

SAS Committee: report to ARM 2022 audio transcript

Dear Colleagues,

It gives me great pleasure to speak at this ARM in Brighton on behalf of the SAS committee. Covid-19 has dominated virtually every aspect of our professional and personal lives for more than two years.

Having answered the Government's call to step-up and help staff the health service frontlines during the acute phase of the pandemic, SAS doctors across the UK should be proud of the service we rendered.

It is also crucial however that, as ministers begin plans to tackle the vast elective care backlog, we do not allow financial constraints to once more relegate us as a branch of practice from the frontlines to the side lines.

SASC will continue to fight to ensure that SAS doctors remain at the forefront of NHS planning.

It is worth focusing on some of the successes we have already secured in recent times. Chief among these was the implementation last year of an improved specialty doctor contract and a new specialist grade contract.

A year on from the introduction of these new contracts has seen many doctors across England, Wales and Northern Ireland moving to these new and long fought for terms.

We are conscious however that due to the ongoing pressures of the pandemic we cannot take these contractual success stories for granted and some employers have not been as flexible as others in implementing it.

We continued to lobby the Government to let doctors move flexibly to the new contract outside the 30th September 2021 deadline and they have now agreed to let Specialty doctors move when they think it is beneficial for them to do so.

We now know that almost two and a half thousand Specialty doctors are on the new contract and almost 280 new Specialist posts have been appointed. This is good news for SAS doctors, for the NHS, and for patients.

Coming under the same umbrella as the new contracts, the development and introduction of the SAS advocate role is also an important and growing success for our branch of practice.

The first ever position of its kind, there are now at least a dozen SAS advocates working in England, while every health board in Wales now has an advocate appointed.

In highlighting this success, I would also like to commend the efforts of all the BMA's Industrial Relations Officers and the terms and conditions of service team who have worked dedicatedly for months to help bring about these posts.

Conference, while it is important to celebrate positive outcomes and achievements, it is also vital that we acknowledge and examine the challenges we face as a committee.

The issue of workplace bullying is one that too many of us are sadly familiar with.

Results from our recent SAS national survey found that asked whether in the past year they had been subject to bullying, harassment or victimisation in their place of work, 30 per cent of respondents said they had on more than one occasion and a further 13% said it was on one occasion

Three quarters of those said that they believed they had been victimised because of their grade, with the most common experience cited as being ignored or dismissed for being a SAS doctor.

Like sexism and racism, we will fight for the phenomenon of Gradism to be abolished too!!!

We are also working to ensure that SAS charters are reviewed and updated to ensure they remain relevant to the demands and challenges of the modern workplace.

Another aspect of career development that is long overdue for review is the Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration and we are working with the GMC to look at what can be done to improve the process.

I have always been proud of the fact that, as a branch of practice, SAS doctors are a close-knit and supportive group and we will continue to stand up for our local employed doctor colleagues so that they feel valued and can continue to contribute to our health service.

I would like to thank all my colleagues on SASC and in committee services especially Hope, Jodie and Caroline for all their dedication and for the efforts they have collectively made towards supporting SAS doctors over the past 12 months.

Looking towards the future is not always easy.

What is important to remember however is that, if we remain united and resolved, each of us has the ability contribute and effect change and help to shape and build the kind of future we want to see.

Together we can make a difference. The future will be a better tomorrow.

Thank you for taking the trouble to listen to this recording or read the text.

Dr Ujjwala Mohite

Deputy committee chair