Introduction

The Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI) is an all-island postgraduate medical training body with over 10,000 Doctors-in-Training, Members and Fellows. Our mission is to train, educate and continuously develop doctors for current and future world health needs.

We offer training programmes, examinations, diplomas and educational courses to equip doctors with the skills and knowledge they need to care for patients and run safe and efficient healthcare systems.

Six of Ireland’s 13 postgraduate specialist training bodies are within RCPI. They are:

- Faculty of Occupational Medicine
- Faculty of Paediatrics
- Faculty of Pathology
- Faculty of Public Health Medicine
- Institute of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
- The Irish Committee on Higher Medical Training.

We also have 2 joint faculties:

- The Joint Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine of Ireland, which is a joint faculty between RCPI, the College of Anaesthetists of Ireland and the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland (RCSI)
- The Faculty of Sports and Exercise Medicine, a joint faculty between RCPI and RCSI.

Our Postgraduate Medical Education Centre develops new and innovative lifelong learning and professional development opportunities for healthcare professionals. The College also quality-assures standards in specialist medical practice by developing policies and procedures to make sure high quality diagnostics and patient care in Ireland.

RCPI also leads 20 ground-breaking National Clinical Programmes with the Health Service Executive that are led by senior clinicians and are helping to transform healthcare in Ireland.

The College is also a strong advocate for the health of the nation, with policy groups for

- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- Obesity
- Physical Activity
- Ageing
- Towards 2026 – developing a vision for patient-centred hospital care for the next decade.
The impact of Britain’s decision to exit from the EU on healthcare

The Royal College of Physicians of Ireland has considered some of the potential impacts that BREXIT could have on the Irish healthcare services and highlights the following areas where issues could arise in the short and longer term.

Cross border healthcare services

There are a number of areas where BREXIT could impact on cross border healthcare services and co-operation. One example is the all-island Paediatric Cardiac Surgery Programme that developed between the Republic and North of Ireland.

This is an all-island initiative to treat Congenital Heart Disease that the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland took a leading role in that ensures that all children have access to the highest standard of cardiac care. The Congenital Heart Disease Network is the first significant all-island model of clinical care, and works largely out of Our Lady’s Children’s Hospital, Crumlin in partnership with Royal Hospital, Belfast in Northern Ireland, alongside the Mater Hospital in Dublin. The Network initially focused on treating children and young adults, before expanding to include adults as well.

The Congenital Heart Disease Network Board works under the direction of a Cross-Jurisdictional Group comprising Chief Medical Officers and senior health administrators from the Republic and Northern Ireland. It implements the recommendations of the International Working Group on the provision of services to patients with Congenital Heart Disease. Other benefits of the service include an expanded database for research into congenital heart disease, and an expanded range of medical services, to reflect that fact that patients with Congenital Heart Disease are now living much longer and fuller lives.

This is the Framework Document for the governance of the Network
Health tourism from Northern Ireland to the Republic

As a result of BREXIT, the funding provided to the NHS in Northern Ireland may decrease. This could potentially pose a threat to the already pressurised healthcare system in the Republic if increasing numbers of people living in Northern Ireland decide to access services in the Republic.

Training and standards

It is important to consider the potential impact of BREXIT on training and standards between the 2 jurisdictions. For example, the current Certificate of Satisfactory Completion of Specialist Training that is currently considered to be equivalent in the Republic and Northern Ireland. A potential area of concern would be if these were to change in a post-BREXIT era. Also regarding the recognition of medical degrees from UK universities – will they now be considered as being from universities outside of the EU?

Regulatory Frameworks

At present, many regulatory frameworks are common across Europe, and are governed by European law. If regulatory frameworks change in the UK, will it have an impact here? How might this impact on patients moving between different jurisdictions with different regulatory frameworks?

An example of this might be the European Working Time Directive- what would the impact be if implemented in one jurisdiction only?

Recruitment of Doctors

It will be important to consider the impact on the selection of candidates for medical posts who are from the EU and those from outside of the EU – which would include Britain? This will impact on doctors applying for posts in Ireland and also on Irish doctors and other healthcare professionals applying for posts in Britain.
Contact

The Royal College of Physicians of Ireland looks forward to engaging with the Department of Health and other stakeholders on the impact of BREXIT on Healthcare in Ireland.

To arrange a meeting contact Siobhán Creaton, Head of Public Affairs and Advocacy, siobhancreaton@rcpi.ie 01 8639797/087 2202879.