

# Fiona O Neill

Mon, 6/20 11:47AM • 14:08

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

crps, register, important, crp, clinical research, work, practitioners, learning, understanding, initiative, next slide, process, professional, organisations, hesitancy, slide, year, started, workforce, network

## SPEAKERS

Fiona O'Neill, Maya Leach, Anthea Mould

### **Maya Leach 00:00**

Our next speaker is Fiona O'Neill, head of registration services for CRPs, clinical research practitioners from the academy for healthcare science. Let's welcome Fiona O'Neill.

### **Fiona O'Neill 00:15**

Hello everybody, and so lovely to be here with you. So I'm Fiona O'Neill, I work at the Academy for healthcare science. But I expect many of you might recognise me, from my time at NIHR Clinical Research Network, when I was involved in starting this work with CRPs. So I'm delighted to be here with you today. So I'm going to go through some slides. So if I could have the first slide? Right. So when I first started this work, it was, I was head of workforce in the network. And one of the things that was really important to me, was understanding the workforce. And then it became very apparent that the way that we portrayed the workforce at the time, wasn't really very inclusive, that we talked a lot about clinical research nurses and the allied health professionals. But we weren't really inclusive. And so we started this work to recognise clinical research practitioners. And some of the things that really were important to us at the time, was when I looked into the system, when I looked at the fantastic work that clinical research practitioners were doing, it was very evident to me that there was a great variation in standards across the system. And in some places that we looked at, there were really great, really great mechanisms in place to support clinical research practitioners. And in other places, it was just at the beginning, really. And so our journey really started with thinking about safety, and, and the quality of the work that clinical research practitioners were doing. And that took us to the Academy for healthcare science, where we started this work this very careful work to be where we are today, where we've both got a register, and a directory for clinical research practitioners. So if I can go to the next slide, I have to say, I can't see the slides. But can everybody in the audience see them. Right,

### **Anthea Mould 03:15**

Fiona, I can see them it's Anthea here, I see them. And I think if you pin your screen, then it'll

### **Fiona O'Neill 03:22**

That's fabulous. Thank you Anthea. So I'm here to talk about the first year of the, of the register. So first of all, I'd like to thank everybody, each one of you, that's been a pioneer in this process. So we launched the register almost exactly a year ago. And since then, we've had 79, very brave pioneers, that have come onboard and joined this register. And I would really like to thank you, because I know, it's not been easy to be amongst the first. So we've got 79. Sometimes I might think that's a bit of a disappointing figure. But to be honest, I think with the pandemic and everything that's in place, I think I'm proud that we've got 79 CRPs on our accredited register. And what's more, when we look into the system, we can see over 200 people have started their application. And what's more, we've got over 1000 CRPs now on our directory, which is an incredible testament to all of you who have taken the time and the trouble to sign up to think about being involved in this. I'd also like to reflect in the first year that there's been tonnes of local initiatives in across the network. And in some of the hospitals that you're going to hear from today. They've really put CRPs in the forefront. And I think it's really important to see this whole initiative, as it's not only national, it's also local, and it's a web it's a network of things that's happening. I think it's really important that we continue to have the strategic support of the Department of Health and Social Care, and the senior executive of the NIHR. And that support as Anthea has just said, it's so important to us going forward. And we've had fantastic engagement, continue to have lots of inquiries, lots of engagement events at local and national level. And then lastly, we have an emerging very vital and vibrant CRP leadership network, that Maya, I have to say, is doing an extraordinary job to promote and get going, because I think it's really important that this initiative rests with you, the CRPs. So if we can go to the next slide, please. So what have I learned through this year? Well, I'd just like to say again, I'm completely always knocked out by the sheer expertise, knowledge and flexibility of all the CRPs that I meet, I think you do an extraordinary job. I think I'm even more proud than I ever was when I worked at the network, for how you've stepped up the extraordinary things that you've been doing over the course of the pandemic. And I just think you are an incredible resource to the whole of the research infrastructure in this country. So thank you, I would like to say a heartfelt thank you to all of you. The other thing I've noticed, as I mentioned it before, that there's a huge diversity in the way that different organisations approach their CRP workforce. Well, we've got Claire Harris here from Guy's and St. Thomas, who've done extraordinary things in terms of really embedding CRPs in their organisation. But that's not the case everywhere, because there's different numbers of CRPs. It works. It's partly to do with local labour markets, there's so many factors at work here around why we've got different types of pathways for CRPs. So I think it's really important that we understand this both. And we can learn from the best practice at these local organisations, I think it's really important to understand that not all CRPs have the same level of support, there isn't a completely universal understanding of why we're doing this, why we've developed the accredited register, why it's so important that CRPs gets a chance to become a professional group that is recognised and organised, just as other professional groups are. And I think we've still got some way to go in promoting that understanding. And I think this event will really help with that. The next thing about my learning is, I think there's still a bit of hesitancy about the register, and about what this whole initiative is about. And I think that's quite understandable, it is still very new, it takes a long time to grow and develop a new professional group. But I think we need to understand more about what this hesitancy is, and, and help to promote that shared understanding, that will take it to the next level that Anthea is talking about. My last bit of learning is really that I think we may be made assumptions when we set up the register. And the process of getting on it about people's understanding of actually what reflective practice is, because as you'll those that have started, their application will know, you know, the application to join the register, actually rests some

understanding what reflective practice and learning is. And we need to get more out there to help you do reflective practice really well. So next slide, please. So all of this is no surprise to me in my career, a lot of my career was spent in change processes and large scale change processes in the NHS mainly. And what I've learned over all these years is that when you look at change, it doesn't happen overnight. It is a process. It's not just a simple event. And we're in the middle of a transformation from taking CRPs to that place of not being visible, that variability in practice, not being able to assure safety, all of those things, places where we started, and we've not arrived anywhere yet. We're in the process of arriving. And so you know, I am very mindful that change takes time. So next slide, please. So what I really want to say to this is my main message is that the register is open. It's there for you all there for all CRPs to walk through, nobody's going to make you go through it. Nobody's going to make you walk through that door. The door is open for you CRPs to walk through and claim your professional identity. I think that's so important that you own the process. Nobody's going to make you do it. Only you can walk through the door and the door is open. So I really encourage all of you that might be thinking maybe I'll join the register this year. You need to get on it. Because to be honest, if it doesn't grow a bit quicker than it's grown in this first year. We can't guarantee that it will be there for you to walk through because obviously, we need to grow it much more than it is at the moment. So this is a heartfelt plea to please please walk through that door, it isn't difficult, there's no tests involved, it's about you your professional development, your ownership of that process, and walking in to take that professional identity that you so, so deserve. So next slide, please. So there are a few missteps. And we are working on very acutely aware that not everybody is able to join the register at the moment, because we quite rightly set the first year's register to capture practitioners who are working at that practitioner level, who most often have a degree. But that isn't to say that I know that there's lots of very experienced practitioners out there who don't have a degree. So that access route is opening, it will be open in the summer, we're just about to start piloting it. So watch this space, this route will be opening to get people without a degree onto the register. This year, it will be opened by the summer. We have to boost the register numbers. So really, what can we do to get these numbers up, we need to be looking at much, much higher numbers, when we're celebrating our second year, next year. There is lots of guidance and learning out there. And my plea is please share it, share how your own experiences of getting on the register, you'll see we're not they're trying to trip people up, this is about you, and your professional development, you're learning. As I've said, I think it's really important that CRPs step into this space. And that the whole next part of the strategy is really led by CRPs. And I think we've got some fantastic leaders out there. And I'm very excited about what's going to happen next, when CRPs have their voice. And as Anthea said we know that this is part of the strategy for the workforce. So last slide, please. So I'm a great one for doing yoga, I spend a lot of my time really I'm almost retired doing yoga. And one of the things you do when you get off the yoga mat is to set your intention, What's your intention for that yoga session. So I want you all for this event. So think about what your intention is, set your attention, your intention, you know, you know, for this Monday afternoon, you've got this opportunity to learn. So what you're going to do afterwards, what is your contribution to the continuing development of the CRP profession? What's your commitment to learning and practice development of yourself and others, because that heartless register is all about practice development and learning and taking that responsibility for your own professional practice. The next point, saboteur or supporter a bit of a controversial point, but you know, there are a lot of saboteurs out there, we can't just assume that everybody is supportive of this. And it's really important that you're mindful of what you say about the register, and the whole initiative, because these careless remarks. Oh, well, I'm not sure what it's all about. Oh, I'm not sure. Let's just wait and

see what happens. Well, if you wait and see what happens for too long, it won't be there, that doorway won't be there. So just be mindful of what you say. Make sure that you're a supporter. Or if you if you're not so sure, be intentional in the way that you go about learning more about it. And don't be a casual saboteur. So how, what do you need to know and how will you find out about it. So lots of opportunities. And my last plea, please join the register. It's, it's there to help assure patients volunteers about what we already know about how marvellous you are. And this is a way of putting that on a firm footing for the future. So thank you very much for listening. I hope I haven't taken too much time. And I look forward to the rest of the event to help answer the questions, etc. So thank you