

FACULTY OF FORENSIC & LEGAL MEDICINE

of the Royal College of Physicians of London



Registrar's report

It is a great privilege to give this report at the end of my first, and eventful year as Registrar of the Faculty. It has been a pleasure to work with my fellow Senior Officers and Vice-Presidents, and with our very able and committed office team.

The President has described many of the past year's events and highlights (and a few disappointments). The chief priority on taking up my post was the need to recruit two new members of staff - Jay Barton-Costa and Tessa Lewis - and to welcome back Charlene Campbell from maternity leave. At the same time, setting up a communications and meetings framework in which decisions could be taken, shared and acted on has enabled the Faculty to respond quickly and decisively to the many emerging challenges faced by its three sections of medical coroners, medicolegal advisers and forensic physicians.

In identifying these challenges, and having a strategy to address them, it has been essential to develop effective teamwork. The weekly meetings between the office team and the Senior Officers, and the regular Senior Officers/Vice-Presidents meetings have increased our capacity to have the FFLM's name and influence at the heart of the discussions about custody healthcare commissioning, deaths in custody, death certification, medical advice to coroners, specialist recognition and revalidation, to identify but a few. Improvements in our internal communications has also ensured that we have been able to agree a rapid and effective response to key organisations; these include the Home Office, Department of Health, Ministry of Justice, Parliamentary Select Committees, CQC, Police and Crime Commissioners, IPCC, HMIC and the Government's adviser on Terrorism legislation.

We have also improved the regular contact with the membership by sending out a Bulletin every Friday; this contains a wealth of information about our activities, upcoming educational events and consultations, and I hope has been useful. Today will (I think) be the only Friday since May 2015 without a bulletin. The website has been significantly improved, with much easier access to Faculty documents, and an enhanced news section.

As Jason has mentioned in his report, we have developed a new press and public relations strategy, and improved our use of social media, especially through Twitter and Facebook. The documents for the AGM contain one innovation: an "infographic", designed to be an accessible method of explaining the role of the forensic physician to press and other contacts. We plan to create more of these for the other areas in which our members work.

A key preoccupation for a registrar of any Faculty is membership. We had a successful process in July 2015 for the renewal of subscriptions. The current state of our membership (see attached chart) can be described as stable, which given the external environment is encouraging. That said, the current state of forensic medicine and medical coroners is not conducive to a major expansion of our membership base, and the FFLM's strategy for the next year will be to:

- expand membership categories;
- improve services to our existing members;
- attract a wider range of doctors to our educational services.

Professor Ian Wall is retiring from the post of Academic Dean. We are in the process of appointing a successor, and I would like to join Jason in thanking Ian for the sheer volume of work he manages to get through, as well as his support. For the new Senior Officer team, the first few weeks involved a great deal of learning about our new roles, and working with a new team at the office. Ian was the only link between the "old" and the "new" and provided essential support, guidance and experience to see us through that period.

I would like to offer a very warm welcome to the new Vice-Presidents, and look forward to developing the work and influence of the FFLM with their support.

Finally, and most importantly, my grateful thanks to Charlene, Tessa and Jay. Their contribution to the work of the Faculty has been immense and invaluable. They have always responded with equanimity to the demands we have placed on them, and the progress we have made over the past year is testament to their dedication and hard work.

Michael Wilks

Registrar