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Recently Appointed Consultants' Committee

Purpose

“In the 2020 Wellbeing of Consultant Physicians Snapshot Survey (RCP London), 16% of respondents had become a consultant in the past five years. 39% reported that this had adversely affected their wellbeing.”

The College is committed to supporting the transition from trainee to consultant, recognising the unique developmental needs and challenges at this important career stage. It is a unique transition in a professional career, arguably the goal of over a decade of undergraduate and postgraduate training. Many non-clinical roles and responsibilities open up that may not have been touched on in training, and perversely, it is the moment when many of the support structures are removed as the consultant embarks on their independent practice – Clinical Supervision, Educational Supervision, annual reviews of progression (ARCP), and access to the pastoral and other support one had as a trainee.

The Recently Appointed Consultants (RAC) committee will ensure the views of its constituents are represented in relation to professional development and identity, training, education, career development and support, through RCPE Council and other appropriate opportunities.

“I divided my life into three parts: in the first I learned my profession, in the second I taught it, in the third I enjoy it.” *The Story of a Surgeon*. Sir John Bland-Sutton (1855 – 1936)

There is no precise definition of the term ‘recent’ in relation to consultant appointment. However, when considering the duration of a consultant career in terms of early, middle and late phases, broadly, the RAC will provide support to those in their first 10 years post-appointment. This will include, but not limited to professional support through initial years in post and beyond as consultants begin to further develop their careers and take on new roles and challenges.

The committee will communicate the value of the College to consultants, whether Members or Fellows or those not affiliated to RCPE. It will work collaboratively with other College committees, regional advisors, and bodies to provide seamless support and development opportunities particularly for those recently appointed consultants. Although obvious, it is worth noting that the RAC committee will work particularly closely with the RCPE Trainees and Members committee, to supervise

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the transition from trainee to independent consultant. The committee will also work closely with the college's established network of Regional Advisors to represent our constituent members, receive their views, ideas and feedback.

Remit

1. Provide a representative forum in which to raise and discuss issues of importance to recently appointed consultants and as a point of contact for queries
2. Provide career support and development opportunities including training for additional roles (e.g. education, management, leadership, governance, research, appraisal, mentoring)
3. Represent the RAC committee on Council and reporting to Council, on matters of relevance to recently appointed consultants, and to constituents of relevant College business
4. Work with the T&MC, Director of Education and the Education Executive to provide non-clinical CPD in a variety of settings
5. Lead on the RCPE Mentoring Programme
6. Represent Recently Appointed Consultants views on the college committees and structures listed in **Appendix A**, and feedback to RAC committee meetings, in order that workstreams are integrated and the RAC voice is heard widely within College business.
7. Liaise and collaborate with T&MC, Director of Training, Regional Advisors, Council members representing geographical constituencies, and EDI group on areas of joint interest such as training and careers support
8. Promote Fellowship and Membership of the College
9. Promote the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity throughout its work
10. Provide relevant communications and up-dates on relevant topics including policy, personal development, education and training
11. Undertake occasional surveys of Fellows and Members giving detailed survey feedback on priority issues
12. Run twice yearly events providing education, information and support for those in transition stages of their careers. The format could be a symposium, conference, evening update etc both online / virtual or in person or a hybrid.

Membership

- 2 Co-Chairs: elected RAC Council members.
- Vice-President RCPE, in an advisory capacity to provide an Office Bearer view where required, and to support the committee where more senior input may be helpful.
- 10 elected members or fellows - nominated and elected for a term of 3 years, and eligible to serve a maximum of two terms of office.

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- Membership Representative – could be MFSG rep or elected employee from Membership Team.
- Trainee representative from the Trainees and Members Committee.

The two elected Co-Chairs of the committee report to Council by requesting item inclusion on Council agenda, submitting a report or papers of note, or both.

Committee members will be elected by a nomination process similar to College Council, but not restricted by geography or skill-set. Where there are two or more applications for vacancies, these will be contested by election.

Diversity will be critically examined every 12 months and consideration given to establishing geographical or skill-set specific roles if feasible.

Geographic representation is currently achieved through strong links and use of the existing College network of Regional Advisors.

Active encouragement of persons with specific skills aligned to the non-clinical aspect of professional practice, or the promotion of the work of the RAC, is to be considered.

Quorum

The quorum will be one third of the total composition, including either Co-Chair.

Role of RAC Members

- Attend committee meetings and contribute to the agenda. (Minimum of 75% attendance is expected annually - either face-to-face or via web link).
- Promote the work of the RAC.
- Regularly contribute to and participate in workstreams.
- Represent the RAC at relevant College Committee and/or Groups.

The RAC seats and committee have a clear mandate – to support doctors at the key transition from trainee to consultant, a time that is known to be especially difficult for colleagues, and known to be a critical career stress point. There is strong endorsement to support this transition from Shape of Training, the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and RCP surveys.

Recently appointed consultants face unique challenges, and the transition from trainee to consultant is a recognised point at which the College loses their engagement. On transitioning to consultant roles, doctors lose many of the sources of support they had as trainees – educational and clinical supervisors, TPDs, and Deanery and Trust trainee support structures. The RAC committee was formed to support this critical transition, and to continue the spirit of the T&MC which brings seamless support to student colleagues through to senior trainees.

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Authority

The committee's authority comes from College Council.

Budget

The committee has no defined budget. Expenditure must be authorised by the CEO or Deputy CEO and Head of Corporate Governance, or if appropriate via the Chair of a Committee or Group with budgetary authority.

Planning

The group will agree an annual action plan linked to the aims and objectives in the Corporate Strategy, and present this to Council.

Meetings

- The group will meet as required to fulfil its remit and normally at least quarterly.
- The Chair will approve the agenda for all meetings and circulate to the group at least one week prior to the meeting with any supporting papers.
- Draft minutes will be circulated within 2 weeks of each meeting, and formally agreed at the next meeting.
- Additional meetings may be called by the chair as required.

Administrative Support

Appropriate support shall be appointed by the Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Corporate Governance. The role will include, but is not limited to the coordination of meetings, minute-taking & dissemination of same, monitoring of agreed action points, and supporting educational and other events as necessary.

The need for College support goes beyond administration, and is required to assist forming and guiding policy, in designing and supporting communication and in actioning change. This enables the RAC members to engage and represent, and their attendance at key internal and external groups allows them to contribute to, and inform discussions within the College, and at a national level.

To underscore the importance of appropriate levels and types of College support, it is worth noting some of the achievements of the RAC. The committee:

- established its professionalism events, now core college business
- established a successful mentorship scheme, also now core business
- published letters in BMA News and in the National press, and wrote to Westminster about staff wellbeing, junior doctor contracts and supporting our international colleagues
- was invited to provide representation to the College Strategy Group, the Education Strategy Group, the Membership and Fellowship Strategy Group and the International Strategy Group

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- collaborated with our sister Colleges on professionalism and wellbeing, representing our early years' consultant colleagues
- contributed significantly to the College's Quality Governance work
- led the move to remove the self-nomination process for Fellowship and re-evaluate the entire Fellowship process, recognising that it is from this key transition that the College fails to maintain connections and fails to convert Membership into Fellowship, particularly in the UK
- championed Equality and Diversity at Council, leading to the establishment of an Equality and Diversity and Inclusivity, now a stand-alone committee in its own right.

Review

- The group will review its Terms of Reference annually. Changes to the TOR must be presented to College Council.

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Appendix A – list of RCPE committees where RAC representation is advised

October 2020: At this period of considerable reorganisation within the college, the list is not included until clarity is achieved on the college structure.