

Area Clinical Forum Report to Grampian NHS Board Meeting on the 5th of May 2021

Purpose of Report

This report updates the Grampian NHS Board on key issues arising from the Area Clinical Forum (ACF) meeting on the 5th of May 2021.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to note the following key points:

Strategic planning

The ACF welcomed Lorraine Scott (Director of Planning, Innovation and Programmes) to the meeting to discuss the development of the NHS Grampian Strategic plan 2022-2028. There was agreement from all of the ACF that we are very keen to engage and to help shape the development of this plan and widening the engagement to our professional committees. We agreed that Lorraine would help form a plan for ACF involvement and engagement which we have since received and also we agreed to have an early review of the engagement test pack in advance of wider circulation. There was recognition that timescales are defined and tight for this programme of work and we will need to work closely with Lorraine to ensure that the ACF have meaningful engagement.

ACF Chair position

Due to the current chair having served one term as chair of the forum the process for election of a new chair began and will conclude at the next meeting in June 2021.

Workshop

Due to the leadership structure of NHS Grampian changing and also the removal of the System Leadership Team (SLT)/ACF joint meetings there is a requirement to ensure that the forum continues to be integrated into the system and to ensure that the ACF provide meaningful professional engagement and opinion in many forums. It was decided that we will move forward with a plan to hold a workshop type event with representatives of the ACF, professional committees and the wider NHS team. The focus would be to raise awareness of the ACF and its purpose and to seek ideas and opinions from the wider group on how to integrate our professional groups and collective ACF into core business and strategic planning. The reach of the ACF and wider group membership is quite unique and a valuable resource of expertise which is not fully utilised in this constantly changing healthcare system. The plan will be to hold this mid to late summer.

Training

Although raised by more than one profession the main concerns around the impact on staff training is from the Dental profession. The pandemic response caused the closure of most dental services and significantly reduced the clinical training for undergraduate dentists. As a result the graduation from all dental schools in Scotland will be delayed although the Aberdeen students will graduate in December 2021. These graduates will not be able to start the vocational training as the current trainees will not yet have moved on and the next opportunity in Scotland is September 2022. However in England there is also a March 2022 intake and there is considerable risk that graduates will take up posts elsewhere. Overall there will be significant recruitment issues and as the profession is already dealing with a significant backlog of patient treatments there will be an increased pressure to fill roles. There will also be only half intake in 2022 and this has the potential to have an ongoing reduced output in a number of years which could raise the possibility of reduced workforce.

Healthcare Science

Vicky Ritchie (Principal Clinical Physiologist/ Laboratory manager) and Chair of the healthcare science group has recently been appointed to the Clinical Physiology Executive Board and we wish to recognise this achievement.

Board Programme

The Board programme is a standing item on the ACF agenda to allow the forum to fulfil the role of providing clinical and professional advice to the SLT and Board on relevant topics. We look forward to planning our meetings in 2021 aligning with the new Board programme when it is available.

Kim Cruttenden

Area Clinical Forum Chair

May 2021