person, Professional Diploma in Infectious Diseases, and Professional Diploma in Occupational Medicine.*

**Professional Diploma in Occupational Medicine**

Within the RCPI / iheed collaboration, the Professional Diploma in Occupational Medicine is the newest qualification which commenced in February 2023. The programme is designed to provide doctors with an introduction to core areas of Occupational Medicine, health & safety, health surveillance and fitness for safety critical tasks.

The wholly online programme runs three times per year and to date, 471 learners have registered. They are supported by a faculty of 15 tutors, led by Dr Conor Mc Donnell (RCPI Programme Lead), Dr Will Ponsonby (iheed Programme Lead) and Dr Alan Bray (Assessment Lead).

Learners are recruited from Ireland, UK, Middle East and South-East Asia. Learner feedback is extremely positive, with a world class Net Promoter Score of +77 indicating the vast majority of respondents are exceptionally satisfied with their learning experience.

*"The Occupational Medicine Diploma program has been a transformative experience, equipping me with the knowledge and skills to effectively address health challenges in the workplace. The practical focus, expert*

*instruction, and comprehensive content have deeply enriched my professional capabilities, allowing me to make a significant impact in the field.”*

Sherif Elwy

*“I highly recommend the Diploma in Occupational Medicine program. It offers a thorough understanding of workplace health, safety, and well-being, along with practical skills applicable in real-world contexts. The knowledgeable and supportive faculty made it a truly valuable experience for general practitioners and anyone pursuing a career in occupational health.”*

Dr. Hafiz Haider

## HEALTHCARE LEADERSHIP

### TREVOR DUFFY, HEAD OF HEALTHCARE LEADERSHIP, RCPI

#### Overview

The Healthcare Leadership Department was established in June 2022. RCPI provides healthcare leadership broadly through advocacy, influence, expertise and support. In partnership with a range of stakeholders, RCPI actively leads via the National Specialty Quality Improvement Programmes, the National Immunisation Advisory Committee and National Clinical Programmes.

Within the scope of Healthcare Leadership, there is a focus on engaging with trainees, members and fellows in three key areas: Teaching Leaders, Supporting Leaders and Acting as Leaders. To strengthen current RCPI offerings of formal leadership education the Healthcare Leadership function develops a programme of supports for doctors in their day-to-day role as leaders and will continue to develop the college's own leadership role. There is also a strategic approach to gathering advocacy views of trainees, members and fellows. This will be backed up by an education programme, policy development and active advocacy, ensuring the voice of RCPI is heard within the healthcare community, among national policymakers and legislators as well as the general public.

#### Healthcare Leadership Projects

##### Pilot Mentorship Programme for Early-Stage Consultants

This pilot mentorship programme has been underway since July 2023. There has been positive feedback from both mentors and mentees. From the feedback we have received to date, the mentees have benefited from the ongoing support and guidance of experienced semi-retired and retired doctors. This is tailored to the individual needs of the mentee; it has helped participants with various management aspects of their consultancy posts as well as broadening their network. The RCPI Research Department created a mentorship evaluation survey in which the consultants self-assess progression over time in ten different aspects of their role. The final report will be shared on completion.

##### RCPI Academy for Retired Doctors

The establishment of the Academy provides an instrumental vehicle for retired RCPI members and fellows to add value and stay connected with the College. The Academy offers a network and social outlet for retired doctors as well as opportunities to use their expertise to get involved in different areas of the college. Retired members are now contributing to the College through their involvement in mentorship, examinations, CPD audits, representation on committees and heritage projects. The social events organised in RCPI have had a good level of engagement and participation.

To date, fourteen members participated in mentorship training to support 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. Volunteers participated in membership graduation ceremonies, invigilation at Climate Change Art Exhibition and others have contributed to various heritage projects. RCPI will provide ongoing support to the committee as the Academy evolves.

##### Leadership Forum

RCPI Leadership Forum is in the early stages of development. The Leadership Forum group consists of National Clinical Programme Leads, Chairs of Clinical Advisory Groups and other RCPI Chairs of Committees. The first meeting of this group took place on 1 May. The Leadership Forum has 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 valuable in identifying those Members interested in participating in RCPI advocacy agendas. The College will plan networking events, seminars and training to support these leaders in their roles.

A Leadership Survey has been carried out by RCPI Research Department to better understand the needs of those in leadership roles for the college. This will help us to identify any gaps with a view to creating the right tools for our leaders to feel supported by RCPI in the extensive work that they do. We are also looking at how to improve communication and connectivity within this leadership group.

### **Sabbatical Pilot Project**

This project is aimed at mid-career consultants.

A new project is at development stage which aims to enhance personal job satisfaction and reinvigorate the individual by enabling them to step away from the constant demands of their day job. Stakeholder engagement is ongoing as we scope out the various aspects of delivering this multilayered project.

### **RCPI President Hospital Visits and Quality Improvement Workshops**

Dr Diarmuid O'Shea, President RCPI and Prof Trevor Duffy, RCPI Director of Healthcare Leadership, led a delegation visiting University Hospital Kerry, Regional Hospital Mullingar and Cavan General Hospital (Jan-Feb 2024). Dr Diarmuid O'Shea discussed developments and updates on key functions of the College. There was a high level of engagement with medical teams on current challenges within the hospitals and the feedback received by the College was invaluable. Leadership Faculty in the College facilitated QI/Leadership Workshops which gave further opportunities to discuss key hospital projects and how to lead changes and improvements to services.

### **Professional Competence**

#### **Summary of Key Activities – August 2023 to August 2024**

The number of doctors enrolled in RCPI Professional Competence Schemes (PCS) increased to 5,901 in the PCS year May 2023 - April 2024. A total of 95 doctors were enrolled in the Faculty of Occupational Medicine Schemes (78 on the Specialist Division Scheme and 17 on the General Division Scheme).

The Professional Competence Department continues to develop extensive guidance, support and innovations in order to help doctors fulfil their CPD requirements and also provided individual help and support to many doctors.

#### **Submission of PCS Annual Reports to the Medical Council – June 2024**

Under the formal Arrangements with the Medical Council for the operation of PCS, our six Training Bodies are required to submit annual reports on the operation of PCS by 30 June each year. This year Training Bodies were only required to submit the Quantitative (KPI) Report for the 2023-2024 PCS year and this report was submitted on behalf of the Faculty of Paediatrics on 28 June 2024.

#### **Compliance with Scheme Requirements for 2023 – 2024 PCS Year**

The overall percentage of participants across RCPI's 11 Professional Competence Schemes who met the PCS requirements for the 2023 – 2024 PCS year is 81%, which is slightly lower than last year, where the compliance rate was 82%. The individual scheme compliance rates for the 2023 - 2024 year ranged from 74% to 94%. The percentage of participants in the Faculty of Occupational Medicine Schemes who met the PCS requirements for the 2023 – 2024 PCS year is 92% in the Specialist Division and 88% in the General Division.

The Annual Statements issued in May 2024 were once again annotated to state the reduced PCS requirements for the 2023 - 2024 year.

### Annual Verification Process (AVP)

281 doctors were selected for the 2022 – 2023 process. 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 to selected doctors at the end of October 2023 with a deadline of 30 November to complete corrective actions.

At the conclusion of the process, 264 (94%) of the initial group of 281 participants remained enrolled on a Professional Competence Scheme. 2 of this number had been exempted at the first stage, and 1 of this group had their previous year verified. This left 261 participants in the process. Of the remaining 261 participants, 183 (70%) have been verified with no further action required (1 {100%} from the Faculty of Occupational Medicine General Division Scheme and 3 {75%} from the Faculty's Specialist Division Scheme).

Doctors who were verified with no further action received an annotation on their 2023 - 2024 Annual Statement. Doctors with outstanding corrective actions will be checked again for the 2023 - 2024 process and if they have not successfully completed their corrective actions at that time, they will be re-selected for that process.

### Strengthened Model for Maintenance of Professional Competence

The Medical Council approved the new Maintenance of Professional Competence Rules and Guidelines on 12 December 2023, representing an important step to bring Maintenance of Professional Competence (MPC) in line with international practice and incorporate right touch and compassionate regulation. The Rules and Guidelines associated with the evolved MPC Framework Model will commence in May 2025.

The new 5 Year Arrangements which formalise the operation of the evolved MPC Model will commence in May 2024 with the first year focusing on developments and to support implementation for May 2025.

The Council have reinitiated their collaboration with the ACCME regarding the CPD accreditation model. The initial phase of this work will be to develop a governance model around the decision-making process leading to receiving accreditation from the Medical Council. Postgraduate Training Bodies (Scheme Operators) will be invited to be part of this process and training will be provided on this.

The Professional Competence Department will continue to collaborate with our Training Bodies, the Forum and the Medical Council on the implementation of the new MPC Framework in May 2025. We will also collaborate with the Medical Council and with the ACCME relating to the evolving governance model and decision-making process associated with receiving accreditation from the Medical Council.

### Professional Competence Requirements for 2024 - 2025

Professional Competence Requirements for the current year 2024 – 2025 are:

- **40** CPD Credits in any category (External, Internal, Personal Learning, Research or Teaching) and
- One Audit or Quality Improvement Project

### 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 June 2023 to 31 May 2024:

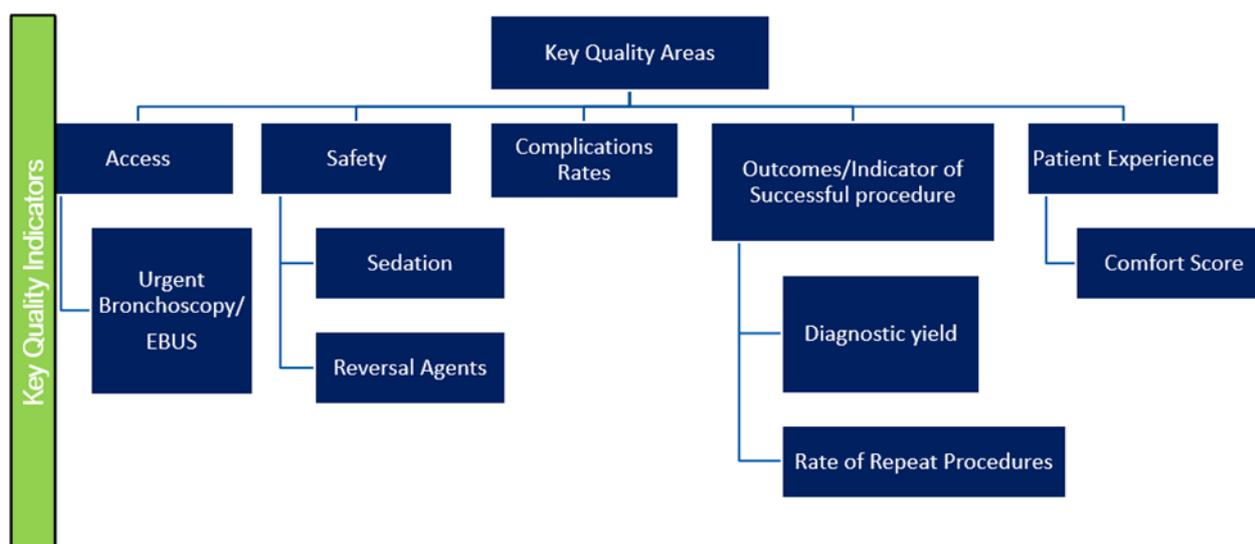
Type	Applications Approved	Credits Allowed
RCPI	294	2232
Non RCPI	372	2156
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>666</b>	<b>4388</b>

**National Specialty Quality Improvement Programmes**

RCPI currently manages four National Quality Improvement (NSQI) 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 Team and Bronchoscopy which is funded by HSE Acute Operations and the NCCP, is to optimise patient care through facilitating and supporting the use of evidence-based quality improvements in diagnosis and reporting. The data gathered via these programmes are also reported on locally and are aggregated in annual national data reports, which are used to drive quality improvement in participating public, voluntary and private hospitals. Based on findings from analysis of 2022 data, the programmes assigned specific owners to several report recommendations in their national data reports in line with a newly developed HSE procedure. It is hoped that assigning ownership to recommendations can ensure a suitable implementation plan is developed, actioned and monitored.

**National Bronchoscopy Quality Improvement (NBQI) Programme**

The NBQI Programme has, over the course of the previous year identified five key quality areas within which they are developing key quality indicators (KQI) for adult bronchoscopy and EBUS procedures. The five areas are 1) Access to Procedures, 2) Safety, 3) Complication Rates, 4) Patient Experience and 5) Indicators of Procedure Success.



The working group have commenced a first round of target setting for KQIs using local clinical audit findings, national and international best practice and clinical expertise. A network of local QI clinical leads has been established, with 24 out of a possible total of 27 respiratory consultants to date. This network will be key in ensuring the programme can be run locally. Discussions are underway regarding the development of a data collection module which will enable participating hospitals to collect and upload data to a national dataset. The NBQI Programme have also been instrumental in reviewing the bronchoscopy module in the new uniform endoscopy reporting system (ERS), Solus to ensure it will meet the day to day needs of respiratory teams.

**National GI Endoscopy Quality Improvement (NEQI) Programme**

In November 2023, the NEQI Programme published its 9th national data report releasing it at the annual conference. The report, presenting findings from data collected in 2022, highlighted increases in targets being met for the following key quality indicators compared to 2019, the percentage of endoscopists meeting the target for caecal intubation rates, comfort scores, sedation doses, polyp detection rates and duodenal intubation rates. A very minor decrease of 1% was seen in the bowel preparation target. The report analysed data from 36 public and voluntary hospitals and 12 private hospitals, accounting for 256,409 procedures performed by 794 endoscopists across the country over the year. A new key quality indicator

has been under development, endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography ERCP) and is in the final stages with recommended targets being set before it is released for data collection.

### **National Radiology Quality Improvement (NRQI) Programme**

The NRQI Programme published its 4th national data report in November 2023. This report presented anonymous quality improvement data collected from 48 participating public and voluntary hospitals from 1 January to 31 December 2022. Findings revealed an 8.8% increase (representing over 3m cases) in workload between 2022 and 2021 in participating radiology departments. The highest increase in referrals was from GPs (19.1%). The NRQI Programme reported on four KQIs including turnaround times (TAT) and peer reviews. The findings for TAT were found to be similar to the previous year with almost half of hospitals meeting the recommended target. Participating hospitals continue to face challenges in meeting the recommended target for the authorisation of X-ray cases. The NRQI Programme continues to highlight the challenges faced by radiology departments by rising workload (data for 2018-2022 presented), growing complexity of cases and the need for adequate resourcing.

### **National Histopathology Quality Improvement (NHQI) Programme**

The 10<sup>th</sup> annual national data report was released by the NHQI Programme in November 2023 and presented at the annual conference. The report presented aggregated findings from 21 public and voluntary and seven private laboratories on national data collected between 1 January and 31 December 2022. In 2022, data were collected on 515,786 cases, 920,694 specimens and just over 1.4M blocks highlighting the steadily growing workload year on year. Average aggregated findings presented in the report revealed that laboratories met targets for intradepartmental consultations, multidisciplinary team reviews, addendum reporting and frozen section concordance rates. Report findings also indicated that laboratories continue to face challenges in meeting the turnaround time (TAT) targets for histology, cytology and autopsy cases. The NHQI Programme has been working with the HSE regarding a key recommendation made requesting that an action plan be put in place to assist those laboratories facing difficulties reaching TAT targets. This work is ongoing.

### **Quality Improvement**

RCPI's Situation Awareness for Everyone (SAFE) collaborative programme completed the 6<sup>th</sup> Irish cohort in 2023-24 and commenced the 7<sup>th</sup> in April. SAFE teaches teams how to improve communication, build a safety culture and enhance outcomes for patients in their clinical settings. To date, 80 clinical teams have participated in SAFE, representing 37 hospitals and more than 300 clinical staff from medical, nursing, ambulance service, administrative, pharmacy and health and social care professions.

Two cohorts of Quality Improvement in Action were run with 40 novel Learners, 28 of whom were doctors. Learners conduct a bespoke small QI project in their setting and report on the outcomes at the final session. This year's medical projects included increasing timely removal of urinary catheter post-surgery, increasing the completion rate of ICU electronic discharge summaries, reducing unnecessary IV fluid bolus in an emergency department and reducing wait times for scans in one oncology specialty.

One cohort of the Postgraduate Certificate in Quality Improvement Leadership was conducted, involving 10 teams from specialties such as obstetrics and gynaecology, neonatology, and gerontology. As part of the programme, learners completed a Quality Improvement (QI) project as a team and engaged in various formative and summative assignments.

A new bespoke programme, Embedding QI, was conducted with a cohort of Critical Care Advanced Nurse Practitioners, Sepsis and Deteriorating Patient Nurse Leaders. Areas of focus during the 5-month course included ingress and egress to Critical Care. A second cohort will be launching in September 2024. The new cohort invites ANP CCO to apply with a clinical project partner including medical registrars in anaesthesiology or critical care.

RCPI’s Paediatric Pocket Tutorial online series was rebranded and relaunched as 14 new courses, available through RCPI’s webpages. All courses remain as a free resource for those registered as RCPI Paediatric Trainees, Members or Fellows. Some essential modules are available as open access to anyone registered with an RCPI ID – Adolescent Health, Child Protection, Inclusion Health, Medicines Safety, Speech & Language Therapy. All other courses are open to any other healthcare professional for a small fee. All carry CPD for completion or can be claimed under Personal Learning for individual topics.

**Advocacy**

Advocacy refers to actions to influence people, primarily decision-makers, to create change. For RCPI this change may be in legislation supporting healthcare and health and wellbeing; health sector plans and actions; or plans and actions in other sectors - impacted by, or which have an impact upon, health or healthcare. RCPI engages in advocacy by defining the issue or desired change through the development of position papers and reports, through communication of these issues directly to stakeholders and decision-makers, and by using media to promote messages or recommendations on the issue. RCPI also responds to relevant national consultations as they arise.

**RCPI current advocacy priorities and related actions for this period (Jul 2023- Jul 2024):**

<p><b>Patient Safety and Dignity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>‘Changing Horizons Framing the Delivery of Training to 2030 and Beyond’</i>. Developed report from discussions convened by RCPI president in March 2024. Report highlights future population health needs and training response, supporting patient safety and dignity with high-quality patient-centred care. Report to be launched in Oct 2024.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Health Equity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion paper published July 2023 - <a href="#">Equity in Healthcare “More than just an appointment”</a>, capturing discussions from March 2023 Masterclass on this topic and highlighting inclusion health, trauma informed care and what clinicians can do to advocate for health equity. A follow on from this workshop is that RCPI is supporting development of a model of care for inclusion health.</li> <li>• Work done to highlight relationship between health equity, health outcomes, and health literacy. <i>Masterclass: health literacy and communication in the misinformation age</i> was held in April 2024. Discussion paper from this masterclass is under development.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Position paper (Oct 2023) from Faculty of Paediatrics and with support from RCPI Policy Group on Tobacco</a> – calling for ban on disposable vapes to protect health and wellbeing of young people and to protect the environment.</li> <li>• Consultation submission made by RCPI Policy Group on Tobacco and by Faculty of Paediatrics to Department of Environment, Climate and Communications consultation on Disposable Vaping Devices (July 2023).</li> <li>• Paper published in <i>Global Paediatrics</i> <a href="#">The adverse effects of vaping in young people - ScienceDirect</a>. Lead author Dean of Faculty of Paediatrics.</li> <li>• Prevention of NCDs/keeping people well is a major theme of ‘Changing Horizons’ discussion and report to be launched Oct 2024</li> <li>• RCPI Manifesto ‘Priorities for Health for the Next Government’ July 2024 – highlighting the need for cross-government policy response to prevent ill health.</li> <li>• RCPI joined the Irish Health Promotion Alliance in 2024.</li> </ul>

<b>Climate Change and Healthcare /Sustainable Healthcare</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper on Climate Action published Oct 2023</li> <li>• Climate and Sustainability theme for St Luke’s Symposium Oct 2023: Session at St Luke’s Day, Climate and Health Art Exhibition, Public meeting – “Healthy Planet, Healthy You”.</li> <li>• Advisory group with cross faculty representation convened to progress actions of Position Paper. Faculty represented in this group.</li> <li>• RCPI as member of Irish Climate and Health Alliance developing a position paper on Active Travel.</li> </ul>
<b>Influencing Public Health Legislation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RCPI presented to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Assisted Dying (JCAD) in Oct 2023. RCPI position from 2017 is that it opposes introduction of legislation supportive of assisted suicide. In Sep 2023, RCPI council agreed to convene a high-level cross faculty group to review the work to date. A researcher has been appointed to carry out a comprehensive literature review to support this work.</li> </ul>

### National Immunisation Advisory Committee (October 2023 - August 2024)

The National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) continues to play an essential role in Irish healthcare. This expert group comprising members nominated by a range of healthcare professional bodies and lay members provides independent, evidence-based advice to the Chief Medical Officer and Department of Health on vaccines, immunisation, and related health matters.

The work of NIAC in the last year has remained consistently high, and regularly performed under tight time constraints and considerable pressures. This has relied upon the dedication and availability of respected and experienced voluntary members, supported by the strength and depth in expertise of the Secretariat.

### Governance and Operations

NIAC welcomed the appointment of Ms Trish Clarke as Programme Coordinator to NIAC in May 2024. NIAC expressed thanks to outgoing Programme Coordinator, Ms Grace Horan, for her contributions and expertise.

NIAC has continued to host Full Committee meetings on a bimonthly basis, with working group meetings (e.g., COVID-19, RSV, pneumococcal, gonococcal, mpox) hosted as required to discuss relevant topics.

### Advice provided to the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) and Department of Health (DOH)

NIAC issued eight separate recommendations to the CMO and DOH in the past year, which included immunisation advice for COVID-19, Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), Herpes zoster, and measles. (Table 1)

Table 1. Examples of NIAC recommendations issued in past year.

Date of Issue	Recommendation
12 October 2023	<a href="#">NIAC Letter, Evidence Synthesis, and Recommendations re. RSV</a>
19 December 2023	<a href="#">NIAC Letter to CMO and updated recommendations for primary series COVID-19 vaccination</a>
12 February 2024	<a href="#">NIAC Letter and Recommendations to CMO re. Herpes Zoster vaccination</a>

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.

### **National Immunisation Programme**

NIAC has reviewed vaccines for suitability for inclusion or removal (in the event they are no longer available/needed) in the national vaccine schedule. NIAC has examined RSV vaccination, with a recommendation issued in October 2023 and further recommendations regarding the passive immunisation of infants against RSV during the 2024/2025 season, issued in April 2024.

### **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. Seven of the 27 chapters have been updated since October 2023, encompassing a total of 18 individual updates across the seven chapters.

### **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 in a timely fashion.

NIAC continues its strong collaborative working relationship with stakeholders including the DOH and the HSE. The HPRA, with which NIAC has had an excellent long-standing relationship, has also been a key support to NIAC.

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 also 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 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 SAGE).

NIAC continues to reinforce these relationships with regard to general immunisation practices through continued engagement, participation and advocacy.

**ADMINISTRATION IN RCPI**

Key personnel in RCPI who conducted work on behalf of the Faculty of Occupational Medicine during 2023 - 2024:

<b>Faculty</b>	John Hunt	01 8639 738 <a href="mailto:fom@rcpi.ie">fom@rcpi.ie</a>
<b>Training (HST)</b>	John Hunt	01 8639 738 <a href="mailto:hst@rcpi.ie">hst@rcpi.ie</a> <a href="mailto:dianasantos@rcpi.ie">dianasantos@rcpi.ie</a>
<b>Examinations</b>	General	01 8639 706 <a href="mailto:examinations@rcpi.ie">examinations@rcpi.ie</a> <a href="mailto:iainmartel@rcpi.ie">iainmartel@rcpi.ie</a>
<b>Professional Competence</b>	Deirdre Donegan	01 8639 739 <a href="mailto:professionalcompetence@rcpi.ie">professionalcompetence@rcpi.ie</a> <a href="mailto:deirdredonegan@rcpi.ie">deirdredonegan@rcpi.ie</a>
<b>Specialist Division of the Register</b>	Siobhán Kearns	01 8639 720 <a href="mailto:siobhankearns@rcpi.ie">siobhankearns@rcpi.ie</a>
<b>Conferences and Events</b>	Hilary Copeland	01 8639 794 <a href="mailto:conferences@rcpi.ie">conferences@rcpi.ie</a>

## NOTES



**Back Image:** The Arthur Eakins Medal being presented to the daughters of the late Dr Eakins. (L-R) Claire Eakins, Prof Ken Addley, Sheelagh Cameron



**FACULTY OF  
OCCUPATIONAL  
MEDICINE**

**ROYAL COLLEGE OF  
PHYSICIANS OF IRELAND**

**Faculty of Occupational Medicine**

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