

Hard work, tenacity, commitment, determination, drive, support, challenge, dedication

Some have drawn comparisons between the Queen and her prime ministers when describing the role that a chief executive has within a clinician-led organisation. However, the Queen does not sit down with the Cabinet, nor take part in cross party parliamentary committees nor sit in the House of Commons. She has to remain remote from debates and decisions at state and political level.

A better analogy then may be that of a permanent secretary in a government department, a civil servant who has a series of MPs arriving as Secretary of State, doing their time, and moving on. The civil servant is responsible for continuity, knowledge of how the organisation runs, but must also be responsive to the ideas and passions of the Secretary of State of the moment, who, for a short time, is the leader and influencer of the direction of travel. In contrast to the Queen, the civil servant rolls their sleeves up and sits at the table alongside the Secretary of State, working closely in partnership with them.



Anne Smith has fulfilled a role not unlike that of permanent secretary in PCRS, for 16 years as a non-clinical chief executive (CE) in a clinician-led organisation. The organisation she joined was very different from the one it is today. In 2004, the organisation was called the General Practice Airways Group (GPIAG), and only GPs could join as full members. Although associate membership was introduced for nurses in 2000, and full membership in 2006, the organisation did not change its name to the Primary Care Respiratory Society until 2009. Today the society is truly multidisciplinary – with representation from all clinicians with a respiratory interest, including increasing numbers of integrated respiratory physicians, as members and on committees. In 2006, a membership fee was introduced to supplement the financial support from corporate supporters, and to increase the independence and financial stability of the group. So PCRS became a subscriber-driven organisation, characterised by a sense of commitment and belonging on the part of its members.

For many years Anne has actively supported the integration of other healthcare professionals into the organisation, starting with nurses but also respiratory physiotherapists, pharmacists, physicians' assistants, and many of the committees are now well established with multidisciplinary membership.

The affiliated groups programme has been a strong initiative, resulting in a network of around 50 groups across the country, mostly nurse-led. As Anne leaves the society, it is fitting that the current Executive chair is the first nurse to hold

this position and is emblematic of the development of PCRS into a truly multidisciplinary society.

In the time that Anne has been CE, PCRS has moved significantly from being a society focused on clinical matters, research and education, to one which supports its members to understand and influence the local healthcare system. There is now a multidisciplinary service development committee which supports members in planning and designing respiratory services at a local level. The annual conference also has a service development workstream alongside those focused on clinical issues, research and practical skills. From being an organisation with an annual scientific meeting for 60-70 research-oriented clinicians, it has become a society with an annual conference attracting 350 delegates from a wide range of clinical and non-clinical roles, with an increasing presence from the patient reference group.

It is not that educating healthcare practitioners about respiratory disease is not still important. Far from it: respiratory education has always been a core activity of GPIAG/PCRS. But there was a growing concern that the society's educational activities were focused on the respiratory-interested and the respiratory-skilled. If all patients were to receive optimal respiratory care, then PCRS needed to reach a much wider audience of generalists, and Anne tackled this challenge with her usual commitment and energy. A major innovation in 2012/13 was to partner with Cogora, as an organisation with a very wide reach into primary care – and particularly those with no respiratory interest – to seek to broaden



Of all the jobs I've done over my career the one I have most enjoyed was being chairman of trustees of PCRS-UK. This was in no small measure to the confidence of knowing Anne was overseeing what Iain (Small) and I did - or sometimes forgot to do - and keeping us on the right track. It felt at times like being supervised by a benign headmistress. I'm full of admiration and gratitude for the way she fulfilled her role as Chief Executive over so many years. She has done a fantastic job and been a more than steady-hand through sometimes turbulent times. Anne, all my thanks for your unflagging guidance of the PCRS and in particular for making my involvement such an pleasurable experience. Enjoy your retirement. Neil Kendle

As someone who has worked for you and with you over many years can I just thank you for your professionalism and consideration in every role you have occupied. You have helped me and the whole field of respiratory medicine enormously and contributed to the improvement of the care of patients with these distressing conditions. I hope you enjoy your retirement hugely. Best wishes, Geoff Higgs

Congratulations on all your hard work making PCRS the excellent society it is! I wish you well and hope you enjoy your free time. Best wishes
Ann Hutchinson

Dear Anne,
All the very best in your future endeavours – I wish you every success.
Love Hetal Dhruve xx

Anne, You have been a friend, colleague, mentor, supporter and inspiration since we first met when you took on the Chief Exec role. It has been a real pleasure to work with you - your clarity, detail and drive over the years. Thanks for all your support for me - for all my colleagues and I believe the patients we care for too. Hoping you enjoy your time in the future and any new positive challenges that come your way! Take care – and always feel free to call me (or drop in if you are down in the South West). Good luck :-)
Steve Holmes

It has been a pleasure to work with you. Your hard work and attention to detail will be a loss for PCRS – you have certainly kept me on my toes over these last few years! All the very best for the future. Best wishes,
Fran Robinson

Dear Anne. It's really, really hard to imagine PCRS without Anne Smith. You have, and will continue to be, such an integral part of the society. What you have achieved as CEO is phenomenal and I am so privileged to be part of this journey. I appreciate there have been some difficult times both as an organisation but also personally but without those you can never fully appreciate the good times. I hope there will be many great times ahead for you and more chance to spend time doing things that you enjoy and spending time with the family. I will genuinely miss your unwavering support and 'kicks up the arse'! Please keep in touch especially if you are ever up in Yorkshire. The very best of luck and love for the future. Sending a virtual hug. Katherine Hickman xxx

It has been an absolute pleasure to work with Anne over the years, having worked with her in my previous and current role. Anne has always been very proactive in keeping us up to date with what is going on within PCRS and the broader respiratory community which has proven to be invaluable. She has always been easy to contact and addresses any issues in a timely and professional manner. She has supported me on many occasions by giving me all of the necessary information and materials so that we can make educated decisions around which PCRS projects and activities we should be involved in. I know that through her activities over the years Anne has helped many HCPs to have the opportunity to improve their respiratory knowledge and skills which has led to an improvement in the overall care of respiratory patients. She will leave a very positive footprint in the world of respiratory medicine because of all of her hard work. I would like to thank Anne for all of her support over the years and wish her every happiness in future endeavours, she will be missed.
Donna Caslin

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respiratory knowledge and skills of all primary care clinicians. And so the Primary Care Respiratory Academy was born – which provides expert-guided learning and peer-to-peer exchange through live meetings and online resources, initially for generalist clinicians. It has gone on to offer similar programmes for commissioners of respiratory services and community pharmacy. It is an example of how PCRS's vision was achieved through an innovative partnership in order to further its aim of providing optimal care for all respiratory patients.

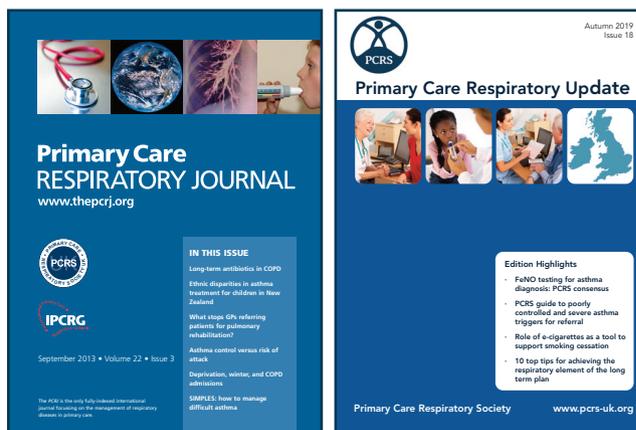
Over Anne's time with PCRS, other partnerships with respiratory groups have also been forged to help support the society's goals. There are too many to mention them all, but they include – collaboration with Education for Health, Asthma UK and British Lung Foundation on developing and delivering the conference; working closely with Asthma UK and BLF on the Taskforce for Lung Health; joining with British Thoracic Society on the integrated care working group; contributing to the development of the national spirometry certification programme and register with Association for Respiratory Technology and Physiology; promoting training and career development for nurses with National Association of Respiratory Nurse Specialists; drawing on the work of ASH for our focus on tackling tobacco dependency.

The Respiratory leadership programme is a further example of how the society has sought to support clinicians in being influential at a local level to improve outcomes for patients – by developing their leadership skills, and raising their awareness of how to input to the local planning agenda and shape services for respiratory patients. It has also provided a forum to support the important task of succession planning, which Anne has led throughout her time as CE. This process goes on behind the scenes to ensure fresh faces are brought into the society and to provide tomorrow's committee members and leaders. When the Department of Health was appointing regional respiratory leaders across England, virtually all those primary care clinicians appointed were members of PCRS and were involved with the PCRS respiratory leaders programme.

Anne has always been committed to seeing PCRS recognised as a valued and influential contributor to the development of respiratory policy. During her time with PCRS, the society has increasingly been seen as a credible and important organisation to have a seat at the table when national respiratory policy is in development. PCRS has been a significant contributor to a very wide range of initiatives – NICE and BTS/SIGN respiratory guidelines, the National Review of Asthma Deaths, National audit programmes for asthma and COPD, respiratory QOF, UK inhaler group, accreditation for spirometry, and many others. Anne saw the value of developing the skills of clinicians to operate at this level and input an important primary care perspective to national policy. She also championed the formulation of pragmatic guidance for primary care clinicians – so that the key points from large policy documents were presented in a relevant and concise format with generalist clinicians in mind.

The way that PCRS communicates with its members has

changed enormously over Anne's years as CE, and is under continual review. The Primary Care Respiratory Journal was the GPIAG's peer-reviewed academic journal at the time Anne joined the organisation, and was available only in hard copy. Highly respected, and with a Medline listing and an improved impact factor, it was a key plank in securing the reputation of GPIAG as a credible and high quality primary care organisation. Now the



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journal has evolved into the npj Primary Care Respiratory Journal, managed by the Nature publishing group and is exclusively online. Alongside the journal, PCRS has developed the Primary Care Respiratory Update magazine – available online and as hard copy. This helps members keep in touch with the society's activities, updates them on topical respiratory issues – both clinical and policy related. A fortnightly newsletter, In Touch, arrives in members' email inboxes to provide a vehicle to market the society's activities and present the latest news to respiratory-interested generalists. And most recently, PCRS has become active in using social media as a major means of communication with members. Anne has led this evolution in communication, always challenging the status quo, and wanting to ensure that members get the best information in a timely and appropriate medium.

Anne's CE years in numbers

- Number of Executive chairs – 6
- Number of Chairs of board of trustees – 5
- Secretaries of State for health – 7
- Number of iterations of BTS/SIGN asthma guidelines – 9
- Number of tweets sent in 2019 – 385
- Current number of Twitter followers – 5341
- Years of healthy reserves – 16!

I am sure once you step aside and view PCRS from afar you will finally see what an incredibly amazing and superhuman influence you had and I hope continue to bask in that knowledge for some time to come. Thanks for making me look better than I was for the 3 years I held the chair. I learned so much from you, enjoyed our time together and I believe I am better as a result. Enjoy the next step :) x. Noel Baxter

Dear Anne
Wishing you a very happy new chapter of different adventures and quality time in the garden.
Thank you for your support and guidance over the past few years.
Best Wishes
Clare Cook

Dear Anne
I hope you enjoy this new phase in your life.
Trust that you have lots of exciting things planned.
Kindest regards
Heather Matthews

Anne, there are no words to describe the contribution you have made, not only to the society, but also to its members. We would undoubtedly have disappeared without you. You are and have been a rock upon which we have been rooted. Not only that, you have, oh so many times, been my own personal rock, you know when, I don't need to write them down. If you are looking for something to do, we could use you right now! stay healthy, stay safe, much love, all Smalls.

Anne - you have been a superb and inspirational Chief Executive for PCRS and we are incredibly lucky to have had you working with us. Your dedication, patience and thorough attention to detail have been enormous assets for the society. You have played a central role in growing the reach and scope of our work, and in helping us prepare for the challenges ahead. It has been a great pleasure to work with you. All good wishes for the next things you do.
Duncan Keeley

Anne, I wish you all the very best for the next chapter in your life. I know that whether it involves work or retirement, you will give it the same dedication, hard work and tenacity you showed at PCRS. I've known you as chief exec since my early involvement a long time ago. Without you the various roles within committees, culminating in my time as chair, would have been so different, and so much harder. I loved working with you as chair, although we are very different characters with different styles, we both care deeply about PCRS and achieved some important and exciting changes in our organisation. PCRS will miss you, and I will too. Love, Stephen Gaduzo x

Hi Anne, it has been such a pleasure to work with you on the PCRS Trustee Board particularly. We went through challenging and exciting times. Hard to imagine the PCRS without you, and I suspect it will be difficult for you to imagine your life without it except that it will be less stressful. Hope the next stage is as interesting and fulfilling as it has seemed to me this one was. With best wishes and good luck
Patrick White

Dear Anne
It has been such a pleasure to work with you and I have really appreciated all the support you have given me over the years. PCRS will not be the same without you and we will all really miss you. Good luck in everything you do and enjoy the time you will have away from the commitments you have had.
Much love Vikki Knowles xxx

Anne, Enjoy the time going forward. I will miss your drive, passion and enthusiasm, and our weekly calls. Thank you for your belief in my ability and for pushing me into uncharted territory. You have left very big shoes to fill! If you're in Stroud visiting let me know, we can catch up for coffee!
With love, Carol Stonham

Your drive and commitment to detail is both exhausting (Lo!) and inspirational I've no idea how you do it! It has been an education, honour and privilege working with you. I do hope our paths continue to cross. Have a very well earned long and happy retirement.
Much love Oonagh Potts x

So what are the qualities that have characterised Anne's leadership of PCRS over the years?

- **Seeing things from a range of perspectives**

As a non-clinician in a clinician-led organisation, Anne has had to do a lot of listening to understand the perspective of generalist clinicians. Her skill lies in bringing other perspectives to debate and decisions. Having held senior roles in the pharmaceutical industry and Asthma UK (then known as the National Asthma Campaign), Anne has been able to turn ideas and concepts into initiatives that can engage corporate supporters – while still ensuring that the society's activities will ultimately benefit patients, and the society's independence is retained. In coming to decisions about the PCRS position on a topic, she has sometimes had to juggle input from a variety of professional perspectives, with the patient perspective. Anne is fundamentally committed to equity for all patients – be it access to services, quality of care, or opportunity to live well with good disease control. Setting up the patient reference group has demonstrated her commitment to ensuring that the society remained focused on what would ultimately benefit patients. A further example of how PCRS has benefited from Anne's ability to see the wider picture was the creation of IMPRESS. At a time when clinicians were encouraged to become more involved in designing pathways of care in the NHS and shaping the way that services were delivered, PCRS collaborated with the British Thoracic Society to develop an initiative whose mission was providing the clinical leadership required to drive improvements in care across the traditional boundaries of primary care and secondary care. IMPRESS was important in bringing together the two organisations to work on common issues and ultimately to provide seamless care for patients. Anne's ability to consider all these varied angles has been a real asset to PCRS over 16 years.

- **A focus on process and detail**

There is a lot that goes on behind the scenes in a CE role which is very unglamorous: dealing with charity finance and process, compliance and GDPR, preparing budgets and forecasts and tracking expenditure, monitoring the turnover of committee members. Anne's focus on process and attention to detail is enormous, and the society owes her a huge debt for all the behind-the-scenes work that many of us know little about. Aply – and indispensably – supported by Red Hot Irons (who are equally strong on process and detail) Anne has kept the ship afloat, in an environment which is increasingly tough financially. Organising the annual conference is a process that takes most of the year, and Anne has developed a process led by the conference organising committee which delivers a high quality conference each year – often described by attendees as the best and most friendly conference in the respiratory calendar.

- **Strong personal relationships**

Many of those who have worked closely with Anne will testify to the loyalty, sensitivity and empathy that she brings to working with individuals. While always keeping an eye on what is best for PCRS, she still finds time and space to support colleagues with health issues, family challenges, and the problems that life throws up from time to time. Without sentimentality, but always with respect for confidentiality, she listens and offers support in a way that many have remarked upon. She has nurtured and maintained some longstanding relationships with representatives from the corporate supporters, and they have appreciated the knowledge she has of their organisations and flexibility in addressing the varied needs and processes of their companies.

- **Commitment and energy**

Anne does not understand the concept of doing any less than a 120% job – her commitment to deliver high value is unparalleled, and PCRS has gained immeasurably from the energy and sheer hard slog that Anne has put into her role as CE. Many of her colleagues have tales of how she has gone above and beyond what could be expected – and how she has sought creative solutions to tricky issues with integrity and wisdom on many occasions. She has forged close working relationships with a succession of Executive chairs, and Chairs of the board of Trustees, often fitting her working hours around their availability. There is no doubt that the role has cost her sleepless nights and stress at times, as well as rewards, and occasionally we have had glimpses of the way that her family has adapted to, supported and contributed to her working life. PCRS is deeply in their debt too.

- **Turning ideas into action**

As one former chair commented – a ten minute conversation with Anne can lead to a 20 page document in no time at all! Anne listens, digests and analyses, and can turn a concept into something actionable with visible outputs – a skill that leaves many in awe. At committee meetings, she is often the one taking comprehensive minutes, so will regularly be heard asking – 'So what is the action? Who is going to do it? What is the output going to be? When will this be done by?' She will chase and follow through so that ideas are turned into action, and decisions follow discussion. Woe betide anyone who lets an action slip! And Anne always has an eye on 'How can I sell this idea to the corporate supporters, in order that they see the benefit and value it will bring?'

- **Fearless in challenging**

Anne has never been afraid of challenging the thinking or actions of others. While this can be disconcerting when one is at the receiving end of such challenge, her motivation is always to seek to understand better and to test an idea or concept for the good of the society. Ultimately, once Anne is

Hi Anne,
Thank you for all your hard work with the PCRS, you will leave big shoes to fill! All the best for the future.
Nicola Wood

Dear Anne, it's been a real pleasure working with you and sad to see you're leaving us at PCRS. You've been really supportive to me since I've joined the organisation and you've seen the potential pharmacists play in supporting patients with respiratory conditions. I hope to see you in the future (possibly at the conference) and wish all the best in your future endeavours.
Darush Attar-Zadeh

Good luck Anne, I haven't known you for long but you are inspirational in your knowledge and commitment. All the very best.
Joanne King

Anne, it has been a real pleasure working with you and learning from you over the past 7 years. You have been such a dedicated and supremely well organised person keeping us all on track, it is hard to imagine PCRS without your guiding hand. I wish you so much luck and success with whatever you do next!
Anne Rodman

Thank you Anne for everything. Best wishes for a happy, healthy and enjoyable future...
Mukesh Singh

Dear Anne,
As per my e-mail in December, I'm so sorry you're leaving us, but fully understand your reasons why. Of course, you leave enormous shoes for the next CEO to fill!... Your fantastic hard work and talent, your organisational skills, your influence and cajoling (when it was needed!), your document writing ability, your attention to detail, and your championing of the organisation, have quite simply been outstanding. You've guided PCRS through many changes and challenges over the years, and I firmly believe that PCRS would not have evolved into the fantastically successful multidisciplinary specialist primary care organisation that it is now, without your guidance, hard work, and skills. You should be extremely proud!
It's been an absolute privilege to work with you over the years, Anne – on the Executive, on the Conference Organising Committee, and of course on the journal. Heartfelt thanks for your support over the years, and in particular Petra and I will always remember the kindness you showed us when I was in hospital back in 2010 and when I was recuperating. Thank you so much! Petra and I send our very best wishes for the future. And remember: don't hesitate to get in touch if you're ever in Cornwall – we'd love to see you!
All best wishes, Paul Stephenson

Anne,
You have brought the PCRS so far during your time as CEO. The influence that PCRS has in the policy world, the heightened focus on respiratory conditions and the mention of respiratory in the NHS Long Term Plan are all major achievements for a small Society, not to mention a prestigious conference, training and education programmes and the Journal.
Your attention to detail, challenge and ability to work with both health care professionals and the pharmaceutical industry are great strengths and have helped you drive the successes. As ever this is a team effort and you have always provided strategic and tactical input at the right level to enable us Trustees to do our job.
Personally, it has been great working with you again. I have enjoyed our exchanges and our complementary skills when we have worked together, particularly on the strategic reviews. I hope you can now find the better balance in life which you seek and I wish you contentment and fulfilment in the next phase of your life.
With my very best wishes.
Alison Clough

Dear Anne
I have learnt so much from you about running an organisation and being a Chief Executive. I know I'll never be in the same boat myself but at least I have seen a really good example and hope some ideas and best practice will rub off! I will miss you, but you are a young thing so the next career starts here!
Much love, Steph Taylor

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inside, she is the best advocate and supporter you can have. She is determined and will see things through to a conclusion. She has also been fearless in leading strategic reviews for PCRS – and in confronting questions about the future direction of the society.

So Anne – as you look back on your time as CE, we trust that you feel it is a role you have fulfilled beyond what anyone could possibly have expected. Thanks to the qualities you have brought to your role as PCRS Chief Executive – we are now able to punch well above our weight as a society. We at PCRS are in no doubt of how we have gained from your commitment to making a difference, the volume of work you manage to do in the time available, the enormity of the changes you have overseen, your

dedication to developing the society for its members, your skill in ensuring the financial stability of the organisation, your support for colleagues regardless of their status, and your focus on ensuring that everything the society does will ultimately benefit the lives of respiratory patients.

We wish you well in your retirement and have no doubt that whatever you turn your hand to in future, others will benefit from the same energy, commitment and drive that PCRS knows so well.

Bronwen Thompson



Having kind of alerted you to the vacancy of CEO for GPIAG – as it was then - i can only say that I take a particular satisfaction in seeing how PCRS has grown and developed in capacity and reach since you have been leading it. You have set the most amazing example of how remote working can work, what commitment to the cause looks like, and how to put challenge into the system – but also to provide support to individuals. You have provided the most amazing support to me in my policy role for so many years – and stepped in on the regular occasions when the %&*\$ hit the fan on several occasions when I took holiday! I am sure that PCRS will go from strength to strength under new leadership, but I am in no doubt about the contribution you have made to get it to be the organisation it is today – thank you! Bronwen Thompson

Dear Anne
I wish you every happiness (and peace!) in your retirement from PCRS. You have been an enormous help in my role as SDC Chair and I am so grateful for your support – and patience.
Daryl Freeman

Dear Anne
It has been such a pleasure working with you on the Executive during the past years, you have been a strong and influential role model for me. I will miss you and wish you all the very best.
Val Gerrard x

Dear Anne,
wishing you many best wishes on your retirement, I hope you are able to relax and enjoy :-)
Jane Watson xx

Dear Anne
Wanted to wish you all the very best of luck for the future.
Kind Regards
Prad Savania xxx

Thank you for all you have done for PCRS and patient inclusion in particular.
Amanda Roberts

I'd like to thank you personally Anne, and on behalf of the rest of the PRG, for all your support. We are only too aware of the complexities of your job and how hard you have worked. Our varied needs must have been an additional burden but you worked well with us to sort them out and, in general, to keep us informed. Thank you so much for your dedication to PCRS and congratulations on your many achievements. I wish you a very happy retirement.
Barbara Preston