

An update on The Spine

Where are we now?

While COVID-19 has significantly affected the RCP's work and workplaces, our new home at The Spine in Liverpool is now nearing completion.

Our focus is now on ensuring the RCP makes the transition smoothly and can harness the new opportunities we will have in the region – for supporting fellows and members; to support staff through the transition; to capitalise on business development opportunities; to use the move as a way to embed a culture of working differently; and to expand and strengthen work on our policy priorities – particularly our ambition to reduce health inequalities.

We have established the RCP at The Spine Programme – led by RCP CEO Dr Ian Bullock and reporting to a review board chaired by RCP president Professor Andrew Goddard – with five specific workstreams: membership engagement, building, business development, role transition and cultural transition.

Membership engagement

Opening The Spine as our northern home offers major opportunities to improve engagement with, and services for, existing and potential members and fellows across the north. This project will focus on joining up existing workstreams in the RCP regions to find out how our membership can make best use of The Spine while also continuing to engage with their local region. In the post-COVID-19 landscape, we will be investigating how to provide more virtual events and assessing the appetite for virtual replacements for previous educational and networking opportunities, such as regional updates.

Building

Despite COVID-19, there has only been a small delay in the building programme. The Spine is nearing completion and

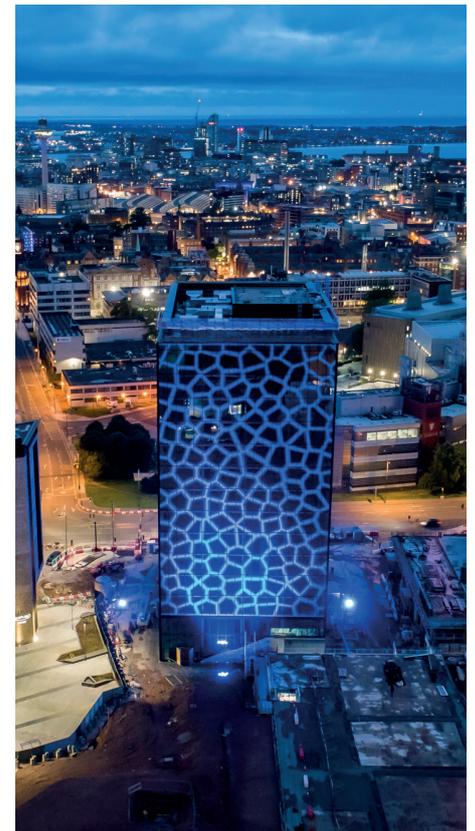
is currently being fitted with electrics, lighting, heating and ventilation systems that will enable the building to meet exacting international standards on wellbeing and sustainability. We expect that RCP staff based nearby in the William Harvey Duncan building will be able to move in by April 2021. In keeping with the post-COVID-19 landscape, we are developing plans for safe working conditions and social distancing in our office and meeting spaces.

Business development

The Spine is a significant investment for the RCP. In addition to being our northern home, this workstream will focus on how The Spine can attract investment and income for the RCP. As part of this, we will be offering office space to related organisations and companies who would like to be part of the local scientific and medical hub. While COVID-19 may see organisations seeking less office space, The Spine has several major advantages compared with some of the office accommodation currently available in Liverpool, including future extensive car parking availability, state-of-the-art facilities, and offices built to the highest standards of wellbeing. As we do in London, our award-winning meetings and events team will also be promoting RCP as The Spine as a major venue for meetings, events and social gatherings.

Role and cultural transition

These workstreams focus on the strategic planning and operational delivery of the move to Liverpool, and developing RCP staff wherever they are – in London, Liverpool, regional offices and increasingly at home. Our continued move away from London-centric working is dependent on



The Spine in July, illuminated as part of the #LightItBlue campaign, celebrating the NHS.

modern communications, flexible working, and a solution-focused staff culture. This shift also incorporates the ongoing modernisation of the RCP as an equal, diverse and inclusive organisation. The priorities for the cultural transition group over the next few months are to support and develop leadership skills, increase awareness of and support for mental health at work, and embed cultural change.

Moving forward

As we near completion of the building, we will be stepping up our communication activities and building on the valuable stakeholder relationships we have made to ensure a strong profile for RCP at The Spine at the heart of the northern medical and scientific community. ■