

# SAS Pay Campaign

'Fairly paid and Fully valued'

An activist's guide for success

**#FairPayFullyValued**





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## Introduction

You're reading this guide because you are a SAS doctor or ally who wants to help us to win our pay campaign in England. Welcome to our new BMA activist community. We need people like you, and we hope this guide will empower you to contribute to this hugely significant campaign.

We also hope the things you will learn from this guide and from the campaign will help you in other ways in the future. We want to use this campaign as a foundation on which to build effective workplace representation for doctors, wherever they work.

While the BMA is leading this campaign, we recognise that our power comes from doctors themselves – from you – organising together with the support of our brilliant staff to get a better deal.

Our aim is to help you do this as effectively as we can, so get in touch if there is something you need.

For those in a rush we have summarised the key actions for you to take now and in November if a ballot opens on **page 5**.

Please do also help us to recruit more pay campaigners.

**Matt Waddup, Director**  
**[doctorspay@bma.org.uk](mailto:doctorspay@bma.org.uk)**

**Share this code to encourage others to sign up as pay activists today.**



## Using this guide

This is an information resource and planning manual for pay campaigners, whatever their level of experience. It contains information in five areas:

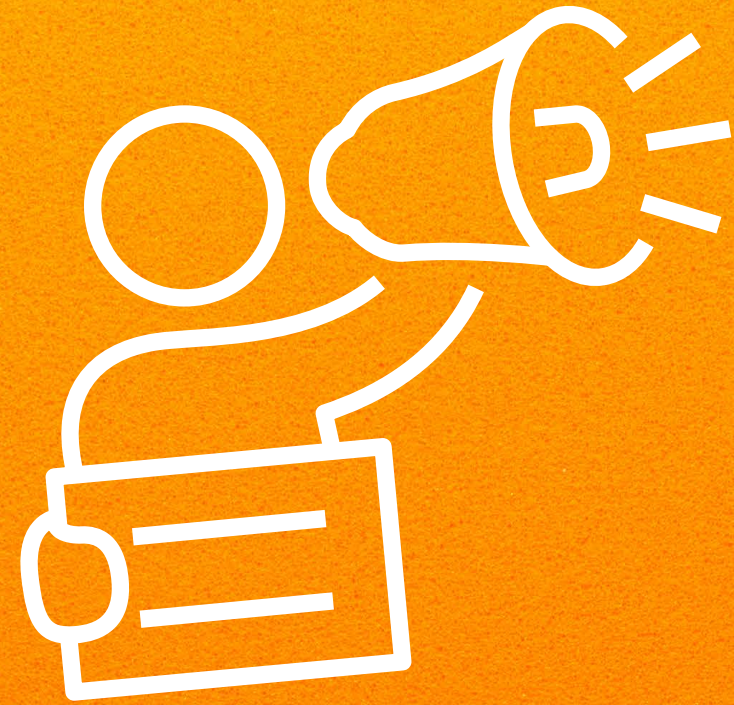
1. **The pay campaigner's role**
2. **What the campaign is about**
3. **How to build your local campaign**
4. **How to influence and recruit**
5. **Campaign resources**

This is a short, and not exhaustive, guide. For the curious, there is a huge amount of information on campaigning and organising online, and if you still can't find the answer to a burning question feel free to email [doctorspay@bma.org.uk](mailto:doctorspay@bma.org.uk)

Where possible this guide is designed as digestible briefings, which can be picked up and used whenever you need to do something. However, if you have time, please try to read through it at least once so you can see how everything fits together. This will remain online rather than in print because we will be adding to it as the campaign moves forward.

To support you, we need to hear from you, so please get in touch with your ideas and suggestions:

[doctorspay@bma.org.uk](mailto:doctorspay@bma.org.uk)



## The pay campaigner's role

On behalf of all SAS doctors and the BMA, thank you for your support and commitment to this campaign.

### What does a SAS pay campaigner do?

- Help build and be part of a team at your workplace that drives our campaign locally; speak directly to colleagues, grow their understanding of the issues, and increase their commitment to the campaign over time so we're ready to ballot and then to take action when the time comes.
- Share your knowledge – feedback your ideas, questions and suggestions to your regional SAS committee and industrial relations officers to help the BMA develop our campaign.
- Recruit new members to the BMA so our voice gets stronger – only BMA members will be able to

- participate in any strike ballot we hold and have a say in when and how we strike, how we campaign, and on any offer made by the Government to settle the dispute. Once they are a member of the BMA, encourage them to join you as a pay campaigner too.
- Organise locally to increase the turnout in our strike ballot and help organise effective action. It's important that if we ballot, we get a high turnout and a clear mandate from SAS doctors to strengthen our negotiating hand and ensure that any action we take makes an impact.
- Amplify campaign messaging and key updates online across social media. The wider our reach publicly, to both doctors and patients, the stronger our message will resonate with people.
- Take part and share in any national

campaigning such as emailing or tweeting MPs, ministers or local representatives.

- Liaise with local BMA LNC representatives and BMA staff to run local events, meetings and activities in support of the campaign.

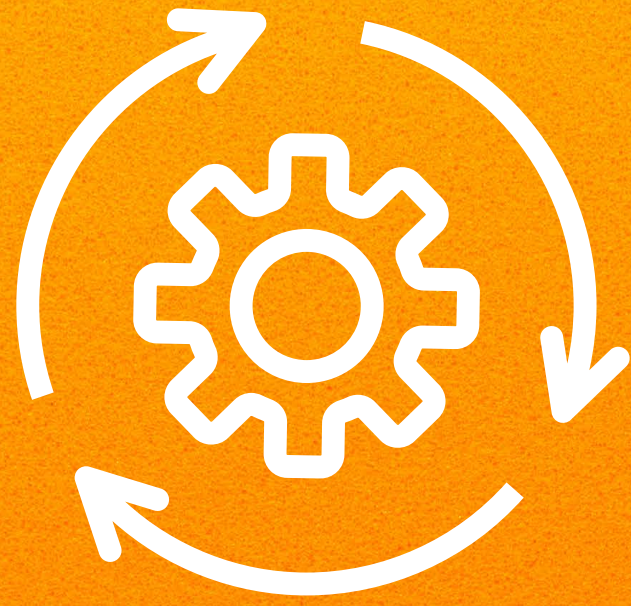
**Our campaign plan is based on a strong partnership between activists and representatives in each workplace and BMA staff, with regional SAS committees overseeing our activity and giving practical advice.**

A plethora of national communications; webinars, emails, SMS and social media, are planned but those should be supported by local communications and work by our SAS representatives and pay campaigners. **You are key to the success of our ballot!**

## Key actions for next stage of the campaign:

1. Encourage colleagues to update their details (particularly their grade and address) to receive a postal ballot
2. Continue to build local networks to improve our communications' reach, reassure colleagues, answer questions and encourage colleagues to vote
3. Recruit new BMA members to further increase our turnout
4. Recruit **new pay campaigners** to help amplify the campaign
5. Identify and approach any local colleagues, groups or networks that could help support the campaign and widen the messaging (e.g. SAS Advocate, Trust Equality and Diversity/BAME network, local BAPIO, BIDA, DAUK reps, BMA Regional FREE etc)
6. Hold regional meetings to help answer questions and tackle concerns. These should complement the national webinars

Everything you need to get started is here, and our campaign support team or local reps will be contacting you regularly to share further ideas, hear updates on how you are getting on in your Trust, give you a helping hand and give us all our best shot at strengthening the BMA as we fight for a better deal for SAS doctors.



## What needs to change

### Pay

SAS doctors have seen their **pay** plummet by up to 31% in real terms over the last 15 years. In addition to this a variety of contracts, some of which have been omitted from recommended DDRB uplifts, mean there is inconsistency in the pay uplifts awarded to SAS doctors doing the same jobs.

### Conditions

SAS doctors face a postcode lottery in their working conditions, with discrepancies in support, policies and diverging offers between trusts. We are seeking ways of securing national investment to improve SAS doctors' working lives.

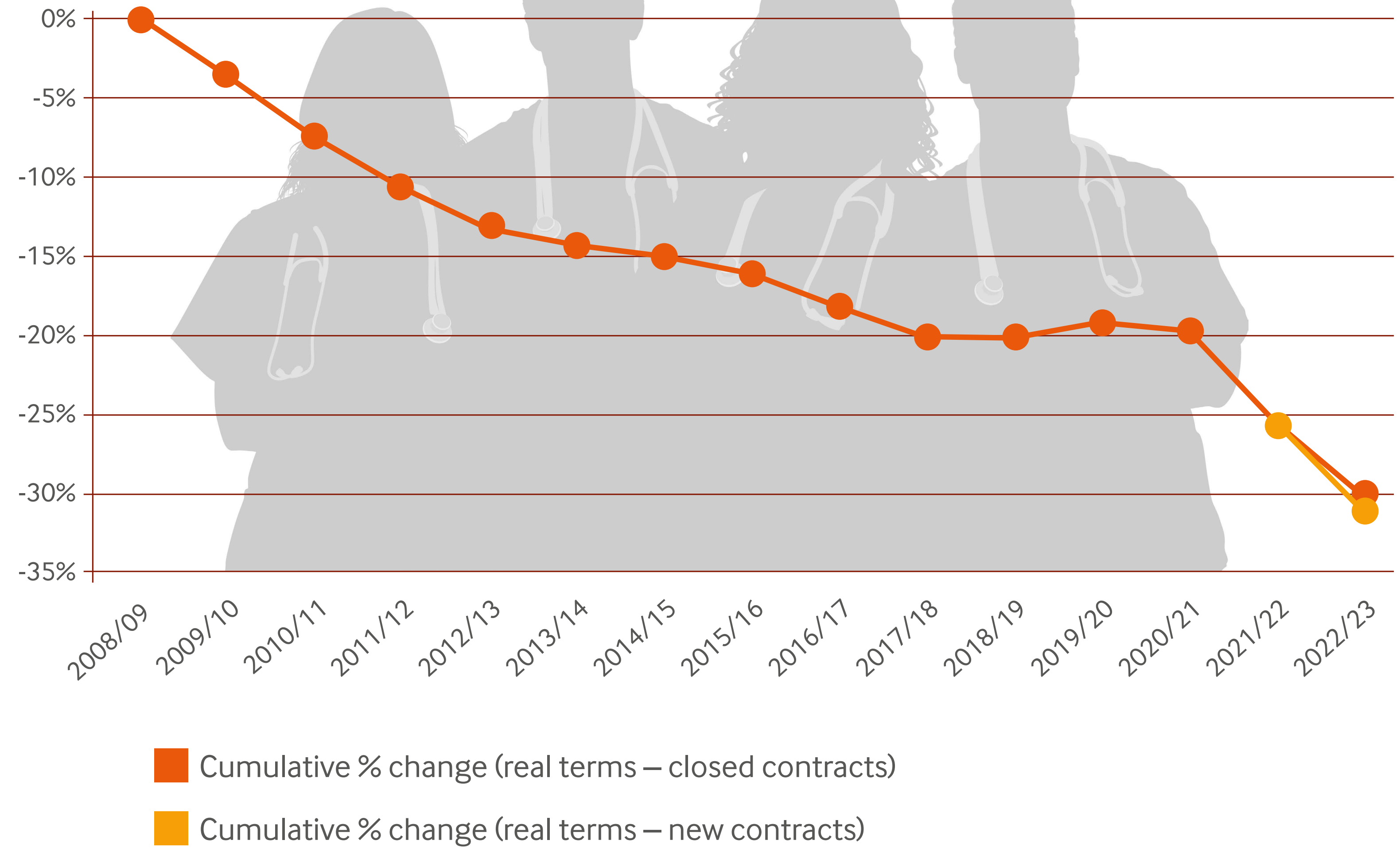
### Progression

Specialty doctors aren't able to become specialists due to a lack of opportunities. There are limited Specialist roles and trusts have failed to adequately promote the new grade. Those that are eligible are rarely provided opportunities or have unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles put in their way. This means many specialty doctors end up caught in a bottleneck, unable to progress in their careers.

31%



## SAS pay has fallen up to 31% in real terms since 2008/09







## The ballot

The BMA's SAS committee held our indicative ballot after months of informal talks with the Government failed to yield a resolution for members. The results, however, have prompted from Government an invitation to enter negotiations, which the BMA hopes will lead to detailed and meaningful progress. SASC UK agreed that progress must be achieved by 6 November, otherwise a formal ballot on industrial action will go ahead.

We have a campaign page that will be regularly updated with answers to questions and information on the campaign. Please make use of this resource – [bma.org.uk/SASpay](https://bma.org.uk/SASpay)

## Key timings

- **6 November** – potential ballot opening date if insufficient progress is made
- **13 November** – Ballots can be resent (on request) to those that haven't received a ballot
- **4 December** – last day for new members to join the BMA in time to receive a ballot and vote
- **11 December** – suggested date to post ballots to guarantee receipt by 18/12
- **(midday) 18 December** – Ballot closes

## Who can vote?

To take part in the statutory ballot, you must be:

- A BMA member
- A SAS doctor holding a contract with an NHS employer, such as:
  - 2021 specialty doctor T&Cs (terms and conditions)
  - 2021 specialist doctor T&Cs
  - 2008 specialty doctor T&Cs
  - 2008 associate specialists T&Cs
  - One of the pre-2008 T&Cs (1996 associate specialist doctors, 1999 staff grade etc)

Note this includes LEDs (locally employed doctors) with contracts that mirror national T&Cs, usually with a pay code starting with 'M'.

- Based in England

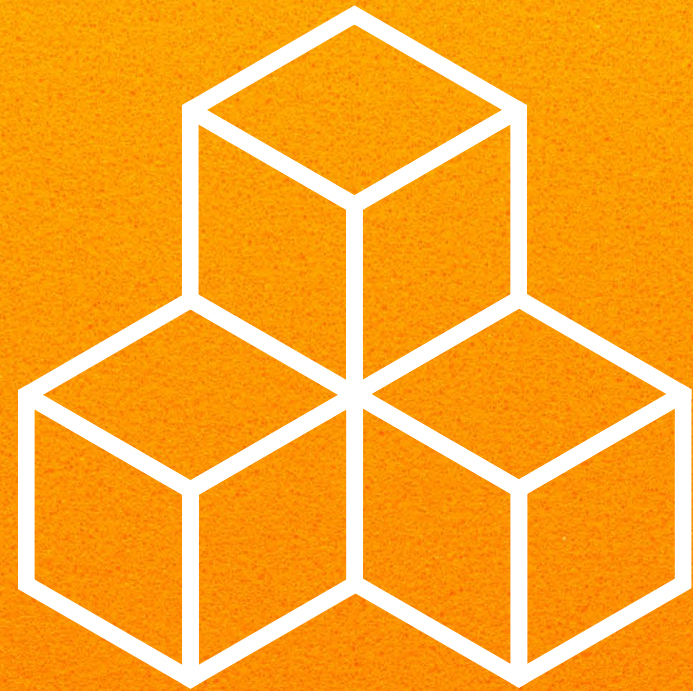
**See our guidance for full details.**  
[bma.org.uk/SASpay](https://bma.org.uk/SASpay)



## Trade unions and the law: five key points

The law on strike action in the UK is the most restrictive in Europe, and when trade unions fall foul of the law, they and their members can face huge penalties. Here's what pay campaigners need to know about the law:

1. Industrial action can take the form of either 'strike action' or 'action short of a strike'. Strike action always represents a breach of contract, i.e. a refusal to work
2. Before they can take industrial action, unions need to hold a ballot of members and achieve a turnout of at least 50% and a majority vote in favour of action (40% of all eligible members (whether they vote or not) to support strike action)
3. This secret ballot must be postal – it cannot be online. This leads to significant expense for the union and can make it harder to achieve turnout
4. Unions have to take practical steps to ensure they are balloting only those who are entitled to vote, and to supply information to employers in aggregate about where the members they have balloted and/or expect to take action work
5. If unions achieve the legal turnout and get a majority, they are subject to a further set of restrictions, including providing notice of 14 days before commencing industrial action and continuing to serve notice for each subsequent bout of discontinuous action.



# Building your local campaign

## Who do we need to influence?

Effective campaigning starts from understanding who is the decision maker. Ultimately, any significant decisions relating to our objectives will be taken by the prime minister and Treasury. Yet local and regional action is hugely important in creating enough pressure on the Government.

Influencing them requires us to gain support from stakeholders including BMA members from all branches of practice, politicians, NHS trusts, patients, local businesses, local and national media, MPs, mayors, councillors, and other trade unions.

Influencing will depend on us being able to bring together a local coalition of the key stakeholders in each NHS trust area, including NHS staff, unions, senior staff, local media, local politicians and NHS governing bodies.

This work will stand us in good stead if we need to take industrial action, but it is not a substitute for building our own strength as union members through workplace campaigning and recruitment. LNCs (local negotiating committees), and regional SAS Committees, with support from BMA staff and working with our new pay campaigners, will be key to this campaign's success and hopefully for future campaigning too.

## Putting together a campaign plan

There are seven steps pay campaigners should take to ensure their local campaign is effective:

1. build a team
  2. define your objective
  3. evaluate the current situation
  4. analyse your local influencers and allies
  5. plan activity and set milestones
  6. agree and tailor messages
  7. regularly review
- Local campaigns work best when they bring together all those interested in fighting for the campaign, in this case making SAS doctors **fairly paid and fully valued**. This can mean local LNC reps, pay campaigners, BMA staff and regional SASC members.



- **LNC reps** are the established BMA representatives in the workplace and have a formal role on the committee that negotiates with Trust management
- **Pay campaigners** are grassroots BMA members who have signed up to support our pay restoration campaign
- **Regional SASC** members are representatives who will have a strategic overview of the campaign in their region and monitor what's happening at each main employer
- **BMA staff** include industrial relations officers who support each trust, coordinators and regional heads who provide a regional focus, and membership development managers who support member recruitment

## Build your campaign team

Campaigning is a team game. Your first step is to find others who are prepared to be active members of a campaign team. Every trust has an IRO (industrial relations officer); yours is there not to do the campaigning work for you, but to support you and your colleagues and help you get organised.

In the first instance, we will ask your IRO to make contact with all those who we know want to be active, so they can help coordinate the setting up of a local team and give us the best start possible.

To build your team you could:

- Ask your LNC chair or IRO to put you in touch with other SAS activists
- Talk to colleagues in any local SAS forums or at development days and ask them to sign up
- Put up posters on the noticeboard asking for volunteers
- Ask your IRO to write to all local members who are SAS doctors, asking them to help the campaign
- Contact your Regional SAS Committee or IRO for more help or ideas
- Use local WhatsApp groups.

Once a local team has come together, have a meeting so you can work through the 'campaign plan' checklist. Your IRO and other BMA regional staff are happy to advise.



## Define your objectives

Before you start, agree as a group of local representatives at trust level what your objective will be. Make it something clear and concrete. Your goals should be consistent with the national objectives of improving SAS pay and value, calling for Government support and gaining support from others inside and outside the workplace. Your objectives should also promote and help secure national objectives.

A good set of initial, local campaign objectives might be to:

- **achieve 90% support from SAS doctors at this workplace for the pay campaign, including for the need to take industrial action if necessary**
- **grow BMA membership among SAS doctors by x% and increase the number of active campaigners by x to build our local power in advance of any industrial action**
- **maximise local turnout and the 'yes to action' vote at higher than 50% in any industrial action ballot**
- **ensure that any subsequent industrial action at this workplace has the potential to be effective.**

## Evaluate the climate in your trust

Start by asking these questions:

- What is the current discussion on these issues at my workplace?
- Who is leading the discussion and are they for or against our campaign?
- Who else is working on this issue – both for and against us?
- What regular or one-off events or opportunities can we use to our advantage? For example, to hand out leaflets, have one-to-one conversations with SAS doctors, or publicly raise the BMA's position.
- What useful connections does your campaign team have within the workplace, and beyond, and what connections are missing? Ask yourself whether you have good connections with every

significant group of staff (eg local International Medical Graduate networks, Less Than Full-Time networks, equality strands, etc) and if you haven't, make contact and try to persuade the group leaders to join the campaign group.

- In any group of SAS doctors, look for the leaders. Who do others go to for advice or look up to? These 'leaders' are not necessarily activists, but their support will be crucial in persuading undecided members to get behind our campaign. Consider mapping who has the local power and influence to support this. Make use of your SAS tutor and SAS advocate (if in post) to help spread messages.

## Engaging with the undecided

Winning ballots depends on 'moving the middle', i.e. those who are undecided. Now you have your narrative (see 'what needs to change' section above), you can use it to engage with those who have not yet made up their mind or who are sceptical about our pay campaign. If you meet SAS doctors who are not immediately enthusiastic, – ask them why, and then think about how you can adapt your responses to deal with objections. Common objections might be:

- I don't like the BMA
- I don't think the campaign will succeed
- The demand is too militant/not militant enough
- I don't like strikes
- I will get whatever you achieve anyway, so why be involved
- I'm new and I'm worried I will get in trouble or be blocked from progressing
- BMA membership is too expensive
- I am worried about my visa status

How might you address each of those objections?

If you are unsure of any answers discuss with your campaign team.



## Tips for one-to-one communication

- **Frame the debate.** Make your conversation locally relevant and use facts about pay erosion.
- **Move the middle.** The priority is to persuade undecided doctors; they will determine the success or otherwise of the campaign.
- **Be consistent.** An effective message is a clear, convincing, and consistently repeated reason why colleagues should support the pay campaign, vote 'yes', etc. It's the basis for every leaflet, conversation and all other communications.
- **Emphasise one-on-one contacts.** The best method of message delivery is one-on-one conversations, wherever possible.
- **Use BMA leaflets and social media.** Use these tools to amplify, not replace, face-to-face communication.
- **Put yourself out front.** Quotes from people who the undecided might know, such as local reps or activists, can be very effective. You can also use these for emails, messages and social media.
- **Be clear, but don't be aggressive.** Again, the aim of your communication is to persuade the undecided, and to address what is stopping them supporting the campaign.



## How can we influence?

- **WhatsApp** – regular reminders on local groups, use polls to check how many people have voted and remind others.
- **Emails** – make use of the trust email system and any distribution lists you have built up.
- **Face to face** – There is nothing quite like a face-to-face meeting to engage people. If there are any trust meetings during the ballot period which SAS doctors will be attending, try to get a short slot to remind everyone to vote. If necessary, ask a question which gets the message out to colleagues. Or set up your own local event. If you work in a trust with many SAS doctors, consider doing ward walks, perhaps with a SAS/consultant or junior doctor colleague. Focus on departments

with large SAS staff groups.

**Speaking to people face to face is the only way to engage some people.** Work out the most appropriate activity for your trust.

- **Social media** – If you want to publicly show your support could you use social media. Perhaps post photos of you with colleagues pledging support or showing you have voted. Or just re-tweet BMA posts to your followers on X.

### WhatsApp

We have found WhatsApp to be a valuable tool in both the junior doctor and consultant pay campaigns. It offers a forum to quickly share information as well as answer questions about the pay campaign. Many trusts have SAS WhatsApp groups, and we also have regional groups which are growing daily. Please do join your local and regional group and encourage colleagues to do the same. (See next page).





## Below is a list of regional groups and links to join them:

- West Midlands SASC <https://chat.whatsapp.com/HCHWUY5kARnL2ChNijKNc5>
- North East SASC <https://chat.whatsapp.com/CtPZ4SzhmtIAjv5IWB5uxd>
- Southern SASC <https://chat.whatsapp.com/BBRRKNZxQLxKREOPspgptK>
- Trent SASC <https://chat.whatsapp.com/Bq0cR1IN1ALDC5vZy4YviM>
- Eastern SASC <https://chat.whatsapp.com/BSDFbwOxnmzFvZfdoKXFSQ>
- London SASCs <https://chat.whatsapp.com/CBuFMMbMMLyFoQbNBCWPFz>
- Oxford SASC <https://chat.whatsapp.com/ETD6mkjlzeELHn7QJOXJIn>
- North West SASC <https://chat.whatsapp.com/LgSsERTzPzYAeaPrAbf15F>
- Mersey SASC <https://chat.whatsapp.com/li19ByK2eJn3iGgaAydeFx>
- Yorkshire SASC <https://chat.whatsapp.com/JeWw0HUa9BW17yfqxXgSNV>

## Social media

Your region will have an account on X and there is also a [BMA account](#) and a [BMA SAS account](#) as well as several active BMA SAS reps on X. Do follow these accounts and help to spread messages to your followers.

The BMA has also produced a Social Media guide to offer support and tips for you [bma-social-media-practical-guidance-2018.pdf](#)



## What else can we do?

### Strike fund

For the first time in the BMA's history, we have created a strike fund. A growing fund will support doctors facing financial pressure and help us win the fight for fair pay and working conditions. The fund has already been used to support over 3,000 doctors during strikes this year and will be open to SAS doctors striking too.

**[Read more about the fund here.](#)**

Anyone can donate here:

**<https://bmastrikefund.raisely.com>**

### Resources

Order resources to support the campaign. You can order badges, placards, posters, stickers and leaflets and will receive them via post for free (new resources available): **<https://www.bma.org.uk/what-we-do/get-involved/get-involved-with-the-bma/supporting-bma-reps>**

If you are holding a local meeting speak to your membership development manager (MDM) as they may be able to provide pizza, basic catering for your meetings or bring an offer to encourage new joiners such as Amazon/Costa vouchers. Find your MDM contact details here – **<https://www.bma.org.uk/what-we-do/local-negotiating-committees/local-negotiating-committees/Inc-rep-support-hub>**



## Recruitment

We need as many SAS doctors as possible to vote and, if required, to take action to strengthen our voice. It's everyone's responsibility to engage with their colleagues to ask if they are members and want a say in the campaign, and in the decisions that the union is making.

Typically, recruitment of new members grows when the union is active and visible in the workplace, and particularly when there is a disputed issue locally or nationally. We can use campaigns as a tool to improve our membership and participation in our decision making. We can also use recruitment campaigns to show that the BMA is central to any campaign for a better deal for doctors.

**No other organisation has the resources, capacity or strength to organise in this way. It is the BMA that will undoubtedly make the key decisions in any SAS dispute, and if you want to change it or influence what it does, you need to be a member.**

A good overall approach to embedding recruitment into your local campaign is to adopt the five Cs:

**Campaign:** be clear with members and non-members on our goals and targets.

**Contact:** be systematic about your contact with non-members, for example with department-level meetings. You may be able to get support through your BMA industrial relations officer with membership lists at Trust level, which will help to know who is in the union and who isn't.

**Communicate:** with all those affected, not just current members.

**Credibility:** be present, with believable analysis and a campaign people can get involved in.

**Commitment:** be clear on the medium- and long-term goals of the campaign and the need to build the union locally.

## BMA membership

If you speak to colleagues who are not yet BMA members it is worth highlighting some of the many benefits. As well as being able to vote in the ballot, BMA members can access guidance and expert employment advice and support. In fact, in the last **14 years** we have recovered over **£18.4m** owed to members. As a member you can also access:

- a **FREE** Contract Checking Service
- Dr Diary App to help with job planning
- Over **1,000** CPD clinical and non-clinical learning modules through the BMJ Learning
- BMA Library – expert literature search and research support
- Access thousands of resources:
  - e-books/e-journals
  - Research services
  - Clinical Key (Elsevier)

And have access to many more benefits, including our popular financial and legal services.

Membership costs between £10.08 and £41.58 a month (there are concessions for those new to UK, LTFT, Spouse and earning under 50k, plus others...) and the cost of membership is also tax deductible (claim back up to 40%). This is extremely good value when some of the employment advice you receive would cost hundreds of pounds per phone call to a lawyer .

<https://www.bma.org.uk/join/join-sas-doctors>



# Summary

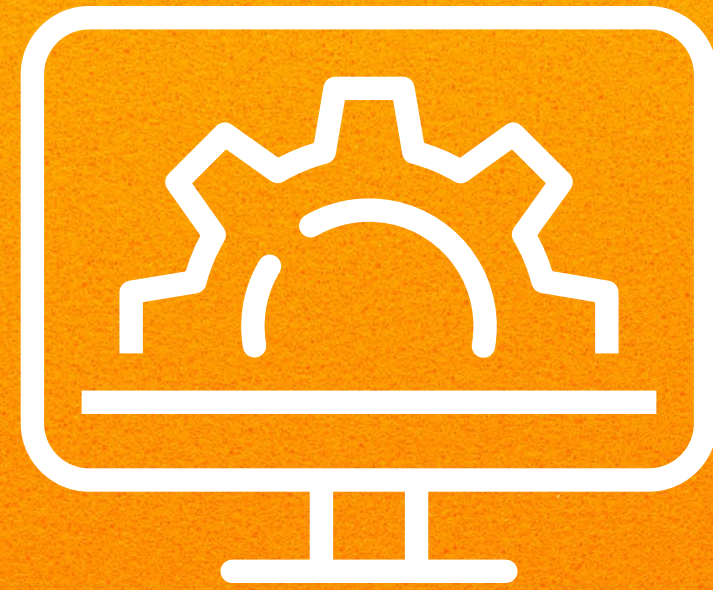
## Immediate actions

You should encourage your SAS colleagues to do the following:

- Prepare for a ballot by updating their details. Do so:
  - Online via their [BMA web account](#) (these short videos explain how to [update personal details](#) and [place of work/ professional information](#))
  - Email [doctorspay@bma.org.uk](mailto:doctorspay@bma.org.uk)
  - Call 0300 123 1233
- Start planning local influencing to help take forward the campaign. Gather a team of like-minded colleagues. Identify or (provisionally) arrange meetings or events to spread encouragement and information to others.

## November actions (post ballot opening)

- Vote! – post ballot papers back ASAP to guarantee your vote will be counted.
- Check – if a SAS doctor colleague hasn't received a ballot paper encourage them to check we have their correct address and place of work details. This must be done by 4 December at the latest in order to vote (though do so earlier to guarantee their vote is counted).
  - From 13 November a replacement ballot procedure will be open. This is for people who are eligible to vote but who have not received their ballot or have mislaid it.
  - Use the form which will appear here [www.bma.org.uk/SASpay](http://www.bma.org.uk/SASpay) or – email [doctorspay@bma.org.uk](mailto:doctorspay@bma.org.uk) to get a replacement.
- Join – encourage SAS colleagues to join/re-join the BMA in order to vote and strengthen our voice. To guarantee a vote members must have re-joined by 4 December. They can rejoin here <https://join.bma.org.uk>



## Resources

This section contains key contacts and resources that you can print off or adapt. Let us know what you use and what you don't.

BMA views on the [DDRB](#) – this page sets out our concerns about the effectiveness and independence of the DDRB as well as the key requirements for reform of the pay review process.

[SAS doctors campaign page](#) – find out the latest on the campaign.

[Reps' hub](#) – order materials and get support.

[Join page](#) – send non-members here to sign up.

[Find your RSASC](#) – list of RSASC chairs and IROs.

It's important that all BMA members know:

- we cannot take action without winning a lawful ballot and beating the thresholds
- it is crucial that every member ensures their workplace and contact details are up to date
- forgetting to vote or assuming others will vote 'yes' will reduce turnout in a ballot.

**As a pay campaigner, one message you should always give members is that if they want a voice, they must keep their BMA details up to date.**

**#FairPayFullyValued**

