Starter for ten

We put 10 questions to President Steve Turner and RCPCH &Us volunteer Demi

Professor Steve Turner

RCPCH President

1. What inspired you to pursue a career in paediatrics? Training to be a doctor, I enjoyed adult and paediatric medicine and, as a final year medical student, I was asked to accompany a child by helicopter for a liver transplant. Afterwards, I thought – paediatrics it is!

2. What is most rewarding about serving as President? Working with fab people and hoping to make an impact on members and patients.

3. Who has been your biggest influence, professionally or personally? Having two parents in the NHS is a personal influence, but I also worked with a couple of inspiring paediatricians who taught me to always have a plan!

4. What's the biggest challenge facing paediatricians today? I think there are two: getting the work-life balance right, and delivering world-class care for our patients.

5. What advice would you give young doctors considering paediatrics as a specialty? Go for it! Whatever career you ultimately choose, you are likely to need experience of paediatrics, so at least get a flavour of paediatrics for your own personal career, and you might well use it later on.

6. What's a fun fact about you that most people don't know? I inherit my phones from my children. One had a game called Crossy Road on it. I have to play every day to make sure I'm still in the top 10!

7. Who would you invite to your dream dinner party? My wife! But also the World Cup-winning England rugby team from 2003. Hearing their stories about it would be fantastic!

8. What activities do you enjoy? I like watching sport – rugby, football, swimming, athletics, cricket and golf. Also doing crosswords, and I'm a closet stamp collector.

9. If you could give one piece of advice to your younger self, what would it be? Back yourself – it might not go to plan, but go for it!

10. What's your wish for child health in the next 10 years? That local and national governments automatically think 'child' when making decisions.

Demi

Long-standing RCPCH &Us volunteer

1. What inspired you to become an RCPCH &Us volunteer? I was at the GOSH youth group and we came to RCPCH for a meeting and thought 'oh this is cool!' Soon I was in parliament giving a speech on mental health!

2. What do you enjoy most about volunteering with RCPCH &Us? I've been volunteering for almost nine years, and it's a safe space for everyone to express their views; no one is negative about other people's opinions, and all the information is used more than once rather than forgotten.

3. Who or what is your biggest source of motivation? Me, because my confidence has grown, but also the people around me. I've learnt a lot from Emma Sparrow, Head of Children, Young People & Engagement – but also all the people I've met along the way.

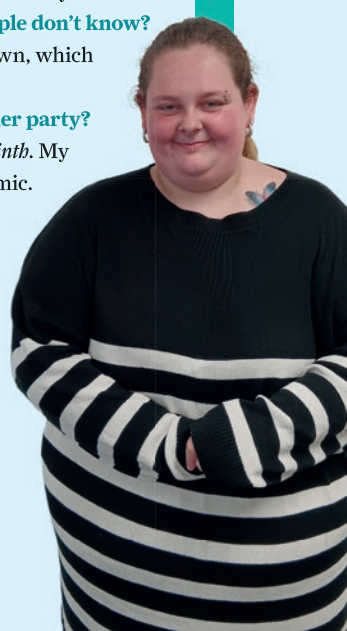
4. What's the biggest challenge facing children and young people today? Age bracket-related moves in healthcare services – there are so many gaps when, for example, moving into adolescent or adult services, or waiting to get referred into adult services because you're almost 16 when you get a new diagnosis. You can be left in no man's land waiting.

5. What's one thing paediatricians can do to better engage with young people? Personalise care in a way that breaks the ice. Start on the same page – for example, if they like *The Simpsons*, talk about it. Don't just go straight to the medical because you'll lose a lot of young people straight away.

6. What's a fun fact about you that most people don't know? I have my Level 2 in sailing! I can sail on my own, which I am very happy about.

7. Who would you invite to your dream dinner party? My nan... and David Bowie! I really like *Labyrinth*. My nan likes him, too, so it would be a good dynamic.

8. What activities do you enjoy? Poetry and writing. I can draw, but not too well!

9. If you could give one piece of advice to your younger self, what would it be? Keep using your voice because one day people will hear it.

10. What's your wish for child health in the next 10 years? I wish for equality – to eradicate the postcode lottery and age gaps.