



Royal College
of Physicians

RCP SAS priorities 2026–30

April 2026



Our priorities

The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) is the professional home of physicians everywhere.

As a modern, inclusive and clinically led organisation, we promote excellence in medicine through education, leadership and advocacy. We are committed to recognition, equity and opportunity for specialist, associate specialist and specialty (SAS) doctors, ensuring that their skills, expertise and leadership are valued and supported.

After all, there is no such thing as a 'non-training' doctor.

All doctors, regardless of career stage, contract status or specialty, deserve access to development, leadership opportunities and professional recognition. The RCP has published Educational and career support for SAS doctors (June 2024) and strongly encourages all NHS trusts and health boards to implement this college guidance for doctors and employers.

While the proportion of SAS and locally employed (LE) doctors in the UK workforce has grown dramatically over recent years, they still make up just 4% of UK subscribing RCP members. We have achieved a great deal since the publication of the [last RCP SAS doctor strategy 2022–24](#) and we must continue to focus on supporting this important cohort of physicians, increasing their number within our membership and demonstrating our commitment to their inclusion in our community.

In advance of the forthcoming RCP organisational strategy, we are setting out our SAS priorities for the next 5 years.

1. Recognition and respect

The RCP will showcase the invaluable contribution of SAS doctors to the NHS. We will:

- celebrate SAS doctors as skilled and valued team members with clear, consistent messaging
- highlight SAS doctor member stories through case studies and examples of good practice
- challenge outdated language and assumptions about the role and autonomy of SAS doctors.

2. Career development and medical education

The RCP will campaign for equitable access to professional development for SAS doctors. We will:

- promote the SAS pathway as a valid, standalone career choice
- advocate for equitable access for SAS doctors to study leave and budget, high-quality educational supervision and protected training time
- encourage NHS trusts and health boards to develop clear career progression pathways for SAS doctors and to fund and recruit specialist-grade doctors
- develop educational resources and courses for SAS doctors on the portfolio pathway
- offer tailored leadership programmes for SAS doctors
- proactively seek to involve more SAS doctors in our educational faculty, courses and events
- support SAS educators, supervisors, appraisers and leaders with targeted resources and guidance.

3. Culture, wellbeing and community

The RCP will promote inclusive, compassionate workplace cultures where SAS doctors can thrive. We will:

- > embed SAS representation within RCP governance, committees, networks and advisory groups
- > actively encourage SAS doctors to become more involved in RCP activities, through taking up representative roles and participating in working groups
- > draw on best practice to develop resources that support SAS doctors joining the NHS from overseas
- > promote the meaningful inclusion of SAS doctors in local decision making and service planning
- > highlight and share examples of good practice in trusts that support SAS doctors effectively
- > showcase case studies in which SAS leadership improves patient care and staff wellbeing
- > use the RCP's voice to reinforce a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, discrimination and exclusion.

4. A stronger collective voice

The RCP will strengthen the voice of SAS doctors in medicine and across the health system. We will:

- > continue to grow the RCP SAS membership across regions, nations and specialties
- > include the SAS doctor perspective in surveys, policy development and influencing activity
- > continue to support the #SASSix campaign run by the [SAS Collective](#)
- > work with external organisations to amplify shared priorities for SAS doctors.

5. Reform of postgraduate medical training

The RCP will play a leading role in the conversation about the future of medical training. We will:

- > develop policy on career pathways for doctors outside formal training programmes
- > showcase good practice examples where alternative and non-traditional career pathways have been developed locally to support flexibility and choice in the medical training pathway.



The RCP SAS priorities 2026–30 were developed in consultation with the RCP SAS regional network. The document was approved by RCP Council.

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