

The ROYAL COLLEGE *of*
OPHTHALMOLOGISTS



Annual Report 2019



From the President



Mike Burdon
President

Innovation and consolidation are, perhaps, the two words that best summarise the work of The Royal College of Ophthalmologists during 2019. Alongside the vital 'business as usual' required by every Medical Royal College, a number of highly important projects were completed or progressed significantly under the stewardship of our five standing committees.

- The Education Committee, working on behalf of Health Education England, completed the development of the curriculum for the ophthalmic common clinical competency framework, paving the way for a more standardised training programme and qualifications for allied health professionals who wish to contribute more to the delivery of eyecare in hospital outpatient departments.
- The Examinations Department took a major leap forward in to the digital age by switching from paper to computer-based testing. It also addressed one of the major challenges of our clinical examinations, the need to find a host eye department. Following a significant investment in equipment, clinical examinations were successfully held in conference facilities instead.
- In my opinion, of all the work carried out by the Professional Standards team in 2019, securing of sustainable funding for the National Ophthalmology Database (NOD) will have the greatest long-term impact. The NOD has already proved itself to be an exemplar to the National Health Service of how large-scale audit contributes to both patient safety and research. The new funding will allow not only NOD's current work to continue but also enable it to audit other areas of ophthalmology such as age-related macular degeneration.

- The Scientific Committee broke with years of tradition by holding the College's Annual Congress in Glasgow rather than Birmingham or Liverpool. The event, buoyed by days of good weather, was a great success and has encouraged the Committee to consider other venues in the United Kingdom in future.
- A major focus for the Training Committee during 2019 was further work on developing a new training curriculum in line with the General Medical Council's Excellence by design: standards for postgraduate curricula. It has also been actively reviewing the various prospective CESR training programmes that are running in the UK to determine whether an expansion of this alternative training route could help to fill our vacant consultant posts.

Other key internal developments during 2019 include:

- The setting up, in response to the NHS Long-Term Plan, of a workforce short-life working group to review major subspecialty patient pathways in order to inform future workforce requirements.
- The recognition of a need to ensure that the College is working effectively in the devolved nations leading to a proposal to form a Welsh Council sub-committee.
- The re-establishment of an Executive committee to facilitate high level discussion between the various College departments.
- The ending of the College's relationship with its Patron, HRH The Duke of York.

In 2019, the College continued to work very effectively with other organisations to promote and develop ophthalmology services. It provided feedback to the GIRFT report on ophthalmology, co-operated



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with the Healthcare Safety Investigation Branch's investigation of outpatient follow-up delays, and, most importantly, it contributed significantly to the current elevated profile of ophthalmology within the wider NHS, leading to the decision by NHS England to begin with ophthalmology, its major review of hospital outpatients.

It must be recognised that not everything the College did in 2019 was achieved without difficulty. In particular, the move to computer-based examinations caused significant disruption and stress to trainees during the latter half of the year, for which I apologise on behalf of the College. The impact on trainees was, I believe, successfully addressed by the College with the invaluable advice and support of the Ophthalmologists in Training Group.

One further major achievement in 2019 was the publication of the College's strategy for the next three years. This was developed by the policy and communications department with extensive consultation both internally and externally. The Strategy will form a firm foundation for the work of our next President, Professor Bernard Chang, who was elected by members to succeed me in May 2020. I have had the privilege of working with Bernie over many years at the College, and I have great confidence in his ability to lead our team.

The purpose of the annual report is to review College activity during the calendar year, in line with the College's financial year. It forms part of the College's Annual General Meeting, usually held during Congress the following May. This year, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused the cancellation of Congress and the need to hold the Annual General Meeting virtually. Therefore, I think it is appropriate to reflect, in this report, some of the impact that the pandemic is currently having on the College. In summary, all aspects of College life, from the current closure of the building, to the cancellation of Congress and seminars,

and postponement of examinations. There are also significant financial implications, the full impact of which will become clear over the next twelve months. We should all be grateful to the Finance Department for careful stewardship of our reserves. I believe that we have enough set aside to meet this current challenge.

Finally, as this is my last annual report as President, I would like to thank our Chief Executive, Kathy Evans, and her staff for all the support and advice that they have given me during my three years in office. It has been a pleasure and an honour to work with such a dedicated team. I would also like to thank all the regional societies that have been so welcoming when I have attended their meetings to discuss College issues. Lastly, I would like to thank all members who have given up their time to contribute to College work.

I leave the College in Bernie's more than capable hands.

Mike Burdon
President



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Annual Report 2019

Foreword from the Chief Executive



Kathy Evans
Chief Executive

*A man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for?*

Robert Browning

I wrote the major part of this report shortly after 2019 ended. Since then our lives have been dominated by Covid-19, we don't know how it will end or how many people will be affected. One thing we can be sure of is that we will be tested and sometimes we will be found wanting – but for the most part College members and College staff will rise to the challenges that the virus presents. The 2020 report will consider the impact of Covid-19 in greater detail but for the moment we can go back to the relative calm of 2019...

I will start by thanking our committed and involved membership, dedicated College officers and a first-rate staff group and note that the College does not want for enthusiasm or ambition. We must identify priorities and retain focus, knowing that the challenges we have are not matched by our resources. Accordingly, we devoted time in 2019 to agreeing those priorities and the result, the Strategic Plan 2020 – 2022, was launched in October.

www.rcophth.ac.uk/2020/01/rcophth-strategic-plan-2020-2022/

This report will concentrate on operational matters and the staff contribution. During 2019 the Wellbeing Group, which has members from across the College, met four times and has had a wide-ranging impact: the introduction of mental health awareness training, improvements to the office environment and recommendations for an induction programme. The group contributed to the flexible working policy which was trialled from June and is now a permanent and popular working practice. Team building training has led to greater cohesion and camaraderie.

During 2019 we conducted a review of the pay policy, ensuring that every member of staff has a meaningful job description and is paid appropriately. The HR function has been brought in-house, previously we have engaged external consultants as necessary and relied on our contract with near neighbours, the Royal College of General Practitioners. The appointment of a part-time HR Manager in October has already had a beneficial impact and the improvement to policies and staff support will continue.

Another new post, the Quality Improvement Manager, was filled in March. It has a focus on improving external reviews to better serve College members and, ultimately patients.

We have been involved in various IT projects:

- Clinicians will be aware of the National Ophthalmology Database (NOD) and share our relief that we can continue the cataract audit even though central funding ceased in August.
- We changed the registration platform for the May Glasgow Congress and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.
- We scoped requirements for a new database and a new website to serve our membership and the wider world. We have engaged two providers and expect to launch both products in mid-2020.
- We worked with another provider to develop new examination software, which has generally gone according to plan. The decision to deliver most written components as computer-based examinations resulted in some problems but the College reacted promptly and with generosity to any candidate affected.
- The Education and Training Department is developing a new curriculum in line with the General Medical Council's requirements and this will result in an additional IT project.



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- In the background we have been implementing a document management system to reduce the dependence on paper records and make more documents readily available to all staff.

Our building at 18 Stephenson Way is the College's principal financial asset and it is maintained to a high standard. In 2019 we held 15 seminars, 11 education courses and 20 skills courses. The basic micro-surgical skills courses have been overhauled to make them even more relevant to trainees and in June we hosted the launch of the Ophthalmic Common Clinical Competency Framework. We are close to Euston station and enjoy excellent transport links, but this means we are close to HS2 works, ironically, we have been more inconvenienced by the refurbishment of the building opposite than the high-speed railway project.

The Communications and Engagement Department has brought our achievements to the attention to members, stakeholders and the public. In 2019 it increased social media activity significantly, introduced podcasts, produced the quarterly newsletter College News, the fortnightly bulletins, Eye Mail, and liaised with print and broadcast media to raise the profile of the College.

2019 has been a busy and productive year and we are poised to increase our efforts in 2020.

Kathy Evans
Chief Executive



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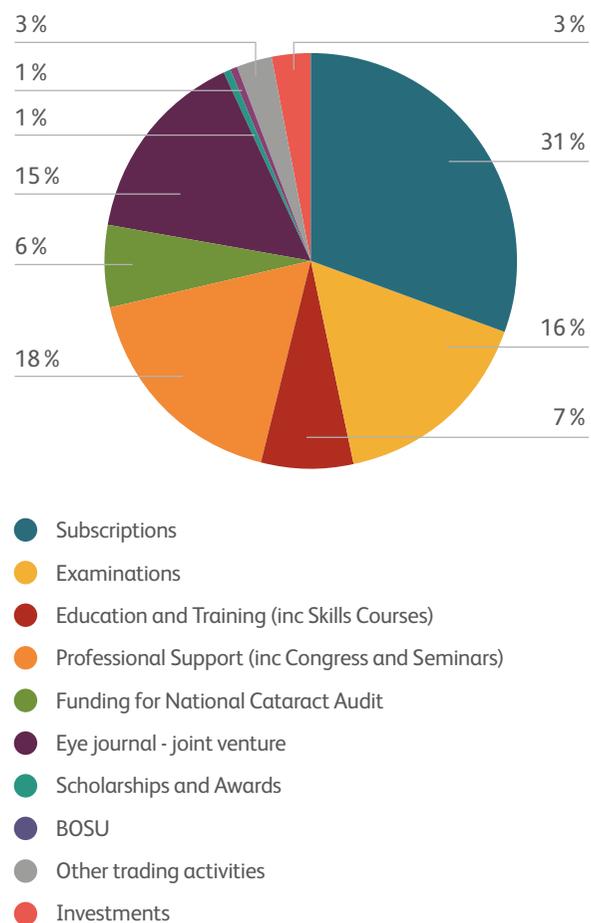
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Statement of financial
activities for the year ended
31 December 2019.

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Income 2019

	2019 £'000s	2018 £'000s
Legacy donations and gifts	-	30
Subscriptions	1,442	1,345
Examinations	764	721
Educations and Training (inc Skills Courses)	340	544
Professional Support (inc Congress and Seminars)	830	970
Funding for National Cataract Audit	300	283
Eye journal - joint venture	710	651
Scholarships and Awards	29	22
BOSU	28	67
Other trading activities	132	120
Investments	136	122
Total income	4,711	4,875





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Expenditure 2019

	2019 £'000s	2018 £'000s
Cost of generating funds	26	94
Examinations	1,368	1,105
Education and Training (inc Skills Courses)	1,411	1,078
Professional Support (inc Congress and Seminars)	1,065	1,202
National Cataract Audit	356	352
Eye journal - joint venture	634	599
Scholarships and Awards	46	34
BOSU	141	151
Total expenditure	5,047	4,615
Gains/(losses) on investment	378	(205)
Net movement in funds	43	55
Funds brought forward 1 January 2019	12,874	12,819
Funds carried forward 31 December 2019	12,917	12,874

