

As the College's Faculty of Pre-Hospital Care enters its 20th year, Dr Colville Laird describes the dramatic developments within the Faculty and in the wider field of immediate medical care

THE LIFE SAVERS

The provision of pre-hospital care in the UK has changed dramatically in the 19 years since the College's Faculty of Pre-Hospital Care (FPHC) was founded in 1996. Back then, the number of paramedics was a fraction of the estimated 15,000 who now work in the UK and there was no College of Paramedics. There were approximately 30 to 40 ambulance services in the UK, whereas today there are 13. National organisations have also been formed, including the Ambulance Service Chief Executives Association and Ambulance Service Medical Directors Association.

Against this changing background, it is important that the Faculty positions itself to ensure credibility and that it is seen as a leading academic organisation in pre-hospital care. It is therefore important to recognise that the Faculty is an academic organisation and not a statutory provider of pre-hospital care. We are extremely grateful to the president, council, and chief executive of the College for the support and freedom they have allowed the Faculty in its development.

The Faculty was founded upon work already taking place in the College, in particular the Diploma in Immediate Medical Care, which had its first diet in 1988. Now, with more than 600 Members, our multi-professional work and the activity of nurses and paramedics – as well as doctors – is vital to the development of its aims.

A pivotal force in the development of the new General Medical Council-recognised subspecialty of Pre-hospital Emergency Medicine, the RCSEd has been appointed lead college for liaison between the Intercollegiate Board for Training in Pre-hospital Emergency Medicine and the GMC.

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENTS

The Faculty has enhanced its academic offering by developing a number of diploma examinations relevant to pre-hospital care and accrediting courses by external organisations. It also plans to lead in developing the evidence base for the practice of pre-hospital care and to coordinate the efforts of its large number of providers.



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Dr Colville Laird is Chairman of the FPHC

To add to the Diploma, in 2000 the FPHC began awarding a Fellowship in Immediate Medical Care. Both examinations have since been critically reviewed and updated by the College's Professional Activities Department.

As trauma and retrieval systems developed, it became clear that there was a need for an examination in this field and so in 2012 the FPHC ran the first diet of its Diploma in Transport and Retrieval Medicine, which it hopes to open to international candidates. The Faculty is also developing Major Incident Management and Urgent Care diplomas.

Furthermore, the FPHC has taken on responsibility for two postgraduate educational programmes and their associated committees: the Diploma in Mountain Medicine from the University of Leicester and the Diploma in Remote and Offshore Medicine from the College's eLearning Department.

Finally, the Faculty is delighted that the College has agreed to the creation of a new academic position, the Gibson Chair of Pre-Hospital Care, to recognise



The emergency services play a pivotal role in pre-hospital care



academic and scientific excellence and contributions to the improvement of pre-hospital care. This award will be made bi-annually and it is hoped the first recipient will be named during 2016.

COORDINATING PRE-HOSPITAL CARE

It is important to recognise the huge number of individuals who perform some form of pre-hospital care in the UK. This includes members of the general public, voluntary aid organisations, individuals trained in first aid at work, ambulance control staff, the police service, fire and rescue services, and health service professionals. It could be argued that the biggest potential improvements for the provision of pre-hospital care would not be provided by health professionals, but by members of the groups listed above.

One of the Faculty's essential roles is to coordinate and standardise this diverse range of activity, such as through the provision of manuals for different groups. It is now the responsibility of the Clinical Standards Committee to ensure that manuals are reviewed and updated regularly.

The presence of such a diverse group of individuals at a pre-hospital incident means there is a need to easily identify the capabilities and competencies of those who may offer services. Recognising this issue, the Faculty has developed a framework to identify nine levels of provider. This is available on its website.

The Joint Royal Colleges Ambulance Liaison Committee develops guidelines for the UK ambulance services and includes a number of representatives from the Faculty. The Faculty has offered to assist in the collection and storage of evidence to support these guidelines. It has also developed a series of evidence-based consensus statements on topics of importance to the practice of pre-hospital care. Most of these statements have been published in the *Emergency Medicine Journal* and on the Faculty website. An ongoing programme to develop consensus statements is now in place under the guidance of the Clinical Standards Committee. The Faculty is also developing an infrastructure for finding, grading and storing evidence bases.

STRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

The Faculty has expanded its infrastructure to engage its membership and the wider community of pre-hospital care providers with its aims. This includes the appointment of a faculty manager and the formation of a number of committees and groups. Previously, as well as the Executive and Advisory Board, the Faculty also had committees to administer examinations, research and development, and training and standards.

New committees and groups include: Clinical Standards Committee, Communications Committee, Publications Group, Student Group, Paramedic Group, Nursing Group and a Regional Faculty Infrastructure. Finally, the Faculty has formed the Stevenson Group in a bid to encourage younger members to get actively involved with its work. Using the name of the famous Edinburgh family who built Scotland's lighthouses, it hopes to attract individuals who will bring new light to the faculty.

For more information on the Faculty of Pre-Hospital Care, visit fphc.rcsed.ac.uk