

## Lothian LMC AGM, Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021

### Chair's Report

At the time of our last AGM, the novel Coronavirus spreading through East Asia was a concern but nothing more so. Since then we have experienced one of the most tumultuous years in history. No one at that point could have envisaged the massive impact it has taken on us personally and as a profession.

Reflecting back, GP surgeries across Lothian responded to the challenges of the pandemic remarkably. The rapid moves made to reduce footfall in our practices, whilst maintaining core services, was a phenomenal achievement. This step alone will have saved hundreds, if not thousands, of lives by reducing community contagion.

We also rose to the challenge of the shielding campaign, contacting thousands of patients across Lothian, offering them support and planning. Additionally, we stepped up to staff the COVID pathway, quickly ensuring multiple sites were operational within days of initial planning. Despite the many unknowns, and indeed fear, at this stage, GPs and their colleagues across Lothian showed the utmost in professional responsibility. They continued to work on despite initial challenges with PPE and significant upheavals at home. As much as the hospitals received most of the media attention, it was the care homes, formerly known as hospitals, where most of the deaths occurred. GPs helped support the patients, family and staff alike.

As well as working hard at our own Practices, the LMC Office was working exceptionally hard trying to keep a handle on all the developments and to disseminate the most important information out to practices. In the early days of the pandemic we were receiving at least one email per minute. The inaugural COVID Practice Action Plan, and its several latter iterations, have been a great tool to offer support and guidance to many. The LMC Zoom meetings were also an incredibly effective tool to get information out to as many as possible in a manner that we could all consume more easily than the hundreds of emails circulating. They have also acted like a virtual community. By sharing just how hard everyone in Primary Care works to help each other or simply the ability to see some familiar colleagues' living rooms, they always seemed to lift spirits.

I want to thank Dr. Jenny English, Dr Neil MacRitchie and Nicola Smith for the hard work they have put in during a very difficult year. The LMC Office is small but has a great balance of ideas, considerations, planning and delivery. We have an exceptionally busy year ahead with the emergence out of the pandemic and a stalled contract to realise but I have the utmost confidence in the team.

I would like to conclude my report by thanking my predecessor, Dr. Drummond Begg. His response to the pandemic was truly remarkable. Not only in his authorship of the Action Plans or his previously unknown chat show host skills, he was always there for support and mentorship to anyone who needed it. I will always remember the chat we had in the early days where he described "this is not a time to think about hours worked or tasks completed but a time, one day, that we will reminisce about with a whisky in front of a fire". This incredibly sage advice can be applied to us all (you can choose your tippie). I have never been as proud to be a GP in Lothian than in the past twelve months, thank you.

Dr Iain Morrison

Chair, Lothian LMC