



Registered Charity No 1119599

President's Report for FFLM AGM 2026

As is clear from the senior officers' reports, it has been another exceptionally busy year for the Faculty. It is somewhat sobering to reflect that I am now halfway through my term of office and will be handing over to my successor this time next year.

The past 18 months have seen significant investment in both the office team and the expansion of our volunteer roles. Over the last year in particular, two themes have characterised our work: the professionalisation of the organisation and a continued emphasis on collaborative working.

Strategy Delivery

Last summer we launched our updated strategy planning ahead through to 2028 with 9 key aims

1. Drive forward the case for speciality recognition
2. Deliver high quality training and education
3. Influence policy and public debate
4. Strengthen partnerships and stakeholder engagement
5. Build a strong and inclusive membership
6. Secure a sustainable financial base
7. Modernise governance
8. Build organisational capacity
9. Invest in digital tools and engagement

I am delighted to confirm that we are making progress on all aspects of this strategy.

Drive forward the case for speciality recognition

We recognise that this continues to be a priority, and as I have advised previously this is not just about doctors but recognition of the importance of this area of practice to support all clinicians working in the field.

Unfortunately, the Speciality Advisory Committee had to be discontinued until the point comes that we are recognised as a specialty since these groups are primarily in place to develop curricula for existing specialities. I would like to thank all those who contributed to the group, in particular Prof Carol Seymour as chair.

This, however, does give us opportunities to progress alternative approaches, and we are in the process of developing resources to hopefully streamline the process for doctors applying for specialist status via the portfolio route, with Carol and I having a very positive meeting with the GMC last week,

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Deliver high quality training and education

This is covered in detail in the Academic Dean's report, but I would highlight the consistently excellent feedback received across our educational programmes.

We continue to expand our offering, not only for forensic clinicians but also for professionals in related disciplines who benefit from our expertise. This year included invitations for Faculty representation at national events, including the trauma care conference policing strand, where we delivered sessions on non-fatal strangulation and conducted energy devices.

Influence policy and public debate

The Faculty has taken an increasingly visible role in shaping national discussions.

We have maintained a clear and consistent position on the risks posed by self-swabbing services in sexual offence investigations. It is encouraging to see these concerns increasingly reflected across the wider sector and in national media coverage, reinforcing the Faculty's role as an authoritative voice in protecting both evidential integrity and patient care.

We have been able to support the office of the forensic science regulator in development of guidance both for custody and SARC provision as well as providing responses to a number of consultations detailed both in the Academic Dean's report and the Treasurer's report.

In March we were invited to host a round table discussion with Public Health Wales and safeguarding practitioners focussing on the huge gap for vulnerable adults who are assaulted. This demonstrates our commitment to delivering on our policy priorities and improving both the level of debate as well as partnership working.

Strengthen partnerships and stakeholder engagement

In addition to the work with Public Health Wales we continue to build links with partners across the UK and beyond.

Notably we have increasingly been invited to work with the Royal College of Emergency Medicine on best practice guidelines where our spheres of practice overlap and we are already seeing the fruits of that labour published on their website.

Prof Stark is undertaking the gargantuan task of updating the blue guidelines, with us taking the document in house for the first time. I won't steal her thunder for updates at conference but discussions have, as always, been illuminating and robust as we evolve this essential document.

Off the back of Deryn Evan's excellent guidance on cannabis based medicinal products we have begun to work with both the Medicinal Cannabis Clinicians Society and representatives from roads policing on ways to support officers managing these complex cases and identifying where to be concerned without disadvantaging those individuals who need these medications and are using them responsibly.

We continue to be invited to provide representation on more committees and working groups than I can count which just confirms that people find our voice valuable.

Build a strong and inclusive membership

We are currently undertaking an in depth review of our membership via a short life working group to ascertain how we can continue to increase the value of our membership offering, the first meeting occurred at the end of April with a raft of positive contributions which I hope you will start to see the benefits of in the next year.

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Securing a sustainable financial base

Despite turmoil in the world we remain in a strong financial position, this has allowed us to invest in our staff and organisation as detailed in the treasurer's report.

Modernise Governance

The work done behind the scenes here is huge and I think every senior officer, vice president and member of the office staff would have no difficulty in describing our Registrars allergy to single points of failure.

It is difficult to overstate the challenges in undertaking end to end reviews of practices that have evolved organically as the organisation has grown and mitigating risks.

We are already in a completely different position to where we were only a year ago in terms of processes and policies which ensure that not only did the auditors struggle to find areas for improvement but also practices are streamlined to allow office staff and senior officers have capacity to ensure they deliver on the areas that matter to our members.

Build organisational capacity

As a largely volunteer led organisation capacity is always an issue with diaries filling up months in advance, it is a tribute to those volunteers that we manage to achieve so much whilst still doing our day jobs.

None of this would be possible though without the tireless efforts of our employed staff, Charlene, Tessa, Kim, Jordan, Ellie and Shelby work miracles behind the scenes to ensure that we keep the wheels on the wagon. We of course, look forward to Halita returning shortly to continue to drive forward both the evolution of the organisation and its governance.

Invest in digital tools and engagement

You will have seen the change in approach across social media and in the faculty files we are seeing significantly increased engagement as a result of this meaning that our message spreads.

It seems disturbingly recently since I led as assistant registrar on the current website, however it is starting to show its age a little so this year we are undertaking to review what we need from it and how we can deliver a better online experience with increased resources.

Next year

Despite this progress, significant challenges remain. Gaps in service provision persist, particularly in the assessment and care of victims of violence. Our work continues to emphasise that without high-quality examination, documentation, and data, violence remains under-recognised and opportunities for prevention and accountability are lost.

Looking ahead, the priority for the coming year is delivery. This includes strengthening services, continuing to enhance training and standards, and ensuring that our voice remains influential in shaping policy, practice, and public understanding.

Those of you who have watched my messages in the Faculty Files will already have heard my pleas, however this year will see some of our senior officers coming to the end of their terms of office as well as a number of other volunteer opportunities available to those who want to shape the future of the faculty. Please think about getting involved and working with us, we want to continue to be the inclusive, authoritative voice in the field and we can only do that with your support.

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Finally....

Thank you to everyone who gets in touch with ideas and suggestions, to those who chair and sit on committees, to our office staff and all the volunteers who help in myriad ways. I am privileged to work with you.

You make this role incredibly rewarding, however challenging it may be at times to fit everything in!

Dr Alex J Gorton
FFLM President
May 2026