

Chairs Corner – Autumn 2024

Hello Colleagues,

I have had much feedback that information flowing at a time of fast-moving change often means that members are wondering what is happening from a PASC perspective. The team are working so very hard to keep PASC in the heart of discussions and ensure that educators are involved where possible in decision making and making our voices heard.

We continue to hold regular meetings with all stakeholders, and carry on advocating with respectful pressure in regard to solutions to the current employment challenges and meeting the Long term Workforce Plans for the NHS. These meetings include representatives of all four nations across the UK.

I wanted to now update on some specific areas and will endeavour to do this between Council meetings. The next Council meeting is on 21st November on Teams.

RCGP

I think, it goes without saying that we were all disappointed and saddened by the recent announcements from the College regarding their position and comments and impact of this on the role of the Physician Associate in Primary Care.

It is safe to say that since the very first PAs from the USA in Primary Care in Tipton in the Midlands, PAs in general have been providing safe and effective care to patients and there is evidence to support this (although it is several years old). I feel that it really is time for some up to date focussed research to prove the point, and as the recent letter from the Academy of Royal Colleges agrees, perhaps it is now time to influence national leaders for some funded independent research.

The PASC Executive have written to express our disappointment and to emphasise that we know that PAs are safe and that we do not agree with the content of sentiment of their announcement. It is clear from conversations that many GPs are also of the same mind and will chose to do with this 'guidance' what they will. However, I feel that many will make independent decisions based on the business needs of their own practices.

Whilst this is a difficult moment and our students are very unnerved by this, I feel strongly that individual practices will determine their own needs. Your PASC Executive Team will continue to lobby, represent and attempt to influence the College and thank those who have made bold statements and decisions in support of PAs across the 4 nations of the UK.

RCP and APA

As you may be aware the RCP following a Council meeting announced that the Faculty of Physician Associates (FPA) will close on 31st December 2024. The FPA has been the voice and champion of the PA for almost 10 years, and many great folks have served and continue to serve as leadership for the profession.

PASC would like to formally recognise and thank all who have served and participated in moving the profession forward, it is a testament to those hard-working colleagues that the profession has come so far. I would also like to highlight that the current leadership, some who never saw themselves in these roles, have done an amazing job in just keeping things steady and trying to look beyond the 31st of December.

This leads me on to the establishment of the Academy of Physician Associates (APA). This announcement is still very new and your PASC Executive are working with the Academy to see how we can help the emergent organisation to work together and ensure that there is a focus on joint working particularly in this time of change.

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CMAPs

You may also be aware that a College of Medical Associate Professions (CMAPS) has been established.

This is a stand-alone organisation, under the limited company of UMAPs Ltd. CMAPs is working to develop a direction in representation for the professions such as PAs and AAs, bringing together groups with similar challenges.

Whilst this group is also emerging, the PASC leadership have also reached out to work with those leading the organisation, again to help shape the future direction at a strategic level and to help ensure that we are all working in the same direction with the same goals and ambitions.

We are hoping that PASC can also help as we will with APA, in direct engagement with the CMAPs leadership team, and we are trying to organise a joint meeting with the leadership team.

Speedwell

We are aware of some issues regarding GDPR and DPIA, we have been working with Karen to help resolve these, Karen has advised:

“the system will have a regular maintenance update next month, and then Speedwell have agreed to address the issues with candidate names being available to all users. In the meantime, I have removed this ability from all users, and until the problem is resolved, I will add candidates to exams. Results (with candidate names) will be visible to the relevant users from each HEI.”

PASC will check our legal status and will work with Karen to ensure we comply and do not breach any governance requirements. We will keep you posted. In the meantime, please work with Karen to ensure everyone who wants to use this important tool has access.

GMC

As we move towards the 13th of December 2024 and registration and regulation, it is vital that PASC members do their bit to help this process happen. The GMC are very focussed and have recently reiterated that they will be responsible for:

- Professional standards: We'll set the professional behaviours that PAs and AAs need to follow to ensure good patient care, effective collaboration with colleagues, and to maintain public trust in the professions. We'll provide guidance to help you apply these standards in your daily work.
- Registration and revalidation: Before joining our register, we'll make sure PAs and AAs are eligible to work in the UK. Once on the register, we'll continue supporting you throughout your careers, ensuring that you meet professional standards every step of the way.
- Fitness to practise: If a serious concern about a PA or AA is raised with us, we may need to investigate and take appropriate action if necessary to ensure patient safety and maintain public confidence in the professions.
- Education: We'll set the outcomes and standards that students qualifying from PA and AA courses must meet to achieve registration and we'll approve the curricula that courses must deliver.

They have also written to all programmes to ensure that each one is registered with the new area of GMC Connect, if you have not already done so, please could you follow the pathway below to ensure you are ready:

We understand you will need access to our brand-new group in GMC Connect. In this group you'll see your lists of PA/AA students*, administer their details and send us their qualification information. You'll also be able to see their Registration Assessment results here when available. Please note that although you may already have access to other GMC Connect groups (for example Education quality assurance groups/folders), this is a new group, and we must give you separate access to access this by following the below instructions.

What you need to do

You need to send a request to access this group (or if you're new to GMC Connect set up an account), but don't worry this only takes a couple of minutes. Here's what you need to do:

- 1 Go to our page where you can request access to our new user group: [GMC Connect - User registration - GMC \(gmc-uk.org\)](#)
- 2 Select the right option for you at the bottom of the page:
 - a. If you already have access to another GMC Connect group, use the link under '**Already a GMC Connect user?**' 'I already use GMC Connect. I want to access a new/additional user group'.
 - b. If you do not have access yet to any GMC Connect groups, select the link under '**New to GMC Services**'
- 3 Select '**Registration - PA & AA Students**' for the stakeholder group field.
- 4 Add your official work email address (this email address) and create a password/enter your existing password. You must not share your password. If a colleague needs an account, they can request one by following the same process.
- 5 Add your reason for using GMC Connect (access to PA/AA student data), and other details you are asked to provide.
- 6 Review our acceptable user policy and, if you're happy, submit your request.

Please make sure you select '**Registration - PA & AA Students**' for the user group. Otherwise, your account will be assigned to my colleagues in another team, and we won't be able to see it.

Next steps:

We'll receive notification you have submitted your request; within five working days we aim to process this and add your information to the right group. You'll receive a further notification once we have done this. After that you'll be able to login and see GMC Connect screens. There won't be any student data available until after regulation starts.

We'll be running training sessions on how to use the system in November, we'll send further details about these for you to sign up to in October.

Please ensure you are ready and fully engaged with the GMC processes.

Representation

Since the general election results and the formation of a new government PASC Executive have been trying to get a meeting with the new Secretary of State Wes Streeting, we are awaiting a reply to our request and will keep PASC members informed as we hope the meeting will be granted.

Along with the aforementioned meetings and feedback, we continue to meet with RCP and have meetings planned with NHSE leadership to discuss workforce and providing HEIs with some concrete information for our students in regard to employment, we have also reached out to NHS Providers to speak with their leadership around similar issues. We will keep you posted.

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PASC Membership

A gentle reminder that you need to ensure your programme has signed up and paid your membership of PASC to continue to have access to the PASC resources and updates. Please chase your organisations finance department if this has not been processed yet. It is vital that we continue to develop and represent the PA educators currently, any issues or support please email Kate Bascombe at Treasurer@pasc.ac.uk

International engagement:

I attended the 15th Annual Conference of the International Academy of Physician Associate Educators in Lynchburg Virginia from 1st – 4th October (at my own expense).

This conference brings together PA and PA analogues from all over the world to meet and discuss mutual topics such as assessment, pedagogy, and research. Some members of PASC have joined IAPAE and will be familiar.

The conference focus this year was really centred on reciprocation and had representatives from:

IAPAE – International Academy for PA Educators

AAPA – American Academy of PAs (USA)

PAEA – Physician Assistant Education Association (USA)

ARC-PA – Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (USA)

ENPAE – European Network for PA Educators

PAGH – PAs for Global Health

NCCPA – National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (USA)

PASC – PA Schools Council (UK)

GACOPA – Global Association of Clinical Officers and Physician Associates

There was some very interesting presentations and discussion around how countries can work together to develop standards and collaborate in determining how the variety of qualifications can be assessed and recognised. This was a very small step into the development of cross nations reciprocation, but it was a start.

There were some very informative presentations, keynote speeches and posters. Go to www.IAPAE.org for more information and membership details.

Upcoming Conferences:

Dates for your diaries:

16th – 20th May 2025 – AAPA, Denver Colorado USA

22nd – 24th May 2025 – PASC Annual Conference Derry Northern Ireland

27th – 30th August 2025 – GACOPA International Scientific Conference – Aston University Medical School.

And finally

I would like to say a huge thanks to your PASC Executive and our great support from Sarah, many don't see the hard work of the team, all of which is done on top of very busy jobs and family commitments, Your executive team often have urgent calls, have to react to sudden and unpredictable situations and do this all with you very best interests at heart, as do our amazing chairs of sub-committees who are equally committed. Please be kind and appreciative of these great folks who champion our work every day and work very hard on your behalf.

Thank you, team, you are amazing.

Best wishes,

Phil