

## Supporting SAS Doctors

At its meeting in November the Academy Council considered two issues relating to support for Staff and Associate Specialist Doctors.

### Reopening the Associate Specialist Grade

Both the Royal College of Anaesthetists and Royal College of Emergency Medicine have agreed statements in support of reopening the Associate Specialist Grade for new entrants based on workforce need.

These statements cite,

- Recognition of autonomous practice
- Lack of recognition for senior SAS staff
- Lack of career progression
- Poor pay progression
- Recruitment and retention difficulties,

as strong reasons for reinstatement of the Associate Specialist Grade.

The RCoA and RCEM statements can be found through the following links:

[RCoA statement in support of reopening the Associate Specialist Grade](#)

[RCEM statement on Associate Specialist Grade](#)

The Council was clear that issues of terms and conditions themselves are not the business of the Academy but recognised the issues facing SAS doctors. The Council also recognised that action is required on several fronts to improve development opportunities for SAS doctors and how they are valued. Contractual changes may well be required as part of that and the Council supported active consideration of reopening the Associate Specialist Grade in that context.

The Academy has subsequently raised the issue with NHS Employers who said that the Secretary of State and DHSC have communicated with them and the BMA that whilst the intention is not to reopen the AS grade on the old 2008 arrangements, action will be taken to develop a new grade of this type to support development and progression. They are aware that both employers and SAS doctors have significant concerns about the lack of a progression structure for Specialty Doctors. NHS Employers expect this to involve a negotiation with the BMA and which will need careful consideration of the current contractual arrangements for Specialty Doctors.



NHS Employers also confirmed they have been working with HEE, NHS Improvement, DHSC and other stakeholders, including the Academy SAS representatives, to gather information and develop resources to support the development and recognition of SAS doctors, including most recently the SAS Charter evaluation toolkit, and the upcoming SAS strategy.

## Mentoring for SAS doctors

The Council also considered a proposal from the Academy SAS Committee on the need for mentoring and developmental supervision for all SAS doctors and non-standard grade doctors.

The Council supported the principle that developmental supervision and mentoring should be available for SAS doctors and non-standard grade doctors but recognised there are resource and time implications for organisations and other doctors.

All SAS doctors should, of course, be receiving regular appraisal and an individual's development requirements should be discussed at appraisal.

The Academy has raised this issue with COPMED who will discuss the topic and with NHS Employers and will be meeting with them to discuss how the issue can be progressed.