

**25<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

Dear Members

**President's update 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

These are very difficult times and all colleagues are working under huge pressures to look after all vascular patients. Our patient demographics make them amongst the most vulnerable to COVID-19 (CV-19). Some of our workforce are already ill, but hopefully on the mend.

With the magnitude of the problems being faced, we felt it appropriate to call an extraordinary virtual meeting of the Executive VS Council. This took place on Monday evening. The technology seemed to work pretty well and wide ranging aspects of COVID were discussed. The agenda had only two items: COVID and the NICE AAA guidelines. We only spoke about the later for a few minutes.

The COVID discussions included:

- VS COVID guidelines (these can be found elsewhere on the VS website)
- NHSEng COVID guidelines (to be published shortly)
- Adequacy and access to PPE and ongoing discussions with the FSSA
- Stress and coping with the additional challenge of COVID
- Information flow and cascading of knowledge and experience
- Unit updates on COVID and experiences to date
- COVID research: COVER Study- this is a VERN / VS led COVID based study looking at how vascular surgery and care for our patients is being impacted. After discussion a decision to support the study was agreed.

We agreed that we would hold these meetings on a weekly basis for the foreseeable future. We are keen to discuss pertinent problems facing our colleagues and patients and please feel contact Sophie Renton ([secretary@vascularsociety.org.uk](mailto:secretary@vascularsociety.org.uk)) if you feel there are issues that we should discuss.

*On a personal note this has been a difficult year so far. One of the great challenges I find in vascular surgery is trying to balance the complex open or endovascular treatment options for a patient with the individual's fitness or life expectancy. The COVID19 experience has added an enormous level of additional complexity. There are severe clinical resource limitations, meaning I am now making decisions I have never had to make before. Open, honest and supportive discussions with colleagues of all specialities is so important. A flexible, pragmatic approach and where possible a positive outlook have so far helped me.*

*These are defining times and I am sure all of you will do your utmost to rise to the occasion.*

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Imray', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Professor Chris Imray, President of the Vascular Society of Great Britain and Ireland