Welcome from SSASC

Thanks for reading our newsletter, which provides you with an update on the work of SSASC (Scottish staff, associate specialist and specialty doctors committee) to improve the working lives of SAS doctors in Scotland.

We’d like to hear the views of as many of our SAS members as possible so please get involved with your LNC (local negotiating committee), who hold regular meetings in your area and feed into the work of SSASC. A list of your local SAS representatives can be found here.

Please share this newsletter with your colleagues and stay in touch with us via Twitter, Facebook, the BMA website or by email to Chair-SSASC@bma.org.uk.

Best wishes,
Beth Threlfall, SSASC chair

Training and development

Hundreds of SAS doctors and dentists in Scotland have benefitted from development and education opportunities under the dedicated SAS professional development fund. The fund was established in 2011 and, since then, almost 10% of Scotland’s 1,300 SAS doctors have made successful bids for funding. Funding is provided for a variety of education and training opportunities, such as courses to improve services, postgraduate qualifications or experiential learning for CESR (certificate of eligibility for specialist registration). £500,000 is in place until March 2017, with a view to extending the fund further.

Find out more information and how to apply for funding on the NES (NHS education for Scotland) website

Read more about the fund from Scotland Deanery SAS project joint lead, Sue Robertson.
Shape of training
Shape of training is a UK-wide independent review into whether changes in postgraduate medical training are required to ensure it continues to meet the needs of patients and health services in future. As part of this review, the Scottish Government has agreed to work jointly with NHS Wales to look at how best to further develop the careers of SAS doctors. In February 2016, the Scottish Government commissioned NES to survey all SAS doctors in Scotland to seek their views on career development and autonomous working. We at SSASC expressed some reservations that the survey questions lacked the context needed for respondents to provide informed answers. We also wrote to the co-chair of the Scottish shape of training implementation group, Ian Finlay, to raise concerns about the lack of input sought from SAS doctors in Scotland. Ian Finlay attended the last meeting of the SAS project board alongside the SSASC chair, Beth Threlfall, where it was agreed that SSASC would be granted a voice on the Scottish shape of training implementation group in order to have direct input into the SAS development pilot in Scotland.

Find out more about the shape of training review

Credentialing
The GMC are considering a new process called credentialing to recognise doctors’ capabilities in particular areas of practice, with the focus on areas that aren’t currently covered by the CCT. The GMC carried out a consultation in 2015, to which the BMA contributed. The GMC council met to discuss the results of the consultation in April 2016 and the GMC’s decision on how to proceed is expected soon.

Find out more about the GMC credentialing consultation

Re-opening the associate specialist grade
SSASC have been working on a proposal to reopen the associate specialist grade in Scotland, as a way to improve career opportunities, recognise the expertise of senior SAS doctors and ease recruitment and retention issues in NHS Scotland. SSASC reps have been promoting the potential benefits both on a local level with employers and on a national level with the Scottish Government.
SAS charter
We at SSASC worked together with the Scottish Government and NHS Scotland employers to publish a charter for SAS doctors in Scotland called “Recognition, Support and Development – A Charter for SAS Doctors in Scotland”. All NHS boards across Scotland should have signed up to this charter, which demonstrates a commitment to supporting SAS doctors and recognising their vital role as part of the medical workforce in Scotland. Read the SAS charter for Scotland

Patient coding
The SAS charter for Scotland acknowledged the importance of accurate and transparent patient coding, to ensure that senior SAS doctors are recognised when taking responsibility for a patient’s care. NHS Scotland employers have given assurances that patients can be recorded against SAS doctors when they take full responsibility for the patient’s care. If you find that patient coding is inaccurate within your health board, please get in touch with your local SSASC representative.

Appraisal and revalidation
We at SSASC have been working to ensure that SAS doctors are provided with the sufficient time in their job plan to train for, prepare and carry out their appraisal duties. This is clearly outlined in the SAS charter for Scotland, agreed by BMA Scotland and MSG (management steering group), a group which comprises of representatives from the Scottish Government and NHS Scotland employers. A joint statement was also agreed with BMA Scotland and MSG, which confirms that appraisers should receive sufficient time to carry out their duties. Read the statement below.

“BMA Scotland and MSG recognise that career grade doctors working for NHS Scotland are required to have an annual appraisal. Therefore, it is important that consultants and SAS doctors who have undergone appraiser training have sufficient time in their job plans to fulfil their appraiser role effectively. When a consultant or a SAS doctor becomes a trained appraiser, a job plan review will normally be appropriate, to ensure that the role is planned into their agreed work schedule.”

Read BMA guidance on appraisals
Read BMA guidance on revalidation
Read BMA guidance on SAS job planning
Recognition of trainers

The GMC has established a phased process for implementing new regulatory arrangements for recognising trainers. Under these new arrangements, all trainers in four specific roles will be fully recognised by 31 July 2016 – these roles are named educational supervisor, named clinical supervisor, lead coordinators of undergraduate training and doctors responsible for overseeing students’ education progress. All teachers and trainers who fall within the definitions described will, in future, be required to be recognised through a formal process and against published standards.

A Scottish trainer framework has been created to support all medical teachers and trainers working in Scotland. This online resource is aimed to help teachers and trainers plan their personal and professional development as educators and provides specific guidance for those requiring formal GMC recognition as a trainer.

Find more information on the GMC website

West of Scotland engagement pilot

Doctors and medical students in two UK regions are taking part in trials to boost help for members at a local level. The trials, which are taking place in West of Scotland and South-East England, mean doctors and students benefit from more activities hosted and run by the BMA, including seminars, debates, CPD, webinars and advice surgeries. The one year trial will be evaluated at the end with a view to making the scheme UK-wide.

Find out more about the West of Scotland activities

SAS conference 2016

The BMA SAS conference took place on Tuesday 24 May 2016 in BMA House, London - this year’s theme was leadership and autonomy. The conference is the main SAS policy setting event for the year and helps determine SAS committee work for the year ahead. It’s also an opportunity for nominated SAS reps to debate key issues, listen to expert speakers and network with colleagues.

Find out more about the 2016 SAS conference
ARM 2016
The BMA ARM (Annual Representative Meeting) will take place from Sunday 19 to Thursday 23 June 2016 in the Belfast Waterfront Hall. The ARM is your opportunity to discuss important issues affecting doctors of all grades and help influence future BMA policy. Find out more information

All members who attend the ARM from Scotland are invited to a Scottish representative's breakfast meeting on the Monday morning of the ARM. Here, you’ll be able to catch up with your colleagues from Scotland and grab a bacon roll (or veggie alternative) before the day’s events begin. If you would like to attend the breakfast meeting, please email kharper@bma.org.uk

Your well-being
Problems and issues at work can take hold of at any time, and can often feel difficult to manage on your own. The BMA provides free services through BMA counselling and the Doctor Advisor Service, providing on-going support and advice to help you through difficult times. You can talk through any issue which may be worrying you in total privacy. Find out more about the support on offer

Your queries answered
If you’re a BMA member with an employment query, please contact one of our employment advisers who are here to help you. You can:

Call 0300 123 1233
Email support@bma.org.uk
Webchat

If you’re not a BMA member, you can join today! Individual advice about your particular circumstances can only be offered if you are a BMA member.