



NHS Grampian Patient Care Reviews

December 2013

The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow shares the serious concerns expressed in reports published by Healthcare Improvement Scotland on the quality of care at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and Woodend Hospital.

http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/news_and_events .

President of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, Dr Frank Dunn commented:

“The findings of these reports have some similarities to the Mid Staffordshire report of 2013. Excellence in patient care and the welfare of our Fellows and Members are our priority and we support the commitment of the Scottish Government to meet all the recommendations. This needs to be achieved as a matter of urgency. It is fortunate that due to the determination and dedication of front line staff, the impact of these failings on patients were minimised. The last word we would want to use in relation to a hospital is toxic but sadly, given the loss of staff morale, increased sickness records and unfilled posts, that is how the environment at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary has been described.”

This College believes that it is the responsibility of senior management in hospitals to create an atmosphere where staff have pride in their hospital and appreciate that their role makes an important contribution to overall teamwork. In all of this, recruitment and retention of permanent staff is paramount. The over reliance on locum staff without question contributes to a disjointed service. We must identify why, despite the many attractions of our health service in Scotland, there are so many vacancies. The current contracts being offered to consultants in Scotland have changed for many with demands being made for more clinical activity to the exclusion of contributions in other key areas such as safety, quality of care and education.

The Royal Colleges, the BMA and the specialist’s societies have major concerns about this and hope that ongoing discussions with the Scottish Government will resolve this issue which presents a damaging mismatch between Scotland and the rest of the UK. Initiatives to attract and retain junior doctors over the past year are to be applauded and hopefully will slow down the worrying trend of junior doctors leaving the UK.

Dr Dunn added: “Scotland has over many years been an exporter of doctors who have contributed majorly throughout the world. We need also to have a health service which because of its excellence attracts and retains high quality staff. There is an absolute requirement for both senior management and clinical leaders to ensure the highest quality of healthcare is delivered in an atmosphere where all have pride in their work driven by a culture of care and compassion; most importantly for patients but also for staff. This College is committed to working with all stakeholders to make this a reality.”

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Notes to editors

The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow is the only multidisciplinary Royal College in the UK. Its membership, which exceeds 11,000, includes physicians, surgeons, dental practitioners, travel medicine and podiatric medicine professionals. The College provides career support to the membership through education, training, professional development, examinations and assessment whilst acting as a charity and leading voice on health issues in order to set the highest possible standards of health care.