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The **RMBF** Newsletter

## Together for Doctors

**New campaign highlights the importance of support for doctors working under pressure**



**Findings from a new survey conducted by the RMBF indicate that an alarming two-thirds of respondents (67%) would now not recommend medicine as a career to their children – despite the fact that traditionally it has been a family career throughout generations.**

The results tie in with the launch of our new campaign, ***Together for Doctors***, which aims to highlight the need to offer vital support to medical professionals, who are working under increasing pressure. Whilst the majority of doctors (62%) said that they would still study medicine

given their time again, 92% think that working conditions in UK hospitals have deteriorated in the past decade, and 93% are concerned by the number of doctors choosing to leave the profession.

Worryingly, 92% of respondents think that current issues within the NHS are having a detrimental effect on recruitment, and the vast majority (93%) think hospital doctors are forced into uncomfortable decisions due to current pressures in the NHS, such as discharging patients early to free up beds.

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# CEO update

**Steve Crone** | RMBF Chief Executive



**We are always moved by the stories of doctors in difficulty that we hear during meetings of our Grants and Awards Committee.** These personal experiences really give an insight into just how demanding medicine can be as a profession, especially when coupled with unexpected crisis. But even with that experience, the figures from our Together for Doctors campaign survey, showing the levels of pressure and challenges facing the profession, still hit home very hard.

## Reaching out

As supporters of the RMBF, I know you are all keenly aware of these pressures too, but this for me underlines the importance of *Together for Doctors* as a campaign and our broader work to raise awareness of these issues. The first step towards creating positive change is to ensure as many people as possible know the scope of the issues that need to be addressed, and many of our recent and ongoing programmes of work are dedicated to this early-intervention approach. We will always be here to help when crisis strikes, but ensuring that fewer doctors reach crisis point through issues such as stress, anxiety and burnout is an increasingly vital component of our work.

The campaign also aims to let doctors under pressure know that they have somewhere to turn, as we know that there are many more doctors and medical students around the country who could benefit from our help. By spreading the word in the media and through our networks, we aim to ensure that every doctor and medical student in the UK knows about the support we can offer in the hardest times of their life and career.

## Launching the campaign

On the *Together for Doctors* launch day itself, Thursday 16th November, we were very pleased to see such support from the profession and interest from the media in our message. I must pay tribute to our President, Professor Dame Parveen Kumar, who was as inspiring as ever. We did many radio interviews together throughout the day, after Parveen arrived

back from an early morning interview on the couch with Sky's Sunrise breakfast programme. Dr David Derbyshire, Dr Richard Stevens and Professor Pali Hungin were also fantastic ambassadors in TV and radio interviews with broadcasters up and down the country, so our thanks to all involved. Pages 4 and 5 of this issue carry a special report on the campaign activity, including our new Fundraising Pack and The Doctor's Doctor, which looks back at inspiring figures in the medical profession's history. I hope you'll take the time to visit the website and find out more at [www.rmbf.org/togetherfordoctors](http://www.rmbf.org/togetherfordoctors).

## Thank you to Professor Roger Jones

Professor Roger Jones stepped down from his role as Chair in September of this year. I would like to personally thank him for his support in my role as Chief Executive. Under his guidance, we have been able to expand our work and relaunch our medical student programme to reach more students in need. Roger was hugely helpful in championing and helping raise the profile of last year's *What's Up Doc?* campaign and with other media appointments. He also successfully chaired the round-table discussion which helped inform the direction of this year's campaign. We are delighted that Roger is keen to continue supporting our work.

## Welcome to Professor Michael Farthing

Stepping into the role of Chair is Professor Michael Farthing, who brings a wealth of

expertise from his current and previous roles at UCL Medical School, the University of Sussex and the British Society of Gastroenterology, to name only a few.

On behalf of all at the RMBF, a warm welcome to Michael, who tells us more about his hopes and aims for the charity on page 6 of this issue.

## An inspiring AGM

It was a great pleasure, as it is every year, to see so many engaged and dedicated RMBF Volunteers at our AGM in September. A big thank you to Dr Rachel Clarke and Dr Liam Brennan for attending and delivering informative and engaging presentations, which linked in very naturally with our own ongoing work. I was also struck by the sense of collaboration in the afternoon's Volunteers' Meeting, where our Trustees and Volunteer Programme Manager Kate Sheppard led group discussions about key aspects of our work, generating lots of ideas to take forward. See page 3 for a full report of the day's activities – well done and thank you to everyone involved.

And, finally, thank you to everyone for your continued support. I hope you enjoy reading our newsletter, and can I just remind you all how important it is to 'opt in' to future communications if you wish to continue hearing from the RMBF (please see page 7).

With all good wishes,

**Steve**

# AGM Report 2017

**On 25th September, we welcomed RMBF Volunteers, supporters and special guests to our 2017 Annual General Meeting and Volunteers' Meeting.**

As always, the day provided an opportunity to recap the charity's activities over the last year, with updates and statistics on the beneficiaries helped by the RMBF, the charity's fundraising campaigns and finances, and the success of various projects, including our Medical Student Programme relaunch and our first Volunteer Conference in June.

In the morning's first session, there were awards of Life Membership for Volunteers who have given exceptional service, including Dr Paul Darragh and outgoing chair Professor Roger Jones (both pictured below). After the official business of the AGM was concluded, we welcomed our guest speakers for the day.

Dr Liam Brennan, President of the Royal College of Anaesthetists, gave a talk

entitled "Morale and Wellbeing – The Anaesthetist's Perspective". The RCA's own recent survey of anaesthesia trainees indicated shockingly that 6 out of 7 were at high risk of burnout. While solutions are not always easy to find, Dr Brennan called for a national morale & welfare strategy for all NHS staff, including access to healthcare provision, hot food and rest facilities.

Speaking next was Dr Rachel Clarke, campaigner and author of the best-selling memoir *Your Life in My Hands*, which chronicles her work on the front lines of the NHS.

Dr Clarke gave a forthright talk which warned that a generation of junior doctors are at risk of losing the vital hope that enables them to work under increasing pressure. She underlined the importance of strong leadership that takes frontline workers' views and experiences into account, and praised the difference that strong medical communities can

make – including online groups like Tea & Empathy and NHS Million.

After a relaxed lunch and a chance to catch up with RMBF colleagues from around the country, the afternoon's Volunteers' Meeting got under way.

As well as the vital roles they play in supporting our beneficiaries, fundraising and spreading awareness of the RMBF, our Volunteers have always been keen to contribute ideas, knowledge and experience to inform the charity's current and future work.

With this in mind, the afternoon was dedicated to group discussions on key areas of the charity's activity, and how we can develop these in future:

- **Raising the RMBF's profile**
- **Early intervention**
- **Developing the Volunteer network**

All three sessions led to productive and interesting discussions, with many suggestions and ideas offered. We have collated the discussion notes and feedback, and these will inform the planning and implementation of our future work – see below for a summary of some key ideas and themes.

Our warmest thanks to all who attended, spoke and contributed over the course of the day. We look forward to seeing you again next year.



## Key ideas from Volunteers' Meeting

### Raising the RMBF's profile

- More targeted distribution of RMBF materials in print and online
- Developing new resources and ways to raise awareness of RMBF support for medical students

### Early intervention

- Further financing for other projects such as DocHealth
- Providing realistic career advice

and help for beneficiaries who are looking to return to the workplace

### Developing the Volunteer network

- Expanding RMBF PhoneFriend service to include non-beneficiaries
- Developing Area Visitor role to offer practical support to beneficiaries with long term/enduring illness



## Together for Doctors

# Our new Fundraising Pack gives ideas and inspiration

As part of the *Together for Doctors* campaign, the RMBF is encouraging supporters to get together and do something fun for a great cause.

At a time when medics are under severe pressure, having the support of colleagues is more vital than ever. Teaming up with friends and colleagues for a fundraising activity is a fantastic way to support others in the profession who are going through tough times.

### Getting started

We've collected some ideas into a new Fundraising Pack that's easy to download, print and share.

A great activity for medical students is Hospital Hopping: getting together to walk, run or cycle between hospitals. A short trip across the city is great fun with friends, or if you're after something more challenging, why not a bike ride between cities?

If you prefer something a little more relaxed, you could hold a "wear green and purple" day at work, or organise a quiz night at your home, a local pub or community venue.

### Cooking for charity

A bake sale is a classic fundraising activity that's sure to lift the spirits, and we're also encouraging healthy home cooking: instead of spending at work on meals to go, challenge your team to prepare food at home for the week, and donate the money you would have spent.

We're very pleased to say that some celebrity supporters have supplied us



with delicious and healthy recipes: Hazel Wallace, doctor and author of cookbook *The Food Medic*; Saliha Mahmood Ahmed, winner of Masterchef; and Debbie Majors, writer for *Delicious* magazine. We're sure you'll enjoy cooking (and eating) their recipes: find them at [www.rmbf.org/recipes](http://www.rmbf.org/recipes).

### Text to donate

We're also encouraging our supporters to become social ambassadors. Text donation is a fast and simple way to support doctors in crisis. Whether it's via social media, email bulletins or a WhatsApp chat with colleagues, a quick message encouraging people to donate can make all the difference. Text "RMBF17 £5" to 70070 to donate.

Download the pack, resources and much more at [www.rmbf.org/fundraising](http://www.rmbf.org/fundraising).

## Key changes could benefit hospital docs, finds survey

Continued from P1

Despite the stark figures from the RMBF campaign survey around work pressure and stress for doctors, the survey also found that there were key environmental factors that could make a positive difference to a hospital doctor's working day.

For example, 75% of those surveyed felt that doctors would significantly benefit from additional administration support.

Respondents also rated the following as making a significant difference:

- better rostering (73%)
- access to communal staff room/relaxing area (71%)
- easier access to parking facilities (70%)
- improved catering facilities available 24/7 (68%)
- Improved childcare facilities (59%)

The survey also found that amongst doctors there is still a stigma around asking for help and support. Whilst over half (56%) of those surveyed think that doctors' 'personality type' makes them particularly resilient when working under increasing pressure, three-quarters (75%) think there is a lack of sympathy within the medical profession for doctors who seek help for stress and mental health issues. This could be explained by a perceived 'bravado culture' amongst doctors, with 93% of those surveyed thinking that doctors place value on one another's ability to work under pressure and cope with long hours without complaint.



## Campaign hits the headlines

We are pleased to say that on 16th November, the **Together for Doctors launch day**, our survey findings and campaign resources were widely reported by national, local and medical press – helping to highlight the pressure that doctors face and spreading the word of the support that the RMBF can offer.

In the morning, our President, Professor Dame Parveen Kumar DBE (below), appeared on Sky News Sunrise,

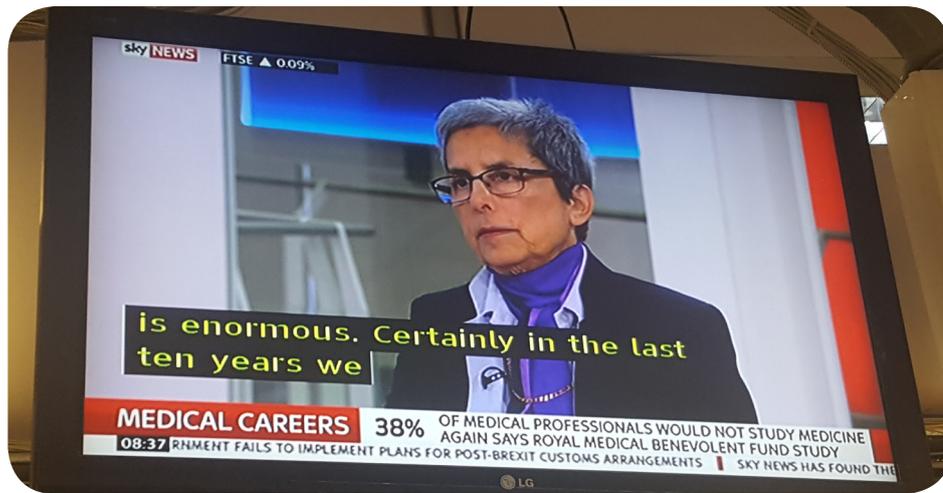
discussing key questions raised by our campaign survey.

Over the course of the day, Parveen and our Chief Executive Steve Crone had a busy schedule of interviews on local and national radio. RMBF Trustees Dr David Derbyshire and Dr Richard Stevens, and our Treasurer Professor Pali Hungin featured in TV and radio interviews throughout the day. This included coverage on Sky News Radio, Heart West

Midlands, North Manchester FM and Tyne and Wear TV.

The campaign was also a big hit on Twitter. Our survey infographic was shared by many influential tweeters, including hospital doctor and writer Dr Rachel Clarke, MP Dr Philippa Whitford, former RCGP Chair Dr Maureen Baker and BMA honorary Vice President Dr Kailash Chand OBE.

Most importantly, we are so grateful to all our supporters for your help in inspiring, launching and spreading the word of the campaign. Thank you especially to everyone who shared and took part in our survey, the results of which have made such an impact in highlighting the need to support medics under pressure.



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## The Doctor's Doctor: celebrating groundbreaking medics throughout history

As well as spotlighting current pressures on the medical profession, we are also looking back over the RMBF's 180-year history, and beyond, to celebrate some of the most influential doctors of all time.

The charity's Trustees have put forward a 10-strong list of doctors who have made vital contributions to the support and reform of the profession since the charity was founded. The shortlist includes Dr Kate Granger (pictured, above right), Dr Sophia Jex-Blake, Ernest Hart, Dr Joseph Rogers, Thomas Wakely, Sir Charles Hastings (pictured, below right), Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, Dr Chuni Lal Katail, Dr Christine Murrell and Dr Dipak Ray.

Each doctor nominated has had a significant influence on today's working

practices: from fighting for the right of women to study and practise medicine, to establishing professional organisations that still support doctors today.

Read more about each nominee on our website at [www.rmbf.org/doctorsdoctor](http://www.rmbf.org/doctorsdoctor), and cast a vote for your choice – we'll announce the winner in the next edition of this newsletter.

We're also asking for your own nominees for the Doctor's Doctor: a colleague, friend or prominent figure who you feel has made a valuable contribution to supporting doctors in need.

We hope to feature a selection of your nominees on the website in the coming months, so please get in touch!



# Meet our new Chair

## Professor Michael Farthing

We are delighted to welcome Professor Michael Farthing as our new Chair, and to express our warmest thanks to Professor Roger Jones who stepped down as Chair in September.

Michael is Honorary Professor and Honorary Consultant Gastroenterologist at UCL Medical School, University College London. He was formerly Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sussex and also served as President of the British Society of Gastroenterology, the European Association of Gastroenterology and Endoscopy, and also of United European Gastroenterology.

Michael's other interests include medical history and the creative and performing arts. He currently holds formal positions as Chair of the Charleston Trust and The West Pier Trust, and recently wrote a book with his brother on Leonardo da Vinci's anatomical drawings.

Here we find out more about Michael's thoughts on joining the RMBF, and what he's most passionate about driving forward over coming years.



### You've had a transformative impact on many organisations. What are your ambitions in joining the RMBF as Chair?

Firstly, I would like to pay a huge tribute to my predecessor, Roger Jones, as former Chair, who I think did a wonderful job, and of course to our President, Parveen Kumar. I would also like to express my deep gratitude to the executive team, trustees, volunteers and members of staff who are out supporting the medical community.

I would say my main ambition is to carry on the good work. I totally embrace the move to bring focus to younger members of the profession and their friends and families. This is an extraordinarily difficult time for young doctors and I will do whatever I can to support the RMBF's efforts to increase the amount of funding that we are able to provide to younger doctors and medical students.

The structure of undergraduate medical training is such that final year medical students are unable to work to supplement income. This presents a big challenge for students whose families are unable to support them financially, and for medical schools who struggle to support students in financial difficulty. I see the RMBF as playing an important role with both.

Another very important underpinning of this future strategy is communication. We need to make sure that the doctors of my generation and the generation behind have full visibility of the struggle younger doctors are facing.

### Our recent *Together for Doctors* campaign survey found that 92% of respondents feel that working conditions in UK hospitals have deteriorated in the past decade. What role do you think the RMBF and its supporters can have in bringing about change?

I think the number is both shocking and tragic. As the major employer of doctors in the UK, it is the responsibility of the NHS to create a working environment that is appropriate and rewarding for its employees. Over the past three decades, consultants have been regarded as being part of the problem facing our health service. Yet in many respects, it is the doctors themselves (along with other healthcare professionals) who are the solution! This has discouraged many doctors from taking on key leadership roles. The RMBF, along with other organisations, have data on the many challenges some doctors are facing today, and therefore have a responsibility to communicate this to the employer. We must also listen more closely to proposed solutions from those on the ground. This information is relevant to the RMBF's support for medical students too: when you combine their financial struggles as undergraduates with the service challenges in the NHS, you could say that there is a 'perfect professional storm' out there for future doctors. The RMBF's support for emerging doctors of the future can help ameliorate these challenges for the profession.

### Why do you think the work of the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund is so vital?

The RMBF is an experienced and informed organisation. It has been around for a long time and not only seen a lot of change, but responded to change too. The RMBF deals with individuals at a personal level and the insights gained from that work are invaluable. It also has an almost unique insight into the issues faced by doctors in UK society, and therefore has a view on the support they need within the profession. These insights can be used to help inform wider strategies within the NHS and the relevant regulatory bodies. Again, a major role of the RMBF is in communication and making the case for change.

### What do you see as being the main areas of opportunity for the RMBF to provide new forms of support to doctors in the immediate future?

The organisation is very aware of the way in which demand has changed in recent years. The RMBF's primary beneficiaries used to be doctors and their spouses in the second half of their careers and in retirement; yet now it has been brought forward, as we see there is increasing need for support during doctors' early years in the profession. The RMBF has observed and noted this shift, and I think that's probably the area that will be a main focus for at least the next 5-10 years.

# News in brief

## Junior doctors connect at Volunteer BBQ

RMBF Medical Liaison Officer Dr Andrew Quayle and his wife Kate organised a very successful networking barbecue for local junior doctors in Somerset this summer, and is hoping to hold similar social events in the future.

They wanted to provide a venue for the newly qualified doctors to meet each other, some for the first time, and to learn about the work of the RMBF and other support services in Somerset.

Andrew, who has two junior doctors in his family, said: "We had been talking for some while about running a social event for junior doctors. We had been very aware of the many problems junior doctors face at the moment and wanted to find a way of supporting them locally.

"The evening went really well with 17 junior doctors coming and making themselves at home in our garden."

## Reaching out to med students in Nottingham

On 27th November, the RMBF will be in attendance at a welfare fair for medical students at Nottingham University, as part of the medical school's student welfare week.

The week includes workshops and events hosted by medical societies, organisations, and charities. As well as having a stand at the welfare fair, we will be providing leaflets and materials for students.

After relaunching our medical student support programme in April this year, we are seeking out more opportunities to reach medical students and forge links with medical schools.

## Last chance to order Christmas cards

Thank you to everyone who has ordered our charity Christmas cards! We hope you enjoy spreading some festive cheer for a good cause.

Our selection of cards, gift wrap and other accessories is still available to order. We have four new card designs available (pictured right) as well as some old favourites. Visit [www.charitycardshop.com/rmbf](http://www.charitycardshop.com/rmbf) or call 01227 811 655 to order.

## Conference support from St. James's Place

Our thanks to St. James's Place, who have supported the RMBF this year by helping us to attend major medical conferences across the country.

At these events, we have been able to offer RMBF resources and information, as well as dedicated financial advice for medical professionals.

Most recently, we attended the Acute & General Medicine conference at the Excel London in November. We were pleased to provide information to doctors who had not been aware of the help we offer – and to say hello to some of our current supporters!

We also had some very positive conversations with doctors interested in volunteering for the RMBF. Our Volunteer roles are flexible and rewarding – a great way to support colleagues in hardship. Find out more at [www.rmbf.org/get-involved](http://www.rmbf.org/get-involved).



## Important reminder: opt in to keep in touch with us

**As you may be aware, regulations around charity communications are changing in May 2018.** We will continue to abide by best practice, so from then on we won't contact you unless you have opted in to communications.



It really couldn't be easier to ensure we don't lose touch with you – simply fill out your name and contact details on the form on the back of this newsletter, and tick the boxes to indicate which methods you'd like us to use to keep in touch.

Alternatively, you can opt in or update your current contact preferences at any time by contacting our Fundraising & Communications department:

- via phone (020 8540 9194, option 2)
- email ([info@rmbf.org](mailto:info@rmbf.org))
- or online ([www.rmbf.org/newsletter](http://www.rmbf.org/newsletter))

We are pleased to say that over a thousand of our supporters have already opted in – thank you very much to everyone who has done so. If you have already given us your preferences, you don't need to do anything further.

We couldn't do the work that we do without your support, which is why it's so important that we can keep in touch in future.

# Donation form



## Your details

Title  Forename(s)   
Surname   
Home address   
  
  
Postcode   
Email   
Phone

## 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](http://www.rmbf.org/privacy-policy)

Please call 020 8545 8443 if you would like to request a copy of the policy via post.

## I would like to make a one-off donation

£25  £50  
 £100  £  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     Expiry date      
Issue no. (Maestro only)  Security code   
Signature  Date

## I would like to make a regular donation

Amount  £  beginning on        
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**

*giftaid it*

### 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.

Please return forms to (in BLOCK CAPITALS): **FREEPOST RMBF**  
You can also donate online at **rmbf.org** or by phone on **020 8540 9194**

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