

Response to call for evidence from the Federation of the Royal Colleges of Physicians

The Federation of the Royal Colleges of Physicians is a partnership between the Royal College of Physicians of London, the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow. The three Colleges are the professional membership bodies representing physicians across the UK, in addition the three Colleges are involved in the vast majority of consultant appointments in physician specialties across the UK.

Workforce context:

The physician workforce across the UK is facing significant challenges with vacant posts across the NHS. There are a number of reasons for this: an ageing population, an increase in patients with complex combinations of health problems, a swathe of doctors nearing retirement, and a different approach to work among their successors.

Between 2007 and 2017 the number of consultants increased by over 70%, from 9,092 to 15,727. But 10 years ago, 80% of advertised consultant posts were successfully filled; by 2017 that had dropped to 55%.

These are fully funded posts that NHS trusts and providers are unable to fill because of a lack of suitably trained applicants. And there are no quick fixes: the journey from medical student to consultant takes at least 13 years. This alone demonstrates that international recruitment will have to play a significant role at all stages from foundation year 1 through to consultant roles for at least the next 10 years.

The three Royal Colleges would specifically ask the MAC to consider the following recommendations:

- The MAC should consider the case for adding all physician posts to the SOL for a defined period of time, which would provide a period of stability for the NHS during a potentially turbulent time for international and EU recruitment into the NHS. This could then be subject to a review moving forward.
- The MAC should recognise the case that Acute Internal Medicine and Geriatric Medicine physician posts should be added to the SOL in their own right based on the significant evidence (included in appendices) that these specialties are in national shortage.
- The MAC should consider the role it could play in making a recommendation that Junior doctor foundation year 1 and year 2 posts are added to the SOL.
- The MAC should consider the skilled roles undertaken across the health and social care professions that currently are not included on the SOL and are unlikely to meet the MACs recommendation for the skilled workers salary threshold of £30,000. If these roles remain in shortage the workload for physician's increases which further exacerbates workforce shortages.

Contact:

Rory Murray, Senior public affairs adviser, Royal College of Physicians (London)
rory.murray@rcplondon.ac.uk or 020 3075 1728

Appendix 1:

Tables 1-3 are drawn from appointment advisory committees (AAC's) which are legally constituted interview panels established by an employing body when appointing consultants as set out in The National Health Service (Appointment of Consultants) Regulations. Tables 4-6 are drawn from Assessment Panel data as set out in The National Health Service (Appointment of Consultants) (Scotland) Regulations 2009. The full dataset is available on request.

Table 1: Specialties with the lowest % of successful appointment rates between 2012-2017 in England

Specialty	Total advertised posts	% of new posts	% vacant posts	Successful posts	% unsuccessful
Immunology	3	33%	0%	1	66%
Metabolic medicine	5	40%	60%	2	60%
Geriatric medicine	1,192	40%	19%	480	60%
Stroke medicine	302	31%	18%	132	56%
General internal medicine	50	38%	8%	23	54%
Acute internal medicine	1,107	43%	11%	520	53%

Table 2: Specialties with the lowest % of successful appointment rates between 2012-2017 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Specialty	Total advertised posts	% of new posts	% vacant posts	Successful posts	% unsuccessful
Immunology	3	33%	0%	1	66%

Metabolic medicine	5	40%	60%	2	60%
Geriatric medicine	1,278	41%	19%	527	59%
Stroke medicine	315	32%	18%	140	56%
General internal medicine	54	41%	7%	26	52%
Acute internal medicine	1,190	43%	12%	581	51%

NB: Immunology and metabolic medicine: in 2017 the total number of immunologists in the UK was 93, of metabolic specialists the total was 27. Compared to the specialty with the next highest number of unsuccessful posts, geriatric medicine, with a total number of 1,556 specialists, this data should be considered in the context of the size of the specialty.

Table 3: Regions in England, Wales and Northern Ireland by highest rate of unsuccessful % appointments 2012-2017

Region: Sub-region	Advertised posts	Successful	% unsuccessful
South: Kent, Surrey and Sussex	792	363	54%
NI And Wales: Wales (North)	83	40	52%
North: Northern	251	121	52%
Midlands and East: West Midlands	978	495	49%
North: North West	1,017	554	46%

Table 4: Specialties with the highest % of assessment panels cancelled in 2017 in Scotland (data from the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and Faculties in Scotland)

Specialty	Completed	Total Panels	Appts	% Panels cancelled	Cancelled
Acute Medicine	4	15	4	73.33%	11
Endocrinology & Diabetes Mellitus	2	6	3	66.67%	4
Geriatric Medicine	9	23	12	60.87%	14
Gastroenterology	8	16	10	50.00%	8
Palliative Medicine	1	2	2	50.00%	1
Rheumatology	6	12	7	50.00%	6
Totals	30	74	38	59.46%	44

Table 5: Reasons given for the cancellation of assessment panels in Scotland (data from the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and Faculties in Scotland)

Cancellation Reasons 2014-2017

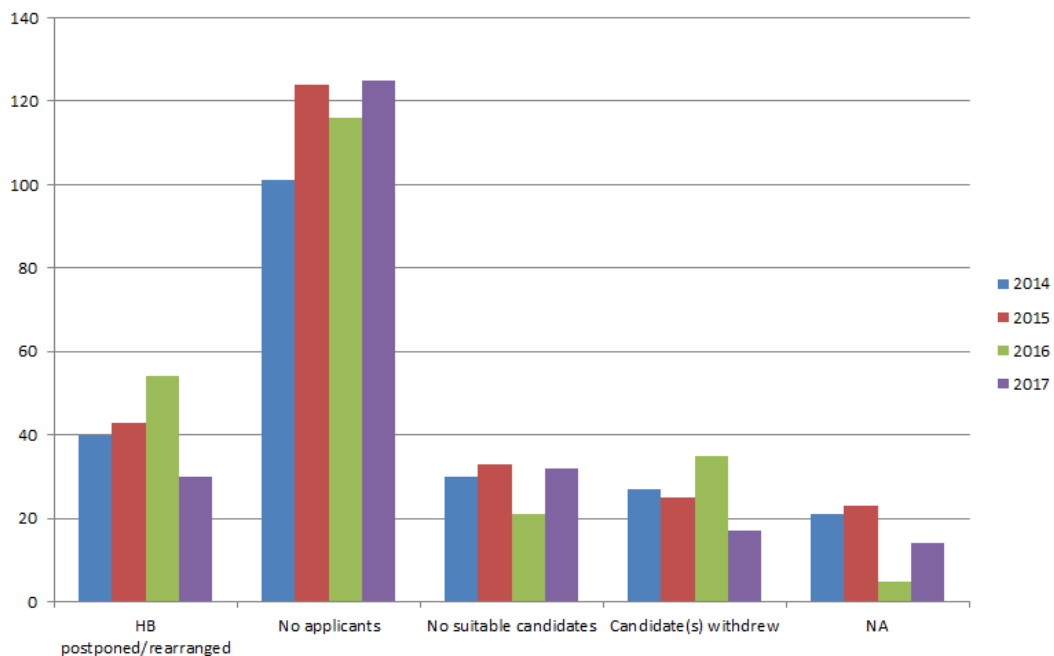
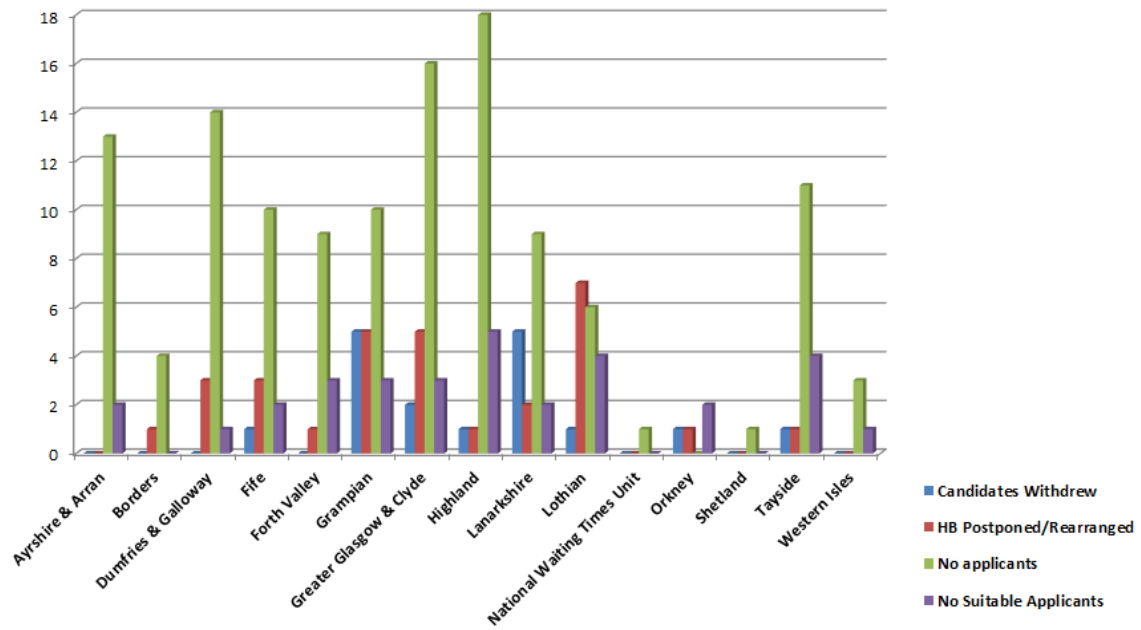


Table 6: Reasons given for the cancellation of assessment panels in Scotland by Health Board (data from the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and Faculties in Scotland)

2017 Reasons for Cancellations across Health Boards Scotland



Appendix 2: Geriatric medicine and acute internal medicine

Tables 1-3 are drawn from appointment advisory committees (AAC's) which are legally constituted interview panels established by an employing body when appointing consultants as set out in The National Health Service (Appointment of Consultants) Regulations. Tables 4-6 are drawn from Assessment Panel data as set out in The National Health Service (Appointment of Consultants) (Scotland) Regulations 2009. The full dataset is available on request.

Table 1 Overall Appointment trends across all specialties in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 2012-2017

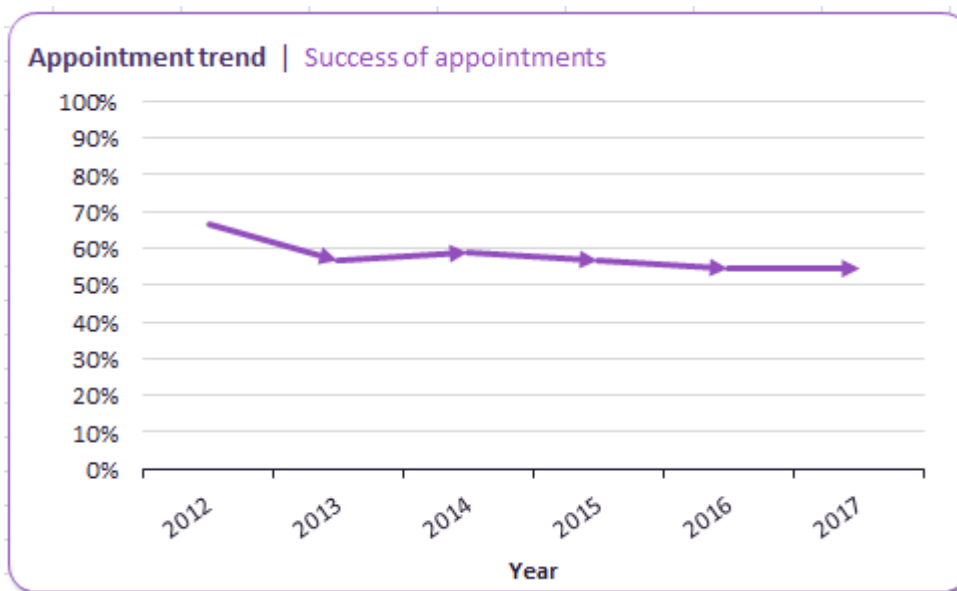


Table 2: Success of appointments in acute internal medicine in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 2012-2017



Table 3 Success of appointments in geriatric medicine in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 2012-2017

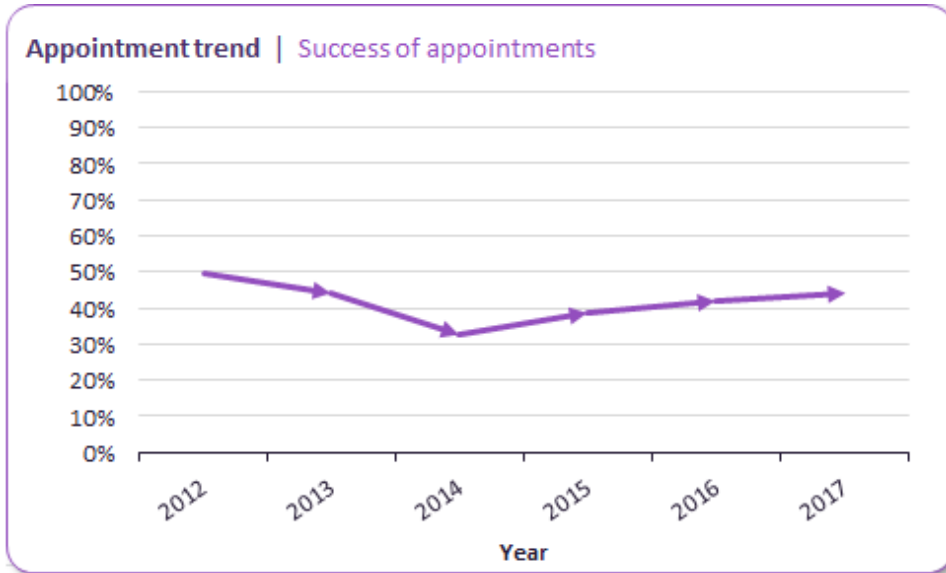


Table 4: % of assessment panels cancelled in Scotland in acute medicine 2014 -2017

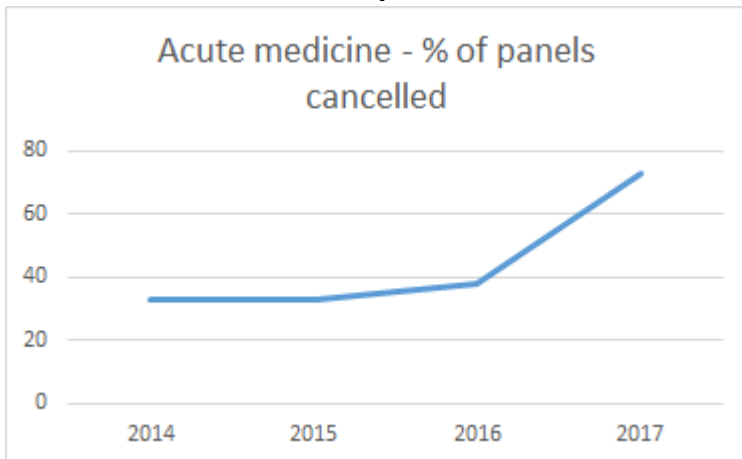


Table 5: % of assessment panels cancelled in Scotland in geriatric medicine 2014 - 2017

