

Lothian LMC Ltd AGM, 2025

Medical Director's Report

Good evening, everyone.

This can be an interesting exercise, looking back over previous years reports in the preparation of this year's ones. The challenges don't seem to get any easier both for the LMC and the practices and teams we represent. A few years ago, the spectre of covid had loomed large, and then the challenges of the contract non-delivery. While there may have been a change in the hot topics this year, General Practice is still hugely affected by the last few years fallout, with increased demand, and trying to deal with problems elsewhere in the system without the promised support. As Andy has suggested, it's not been an easy year. And for that reason, I would like to hugely thank the committee members for all their efforts over the past year; their engagement, opinions, and dedication in representing the profession is great to see.

The LMC has said goodbye to a number of members of the committee in this year, Sheelagh Stewart (East Lothian), Colin McArthur (Midlothian), John Magill (Sessional), Polly Dunne (Retainer). Between them they contributed hugely to the committee and I've no doubt will continue to be strong advocates for General Practice in the years ahead. I would like to thank them all; we are grateful to them for all their dedication and wisdom over the years and wish them well with all future endeavours. Despite the list of those leaving the committee, we have been fortunate in those who have joined; Suzy Scarlett (NW Ed), Joanna Smail (East Lothian), Kim Rollinson (Sessional), Fiona Ferguson (East Lothian), and Joanna Loudon (Retainer).

We are very grateful for all their efforts and the fresh perspective they bring to the committee.

The big change in the committee and the office has obviously been Dr Iain Morrison being elected as Chair of SGPC, and therefore stepping down as Chair of Lothian LMC. While this may seem an extreme move to get out of having to have a weekly meeting with me, it is perhaps understandable after 4 years. Seriously however, I do feel that his decision to stand as SGPC Chair was a courageous one, and one based in his commitment and vision for the profession. Even in the last 24 hours we have seen his advocacy for the future of General Practice, and as one of our reps to SGPC I can assure Lothian's GPs that the committee has a new energy and direction.

While we were disappointed to lose Iain in his role as chair in Lothian, we had a competitive election for our new Chair, and I'd like to publicly thank all those who stood in what was a close-run election.

Given you've just heard his Chairs report, it's probably not news that Dr Andy Forder was elected, and I can confirm that he has hit the ground running. He's shown a great enthusiasm and attention to detail and has thrown himself into the activities of the office.

While he has strong opinions and is firm in his defence of the profession, Andy is also keen to hear the opinions of colleagues and I think we have a great hand on the wheel.

Following the change in Chair, we had an election for the Executive Committee, and I'd like to thank all those who stood for election and congratulate Dr Debbie Strachan who has already been a welcome addition to the Executive.

Lothian's voice has been well heard externally during the last year. We were well represented at both the UK and Scottish LMC conferences with excellent speeches to a number of motions - it was good to hear some new voices at conference and it's clear that the pool of talent on the committee runs deep. We have also been well represented on SGPC with the Lothian bench contributing significantly to debates and Dr Jenny English was once again elected in the competitive vote to SGPC's executive, joined this year for the first time by Dr Annie Lomas, meaning Lothian has a disproportionate voice at this level.

I am now in my fifth year as one of the medical directors at the LMC and remain really impressed by how well the office works as a team, and it would be totally wrong if I didn't pay tribute to the work of Nicola, our business co-ordinator, who is the power house of the Office and who has developed her knowledge of the often complex world of General Practice contracts and Medical politics over the last few years. I know how much practices value the knowledge she has built up, and how well she communicates with the wider practice community. What colleagues may not see is the vast amount of work she puts in behind the scenes, we really couldn't work without her.

And talking of colleagues we'd struggle to manage without I must also pay tribute to the work of Dr Annie Lomas, our other Medical Director, I'm forever amazed by her boundless energy and enthusiasm, and she is tireless in her advocacy for both the profession and working better across the interface. I'm definitely the luckiest member of the office team getting to work with the three of them.

While we all rely on colleagues, we are well aware in the office that we are representing practice teams across the whole of Lothian, not just GPs, but their whole teams on the front lines of providing care. And the more we hear from practices and their challenges I salute the whole teams that help us in our practices every day.

Lothian LMC remains committed to representing every GP practice and General Practitioner who works in Lothian, be they sessional, partner, retainer or working in out of hours, and we are delighted to have all these voices on committee. We are aware of the responsibility this representation brings and are always happy to be contacted by any practice or individual if they think we can be of help.

Dr Neil MacRitchie,

Medical Director, Lothian LMC.

April 2025