More support for medical students

Relaunched RMBF programme offers grants, new guide and online resources

We are pleased to announce that the RMBF is expanding its programme of help for medical students, with the support of UK-wide medical defence organisation MDDUS.

To support and protect the future of the medical profession, we now offer financial grants for students facing exceptional and unexpected hardship while studying. Previously this support was offered in the form of loans, but by switching to grants we hope to reach more students in need who may be wary of taking on additional debt.

A new downloadable publication, The Vital Signs for Medical Students, highlights key pressure trigger points for medical students and provides advice on managing stress during medical education. A new-look leaflet, for distribution in medical schools, will also set out the support on offer and encourage students to seek help in difficult times.

The relaunched RMBF website (see page 4) also hosts revised and updated advice on student finance, covering sources of funding, applying for bursaries and grants, saving money as a student and more. It also features a dedicated online money adviser and interactive budget planning tools.

Since the RMBF started providing help to medical students in 2012, the programme has directly supported over 25 student beneficiaries, and hundreds more have accessed our online resources. By extending the help we offer, we hope to reach as many students in difficulty as possible.

The RMBF has built key relationships with UK medical schools to ensure that all medical students can access help in times of crisis.

To download resources and find out more about medical student support, visit the new-look website at www.rmbf.org.

In this issue

1  CEO update  
2  Volunteer news  
3  Website update  
4  Conferences  
5  News in brief  
6  Guild events  
7  Trustees  
8  New materials  
9  Legacies  
10  Testimonial  
11  Donation & contact form
What’s the best way to support doctors in crisis?
The answer is always shifting and never simple, so the support we provide has to be carefully considered and evolve over time to meet the changing needs of the profession. The new initiatives we are undertaking, in 2017 and beyond, aim to do just that.

Raising awareness
We’ll be building on the success of last year’s What’s Up Doc? awareness campaign, which was very effective in spreading the word about the RMBF and reaching more potential beneficiaries – thanks in no small part to the efforts of you, our supporters. It’s important that the medical profession should encourage frank discussion about the pressures and difficulties that doctors face, and by being part of that conversation, we can ensure that every doctor and medical student knows what we do and how we can help in hard times.

You can find out first about our next awareness-raising campaign, as well as all our forthcoming projects, by signing up to our e-bulletin at www.rmbf.org.

More enquiries and grants
I am pleased to say that relaunch of our Medical Student Programme (see front page) has already had a positive effect in reaching more students in need. Within the first week of its launch, we saw a number of new enquiries from medical students seeking help, and we anticipate being able to support several of these applicants.

By reaching new beneficiaries, we have also increased the amount we have given in grants compared with last year. In the 2016-17 financial year, grants paid to beneficiaries totalled over £460,000, an increase of 50% on the previous year. Look out for a full breakdown of how we’ve helped our beneficiaries in our next Annual Review.

DocHealth progress
As reported in previous issues, last year we collaborated with the BMA to launch DocHealth, a specialist-led service helping doctors to deal with stress-related anxiety and depression.

During the first eight months of DocHealth, 65 doctors have self-referred to the service. 66% of the doctors are trainees and 34% are consultants and general practitioners. 42 trainee doctors who have self-referred have been supported by the RMBF and enabled to attend the service. We are delighted to continue supporting DocHealth for the second year of the pilot, helping to ensure doctors always have somewhere to turn.

President’s Appeal a success
I would like to express my gratitude for the incredibly kind response from supporters to our annual President’s Appeal, sent out in November. The appeal raised over £60,000 in aid of our charitable activities and attracted a host of new supporters. Many of you pledged regular gifts, which are so important in helping us to continue our work in years to come.

On behalf of everyone at the RMBF, especially Parveen, thank you sincerely for so tirelessly promoting and supporting our work.

Welcoming new Trustees
At our last Board meeting in December, we had the pleasure of welcoming four new Trustees.

Dr Fuzz Ahmed, Simon Dinnick, Dr Oliver Seyfried and Dr Richard Stevens will bring a wealth of experience to the charity, and we are very pleased to welcome them to their new roles. You can find out more about all of them on page 6 of this issue.
Volunteer news

First RMBF Volunteer conference

Preparations are well underway for the RMBF 180th Anniversary Conference, entitled “A Celebration of our Volunteer Network,” which is taking place at Aston University, Birmingham on 1st June - the first day of National Volunteer Week.

Over 100 RMBF Volunteers and supporters will come together for the event, which will help to shape the future of the Volunteer network and the charity’s wider plans.

The day’s programme will include interactive group discussions, including:

• overcoming the barriers preventing medics from seeking our help
• getting younger doctors involved in volunteering and fundraising
• talking confidently about the RMBF’s work

Dr Duncan Shrewsbury, an Academic GP Registrar in Worcestershire and Chair of the RCGP AiT committee, will give a keynote speech on helping new and future doctors.

We are pleased to say that RMBF Trustees Prof Parveen Kumar, Prof Pali Hungin and Prof Roger Jones will also be speaking, as well as our volunteer Dr Harj Kaul. Harj will be talking about how his professional work as an Occupational Health Physician links in with his volunteering role as a Medical Liaison Officer. Dr Roberto Bilbao will also be speaking, sharing his experiences as a beneficiary of the charity.

The day will also offer ample opportunity for networking and meeting Volunteer colleagues from across the country, with ice-breaker activities and a three-course lunch.

Our thanks to our sponsors for the conference, Wesleyan and the MDU. We will have a full report from the conference in the next issue, so watch this space!

We are delighted to welcome some new members to the RMBF Volunteer network, and we would like to say farewell and sincerest thanks to those who are retiring from their roles.

Medical Liaison Officers

Appointment

Dr Osmond Jones
Counsellor and Addiction Therapist, London

Retirement

Dr Roddy Wade-Thomas
GP, Somerset

PhoneFriends

Appointments

Dr Angus Royal
Anaesthesia SHO, Buckinghamshire

Miss Heidi Tempest
Urologist, Oxfordshire

Dr Osmond Jones
Counsellor and Addiction Therapist, London

Links with medical schools

We now have Volunteers linked with all of the medical schools across the UK, building local relationships and helping us raise awareness among those students who are most difficult to reach.

We would be delighted to hear from any supporters who have any further links or contacts at medical schools (and medical societies within universities) who would like to help us spread the word.

Volunteer online resources

Our relaunched website includes an updated and refreshed Volunteer Area (previously known as the Extranet). The section includes essential handbooks for each Volunteer role, offering a wealth of advice and information on RMBF’s policies and procedures, as well as downloadable forms and templates.

All Volunteers have been sent a password via email to allow them access to the area, which can be found at www.rmbf.org/volunteers
New RMBF website launches

In March, we launched the new look RMBF website at www.rmbf.org.

The new site makes it simpler than ever to find the right support if you are in need of help, as well as making it easier to get involved and support doctors and their families in need.

The site has a host of features that make it a big upgrade on the previous version, and it will be frequently updated with new content and helpful information.

Browse on the go

The site features a responsive design which means it functions just as easily on tablet and mobile devices as on a desktop. We know this is important for hard-working doctors who may need to access help and advice at busy times.

Getting help

We’ve simplified and streamlined the process of accessing our support if you’re a doctor or medical student in need, with clear eligibility guidelines and information on the types of support we can and can’t provide. The site also hosts an extensive list of other organisations which can give help, and we’ll be expanding this list to include more entries. If your organisation offers support to doctors and you’d like to be linked from the site, please get in touch.

Health & Wellbeing

This section offers advice and support articles covering a host of topics, from work-life balance to career development, written by expert guest authors. Get tips on time management, working overseas, preparing for interviews and more.

These articles are revised and updated from our Support4Doctors site, and more will be added in the coming months. If you’re interested in writing an article that could be helpful for doctors, we’d be happy to discuss - please contact Mark Williams, Fundraising & Communications Manager, on mwilliams@rmbf.org.

Medical Students

We’ve also updated and revised our money advice articles for medical students, previously hosted on Money4MedStudents. There’s information on applying for funding, handy tips to help make your money go further, and much more.

It also hosts interactive budget planner and debt calculator tools, as well as a specialist Student Money Advice service provided with Leeds University Union. If you have a query about student finance, just fill out the online form and our advisers will get back to you.

Getting involved

There’s also a wealth of information about how you can support the charity, including testimonials from our Volunteers, and stories from our fundraisers giving inspiration on how to take on a challenge for charity.

Your feedback

Of course, we would like the site to keep improving, and your views are incredibly helpful in this regard. If you spot any errors, have difficulty navigating the site, or would like to suggest any additions, let us know! Contact Joe Meredith, Fundraising & Communications Officer, on jmeredith@rmbf.org.

Many thanks to our very helpful web designers Fat Beehive for their hard work and support on this project.
St James’s Place support for conferences

Over the course of 2017, we will be exhibiting at key medical conferences across the UK with the support of Navigation Wealth Management, a Senior Partner Practice of St James’s Place Wealth Management.

By helping us cover the costs involved with exhibiting, they are ensuring that more of our supporters’ donations go directly to our beneficiaries.

It’s always a pleasure to catch up with our supporters at events, so if you are in attendance at any of the conferences listed below, please come and say hello - and why not bring a colleague along to the stand?

We will have RMBF materials available to take away, and a St James’s Place representative will also be available to provide information on specialist financial advice, tailored specifically for doctors.

Our first event of the year was the Royal College of Physicians’ annual conference in Manchester. It proved a successful and well-attended event, and it was a pleasure to speak to so many doctors who were keen to support our work.

Conferences 2017

RCPCH Conference
24-26 May, ICC Birmingham

AAGBI Annual Congress
27-29 September, Arena And Convention Centre, Monarchs Quay, Liverpool

Association of Local Authority Medical Advisors Autumn Conference
15-17 November, Norton Park Hotel, Winchester

Acute & General Medicine
21-22 November, Excel London

News in brief

Help Me, I’m a Doctor

The Royal Medical Benevolent Fund has always worked closely with other charities to ensure that doctors and medical students under financial pressure are able to get the right kind of support.

In this spirit, we have worked together with BMA Charities, the Cameron Fund, the Royal Medical Foundation and the Society for the Assistance of Medical Families, to create Help Me, I’m a Doctor (www.doctorshelp.org.uk), an online portal designed to help doctors access exactly the right support and assistance for their circumstances.

By answering a simple questionnaire, doctors can find out from which charities they are likely to be eligible for help, and what type of support they offer.

In 2016, the five charities supported doctors and their dependent families with charitable grants and loans totalling over £1.3m.

More help for GPs

January saw the launch of a new support service for general practitioners.

The NHS GP Health Service is provided by The Hurley Clinic Partnership and is accessible via a confidential national self-referral phone line, website and app, enabling GPs and GP trainees to seek information about the services available, access self-help tools, and access clinical support.

Any GP or GP Trainee who is registered on the National Performers List in England, and any GP or GP trainee who is looking to return to clinical practice after a period of absence, can access the service. It is available within each of the 13 NHS England local team areas, and within each area there will be a network of clinicians who can be accessed at a range of different sites.

As part of the ongoing development of the service, an Expert Advisory Group (EAG) has been set up as a forum for key stakeholders to meet, discuss, reflect and advise on the effective delivery of services for GPs.

The group is likely to facilitate discussion around changes to service delivery and help develop strategies to improve GPs’ access to mental health support, as well as enable greater joint working between key partners to offer a holistic support package to GPs.

Heather Mellows, Vice-Chair of the RMBF will be joining the group along with senior representatives from NHS England, the General Medical Council, the British Medical Association and the Royal Medical Colleges.

Find out more about the NHS GP Health service at www.gphealth.nhs.uk.
Belfast Guild

The annual fundraising dinner of the Belfast Guild of RMBF was held at Malone Golf Club on 7th April 2017 and was attended by 134 people. The event raised a fantastic £5,200.

Following a drinks reception and an excellent dinner, the guests were educated and entertained by Dr Barry Kelly who delivered a talk entitled ‘Aether, the Cat, the Fly and the Wrangler; Joseph Larmor and the matter of life and death’, a guide for the largely uninitiated to the personalities and intricacies underlying quantum physics.

The function was drawn to a close after a raffle of prizes organised and donated by the committee members.

Brentwood Guild

A recent evening supper party held by the Brentwood Guild was a great fundraising success. Held at Thorndon Park Golf Club in Ingrave, the convivial evening saw guests enjoy a splendid carvery supper and, later on, music from Johnny Moore and the Blue Moon Quintet.

Meet our new Trustees

Dr Faizan “Fuzz” Ahmed is a practising GP in Manchester, and has been an RMBF Medical Liaison Officer for over two years.

He holds posts with Manchester Local Care Organisation Commissioning, NHS Central Manchester Clinical Commissioning Group, the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service and the Family Doctor Association. He also holds various directorships, and is a primary school Governor.

Simon Dinnick has been a solicitor for over 30 years, and is currently in-house General Counsel with MDDUS.

He brings lengthy experience of helping doctors who encounter professional difficulty, and of helping to lead a major law firm specialising in this area.

He is married with two grown-up children living in London, and is a dedicated Harlequins rugby supporter.

Dr Oliver Seyfried is a consultant in anaesthesia and pain medicine at St. George’s Hospital.

His interest lies in anaesthesia for general and vascular surgery and the management of long term pain conditions, especially those of a neuropathic nature. He enjoys the bagpipes, his dog and his motorcycle.

Dr Richard Stevens studied Psychology and Physiology at Oxford before his medical degree. He was a GP principal in Oxford for thirty years and was a trainer, appraiser and tutor.

For the last seven years he has worked as a coach for the Thames Valley Professional Support Unit and is currently acting assistant director. He wrote The Vital Signs, a series of guides for doctors experiencing stress and pressure at work, for the RMBF.
New RMBF materials to spread the word

As well as our new leaflet for medical students, we have a range of new resources available to help spread the word about the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund and reach doctors in need. Our general leaflet gives information about the help we provide and who is eligible for support, and we now have a handy wallet-sized flyer with the charity’s basic information and contact details. Copies of our newsletters and Annual Review can also be helpful in educating people about the RMBF’s activities.

If you’re hosting meetings or conferences, we offer promotional items including pens, post-it notes and stress balls, which are great to include in delegate packs – every little helps in getting the charity more widely recognised. For fundraising events, we can provide collection tins and donation forms, and we are always happy to promote events via this newsletter and online.

All items are available on request while stocks are available – please get in touch with Mark Williams on mwilliams@rmbf.org or 020 8545 8443 to discuss what could benefit your activities and events.

Thank you for remembering us

We are honoured and deeply grateful to those who have generously chosen to remember the RMBF in their will.

By leaving a legacy gift, they have helped to ensure that future generations of doctors will be able to access the support they need in times of hardship.

Legacy gifts 2016-17

Dr Barbara Adams of Glasgow
Dr Alexander Paton
Dr John Hacking of Kilmarnock
Dr Delia Cothay of Surrey
Mrs Elizabeth Ball of Mansfield
Dr Elizabeth McClatchey of Belfast
Dr Margaret Fleming of Gosforth
Dr Antony Twort of Surrey

Our deepest condolences to the friends and family of those who have passed away.

A message from one of our beneficiaries

“The moment when I read the letter about the grant was a pivotal moment enabling me to move forward: re-focussing my mind away from the illness and its impact on my financial situation, and back to my career progression.

“Unfortunately I do now have to accommodate a chronic condition into my life and work, but I have great doctors and great support in my training. I would not be in the currently stable position I am now without the RMBF.”

Beneficiary has chosen to remain anonymous
Donation form

Your details
Title
Forename(s)
Surname
Home address
Postcode
Email
Phone

I would like to make a one-off donation
£25
£100
£50
Other

I enclose a cheque/charity voucher made payable to RMBF.
I would like to make a donation by MasterCard/Maestro/Visa/Visa Debit/Amex

Card no.

Start date M M Y Y
Expiry date M M Y Y
Issue no. (Maestro only)
Security code
Signature
Date

I would like to make a regular donation
Amount £
beginning on D D M M Y Y
and monthly
quarterly
annually
thereafter until further notice

Bank name
Bank address
Account number
Sort code
Signature
Date
Payment to: RMBF, NatWest Bank, Regent Street, London, sort code: 56-00-27, account number 24465178. This replaces any existing standing order

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate
Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box below:
I want to Gift Aid my donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Please notify the charity if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address, or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.
If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

For full details see our Privacy Policy: www.rmbf.org/privacy-policy
Please call 0208 545 8443 if you would like to request a copy of the policy via post.

Please return forms to (in BLOCK CAPITALS): FREEPOST RMBF
You can also donate online at rmbf.org or by phone on 020 8540 9194
Charity registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales No 207275 and the Scottish Charity Regulator No SC046148
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Contacting you
Please confirm if you are happy for us to contact you via the following channels with information about our news, activities and how you can donate and support our work (including volunteering or fundraising on our behalf).
Your details will only be used by the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund – we will never give your information to other organisations to use for marketing purposes.

I am happy to be contacted:
By email
By text
By phone
By post

For full details see our Privacy Policy: www.rmbf.org/privacy-policy
Please call 0208 545 8443 if you would like to request a copy of the policy via post.