

Summary of SAS Development Programme, April 2023 - March 2024

Background: The Scottish Specialist, Associate Specialist and Specialty (SAS) Doctors and Dentists Development Programme was founded in 2012 to offer national funding to those SAS doctors and dentists whose clinical teams are seeking to develop new or improved clinical services, or to enhance their role within the clinical team, where funding is not otherwise provided by the employing Health Board. This funding may support costs for training, salary backfill, or completion of training to apply for the Portfolio Pathway to Specialist Registration (replacing the CESR process from November 2023). In addition, funding supports a national network of Education Advisers, themselves SAS doctors or dentists, to support their peers at Health Board level and to guide them to make best use of funding opportunities.

Key to the SAS Development Programme is the recognition that taking up a SAS post does not preclude professional development opportunities. Specialist, Associate Specialist and Specialty doctors and dentists provide practice in areas of learned competencies; however, it is vital that they continue to develop new skills to support changing specialist service development and to develop their roles within clinical teams.

Our SAS Programme continues to:

Support SAS in their individual development and training needs.

Assess the changing needs of the SAS group, offering training opportunities and workshops to reflect this.

Consider the changing medical landscape to support our SAS workforce to be best placed to thrive in Scotland's NHS, and thus contribute to best patient care.

Over 2023-24, 40% of SAS grade doctors and dentists in Scotland engaged with the SAS Development Programme, either through applying for individual funding, attending one or more bespoke SAS events and courses, or both.

OUR STRUCTURE

SAS Programme Board

The SAS Development Programme is part of NES's Medical Professional Development workstream, supported by Principal Lead Adrian Dalby and during 2023-24, by General Manager Anna Alexander.

The SAS Programme Board meets quarterly to address operational issues and consider all applications for funding based on individual merit and set criteria. The Board is chaired by Dr Lynne Meekison, Associate Postgraduate Dean for SAS (APGD SAS), and has a broad membership including representation from NES, Directors of Medical Education (DMEs Group), the BMA, and the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AoMRC), enabling expert input on key areas and challenges.

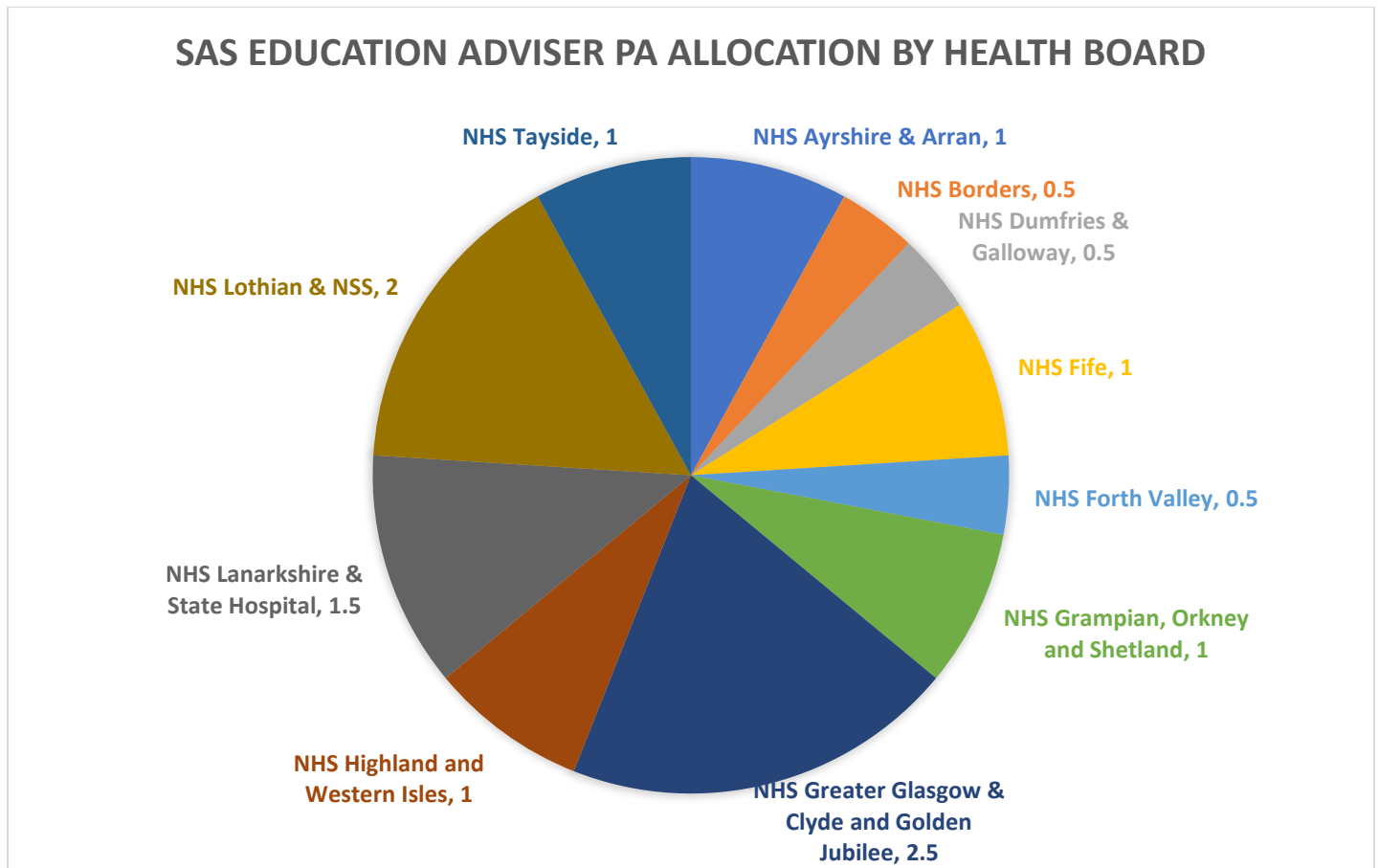
Dr Lynne Meekison continues her role in leading the programme as well as managing the network of SAS Education Advisers across NHS Scotland.

Administrative support for the team's work is provided by Phil Smith, Senior SAS Programme Officer, and Julie Aveling, SAS Programme Officer.

Education Adviser team/managed Educational Network

The SAS Education Adviser team provides invaluable local support for their SAS colleagues in their Health Boards, providing support and, where appropriate, enabling SAS to reach their full potential in development towards clinical service provision and improving patient care. This experienced SAS Education Adviser team welcomed two new members in NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde and NHS Ayrshire & Arran, with mentorship and peer support provided.

The table below represents the SAS Education Advisers (EAs) by Health Board and their allocated PA (Programmed Activity) per week for the role, apportioned by the number of SAS within each Board. The allocation of sessions will continue to be adjusted going forward, according to the agreed set criteria, as the numbers of SAS grades in some Health Boards change over time.



The SAS EA team held a Development Day in the Golden Jubilee conference centre in June 2023, with a second Development Day in the Edinburgh NES office in November 2023. EAs used the time at these days for reflection and updates on the progress of the Programme in their respective regions, as well as discussing planning for specific upcoming projects such as our next Training Needs Analysis survey, changes to Specialist Registration, Quality Improvement, and standardisation of SAS-grade job advertisements.

Collaborations

The SAS Associate Postgraduate Dean (SAS APGD) represents the SAS group in NES, as well as Scotland in COPSAS, the SAS subgroup of the Conference of Postgraduate Medical Deans (COPMeD). Scotland's SAS APGD was appointed Lead Associate Dean SAS for COPMeD, taking up this role in January 2024.

The SAS APGD, as SAS lead for Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow and part of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AoMRC) SAS committee continues to work together with national groups, ensuring Scotland's SAS remain central to any wider discussions.

The SAS workforce in Scotland

The [GMC SOMEPE report](#) published June 2023 considered SAS and Locally Employed Doctors (LEDs) separately, recognising that whilst many of their development needs are similar, they are distinct groups with different backgrounds, challenges and experiences. Across the UK as a whole, 36% of SAS doctors are “most satisfied” and highlighted that many SAS doctors with a non-UK primary medical qualification (PMQ) are doing well, however are often carrying out work usually done by more junior doctors and feel less supported by senior doctors. This suggests they are perhaps being underutilised. In comparison, SAS doctors with a UK-PMQ may have normalised a heavy workload and are often working well beyond their rostered hours.

Scotland’s 1250 SAS Doctors and Dentists deliver high quality care to patients across Scotland – to retain this group, this workforce must be valued. The new SAS contracts introduced in Scotland in 2022 enable suitably qualified SAS to potentially progress in their careers. The newly created “Specialist” grade posts require that a SAS should have ten years of medical experience since PMQ, with a minimum of six years in a relevant specialty in the Specialty Doctor grade or to have equivalent training and experience, including from overseas; of which a minimum of six years should have been in a relevant specialty in the Specialty Doctor and/or closed SAS grades; and that they meet the [Generic Capabilities Framework](#). Newly created posts are appointed by open competition. To date, few posts have been created; however, the aim is that this should encourage SAS grades to develop their careers in Scotland and help retention of this group of experienced clinicians.

The NES SAS Development Programme and its team of SAS Education Advisers (EAs) has continued to improve SAS induction their boards, helping to support newly appointed Specialty Doctors and ensure they feel welcomed and valued in the board. SAS EAs guide SAS to be able to access training to develop the skills to improve patient care; to upskill leading to autonomous practice and potentially to a more senior clinical role; to enter a training programme; or to achieve competencies towards Certificate of Eligibility of Specialist Registration (CESR) and subsequently move into a Consultant post, helping Scotland’s NHS to deliver high quality patient care.

CESR (soon to be Portfolio Pathway) Peer Support & Mentoring Network

In November 2023, the GMC CESR process will change to the new Portfolio pathway to Specialist Registration. This will require SAS to demonstrate that they meet the GMC requirements in their Specialty and have the knowledge, skills and experience of a day 1 Consultant, thus meeting the same exacting standards as that of a Trainee at the end of their training programme. SAS will continue to require ongoing training and need to be supported by senior clinicians to achieve this.

Since 2021, the SAS Programme has offered a CESR Peer Support & Mentoring network on Microsoft Teams as a virtual space for SAS-grade doctors across Scotland who are interested in applying for CESR, where they can source help and support from others going through the same process, supported by mentors who have already achieved CESR in their specialties.

The group now has over 160 members, including 15 mentors, supported by SAS Education Advisers from the regional Health Boards. As part of this support, we continued to hold interactive webinars with presentations from current or former SAS grade doctors who have achieved CESR, including those who have recently submitted their portfolio of evidence to GMC, enabling supportive conversations with those at an earlier stage in the process. These talks are recorded and available to download later, acting as a valuable resource for our SAS group.

| CESR Peer Support Network talks | Date | Attended |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Achieving CESR in General Internal Medicine – Dr Megan Hume | 9 th November 2023 | 14 |

FORMAL TRAINING / MEETINGS DELIVERED BY THE SAS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Education Adviser-led local events

In 2023-24, we hosted local SAS educational events on behalf of eleven Health Boards; for ease of accessibility, shorter events were offered online, whereas later in the year we moved to run half-day or full-day events in-person to enable opportunities for peer networking.

A total of 255 SAS delegates attended the local events, with interactive sessions covering topics such as end of life care, extended roles, wellbeing and peer support, raising concerns, and job planning.

Our aim is to continue to host local events in-person, offering SAS doctors and dentists across Scotland opportunities for learning, support, and networking.

| Health Board | Date | Attendees |
|--|--|------------------|
| NHS Ayrshire & Arran | 15 March 2023 (in-person) | 15 |
| NHS Borders | 28 September 2023 (in-person) | 13 |
| NHS Dumfries & Galloway | 19 April 2023 (in-person) 24 January 2024 (in-person) | 44 total |
| NHS Grampian | 13 March 2024 (in-person) | 18 |
| NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde and Golden Jubilee | 19 May 2023 (in-person) 1 December 2023 (online) | 71 total |
| NHS Lanarkshire and State Hospital | 18 May 2023 (online) 19 September 2023 (in-person) | 49 total |
| NHS Lothian and NSS | 15 March 2024 (in-person) | 29 |
| NHS Tayside | 8 December 2023 (in-person) | 16 |
| | TOTAL | 255 |

Of the 62% of delegates who provided feedback for these events, 100% of attendees reported that they would recommend these events to SAS colleagues.

- “The session was well run, informative and very relevant for SAS.”
- “It was terrific to meet SAS colleagues in person.”
- “Thank you for a very inspiring afternoon. Excellent opportunity to catch up with SAS peers as usual.”
- “Very well organised and good interaction. Good topics and involvement of all attendees.”
- “Highly motivational sessions providing inspiration about career development[...] I took away a lot of useful information. An excellent program, thank you very much to all those in organising and speaking at this event.”

SAS National webinars & workshops

A diverse series of small group workshops was organised by the SAS Development Programme to address topical matters for SAS doctors and dentists, with a continued focus on understanding and addressing challenges to effective service delivery and the promotion of civility and wellbeing in the workplace.

| SAS National Webinars & Workshops | Date | Attendees |
|--|---|---------------|
| Undermining & Bullying of SAS Doctors workshop | 6 December 2023 22 February 2024 | 23 |
| SAS Communication Challenges workshop | 8 September 2023 23 November 2023 13 March 2024 | 9 16 14 |
| SAS Human Factors in Healthcare workshop | 18 May 2023 8 March 2024 | 21 18 |
| SAS GMC (General Medical Council) Professionalism workshop | 14 & 15 March 2024 | 25 |
| SAS GMC Decision-making and consent workshop | 15 December 2023 | 19 |
| SAS GMC Portfolio Pathway workshop | 16 November 2023 | 69 |
| TOTAL ATTENDANCE | | 214 |

‘Undermining & Bullying of SAS Doctors’ was an online interactive workshop where, under the guidance of an expert facilitator, participants were supported to openly discuss their experiences of undermining, bullying, and harassment in the workplace and explore practical strategies to take back to their workplaces.

- “Able to express my views and share with others my experience, also gaining knowledge from others”
- “I got the opportunity to learn from others across Scotland's SAS group that it is actually really common and that the factors (and solutions) whilst partly come from me, are not wholly about me - and how to protect myself in future.”

‘SAS Human Factors in Healthcare’ was an online interactive workshop designed to help participants identify common human factors/non-technical issues that affect staff in healthcare settings and understand how they may impact on delivery of safe, effective, and high-quality healthcare. The session also covered steps that participants could take to mitigate for adverse events and errors, particularly during periods of potential high risk.

- “Excellent facilitator - knew content, approachable, friendly, organised”
- “Extremely informative with, importantly, strategies for practical implementation. No negatives!”

‘GMC Professionalism’, led by Kirsten Baird & Christina McNiven, Liaison Advisers at GMC Scotland, aimed to define what makes a good doctor by setting out the professional values, knowledge, skills, and behaviours required of all doctors working in the UK. It examined the key principles in Leadership & Management and raising and acting on concerns about patient safety guidance.

- “This session has empowered me with information where I can get support for raising concerns with confidence that my voice will be heard.”
- “Re-energised in my role as a leader”

‘GMC Decision-making and consent’ looked at how GMC guidance could support SAS in conversations with patients, empowering them to confidently work towards shared decision-making with patients and ensure that they are

appropriately informed enough to give consent. This session was led by Kirsten Baird & Christina McNiven, Liaison Advisers at GMC Scotland.

- “Many pointers to good practice here. I now have a mind map of how to think around problems and difficult decisions.
- “I like the efforts made to guide us towards the GMC guidance in a friendly and accessible way.”

‘GMC Portfolio Pathway workshop’ was an online session led by Jessica Betts, Specialist Applications Adviser with the GMC, specifically for SAS doctors seeking to attain Specialist Registration. The workshop featured a presentation on the new Portfolio Pathway application system (replacing CESR) and the latest requirements, followed by a Q&A opportunity for individual delegates to ask about their own specific circumstances.

- “Great overview of the CESR system and then the breakout room was very helpful as focussed on our specialty[...] Very helpful workshop”
- “Well organised workshop. Very beneficial.”

Leadership and Management (LaMP) workshops

Last year’s Training Needs Analysis survey demonstrated the need for NES to offer access to Leadership and Management training. Our NES colleagues in the Trainer Development Collaborative offered their non-trainee Leadership & Management Programme workshops in person and online over 2023-24, improving the capacity to meet demand; as a result, the SAS Development Programme were able to support 23 SAS doctors and dentists to attend these workshops with our funding.

| LaMP non-trainee workshop date | Sponsored SAS delegates attending |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 5 th May 2023 | 4 |
| 15 th June 2023 | 4 |
| 11 th October 2023 | 11 |
| 13 th March 2024 | 4 |
| Total | 23 |

80% of SAS felt it has changed their practice since attending the course.

- “Very good”
- “Helped guide my role in enabling local service changes”
- “I felt more oriented about leadership and management”

Other short courses

We have supported further training to develop the skills required for SAS taking up new roles, as well as upskilling SAS to develop their skillset for improved patient care:

- Nine SAS were supported to undertake the Mid Clinical and Educational Supervisor course, giving them the necessary skills and information to take up these roles.
- Six SAS were supported towards completion of a Train the Clinical Trainer course, gaining skills to help them to pass on their knowledge and expertise to Scotland’s future doctors and dentists.
- Four SAS were funded for Life Support training courses in various specialties, helping them consolidate these skills and evidence them for Portfolio Pathway applications.
- Other short training courses supported in this period included a Paediatric Cardiology update course, Dental Cone Beam CT training, and treatment of Adults with Incapacity for Dentists.

Scottish National SAS Conference 2023: 'SAS in Scotland - Your Career, Your Role'

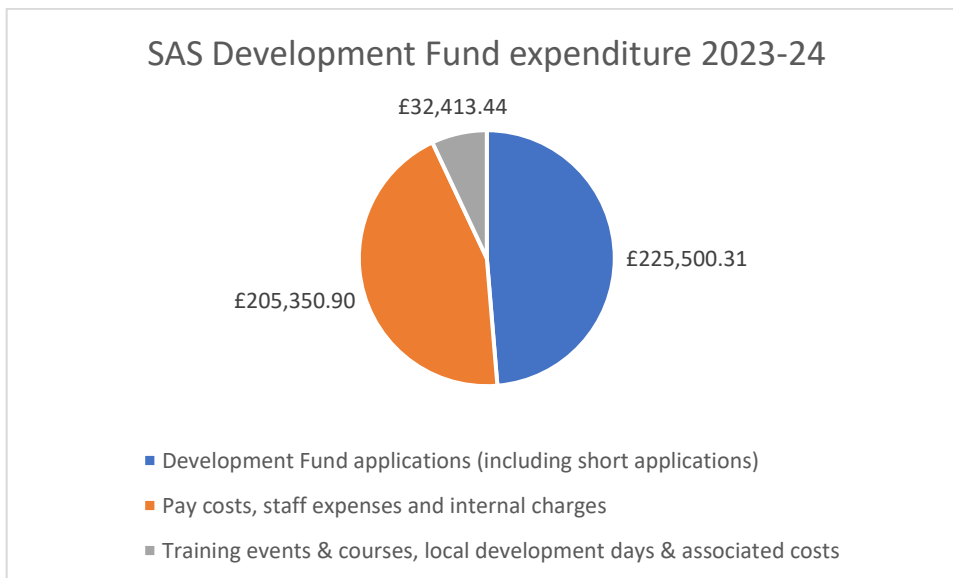
The 7th Scottish National SAS Conference took place as a hybrid full day conference on 2nd November 2023, allowing for both in-person and remote attendance. The programme featured a varied group of expert speakers presenting on topical sessions, including Dr Mary Doherty on 'Peer Support for Autistic / Neurodivergent Doctors', Prof John Gibson 'Suicide – The Story, The Facts, The Future', Nicola Cotter on 'GMC Spotlight Report on SAS and LE Doctors', and Martyn Ramsay on 'New SAS Contract and the Specialist Grade'. The conference concluded with a panel discussion on 'Enhancing Your Career as a SAS Grade: Leadership and Extended Roles' featuring SAS doctors Dr Clare Gilroy, Dr Gary Manson, Mrs Vinita Shekar and Dr Patricia Townsley. The event was attended by 91 delegates in-person and 115 online, for a total attendance of 206.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with all sessions scoring an average rating above 4 out of 5 (with 5 being the best score).

- "I thought it was brilliantly managed. I did not feel disadvantaged or left out by attending remotely."
- "I enjoyed it very much. Met other colleagues from Aberdeen, Glasgow & Edinburgh[...] A lot of inspirational personal experiences."
- "Excellent conference with a good range of topics. Good to have a hybrid conference to allow for maximum participation."
- "Excellent, well organised and helpful event. The hybrid approach worked the best I've ever seen one work."

Webpages & Online Resources

The webpages in the SAS Development section of the Scotland Deanery website provide essential information across a range of themes directly catering to SAS including CESR/Portfolio Pathway, job planning, our training calendar, quality improvement and information about the SAS Development Fund. These pages were visited a total of **1,150** times in 2023-24.



Total expenditure for Financial Year 2023-24: £478,551

34 individual SAS doctors and dentists were supported by their local SAS Education Advisers to successfully apply for funding for bespoke training and development, as well as 5 SAS who were approved for funding to continue previously approved university studies into their next academic year, and 1 approved for an extension to a training secondment. The Programme delivered more training courses and local events this financial year, responding to the needs of the SAS group.

Details of the individual SAS applications made in 2023-24 are summarised in Appendix 1.

In order to measure the benefit to patient care and clinical services, we seek feedback three months after completion of the training, to check that such training shows demonstrable benefit.

SAS Development Fund Impact Assessment

The SAS Programme requires both the applicants and the Clinical Leads or Clinical Directors of applicants to the fund to provide feedback three months after completion of the applicant's training, in order to measure the benefit to clinical services and patient care. Therefore, there is always a time-lag from applying for funding until feedback can be given; the following consists of feedback obtained for applications from 2022-23.

Feedback from Clinical Directors & Leads, 2022-23

We received feedback from 50% of the Clinical Directors and Leads of those SAS who completed their training and/or secondments.

It is clear from this feedback received that these teams have greatly valued the training supported, 100% indicating increased levels of confidence of the SAS, 100% increase in level of knowledge, 92% increased level of skills and 69% with increased level of experience.

However, the free text comments reflect additional benefits, including:

- "Improved communication and teaching skills with patients and trainees"
- "Increasing level of complexity undertaken in skin surgery"
- "Dr X is now keen to take on additional procedures, including head and neck surgery. She has also kindly offered additional capacity during the summer months for skin surgery"

How has this development benefitted clinical service delivery?

100% of teams reported improvements in person-centred care, 77% in safe care, and 62% quicker diagnosis or treatment. 69% of teams indicated that the learning has enabled additional clinical procedures. From a development point of view, 38% have improved service delivery with leadership/management tasks, and 77% have enabled better teaching, training, or supervision of others, demonstrating that the experience and knowledge from the training and developing of the SAS doctor/dentist often goes beyond their performance in their own role to support and educate the entire team.

They also reported:

- "[Dr X] is now keen to take on additional procedures, including head and neck surgery. [Dr X] has also kindly offered additional capacity during the summer months for skin surgery."
- "Has given [Dr Y] the confidence to provide an Allergy clinic with Consultant supervision at a distance rather than direct. This has enabled us to expand our allergy service, benefitting local children and families"
- "Has developed to be able to see more complex patients. Improved contribution to MDT discussions."

How has this development benefitted patient care?

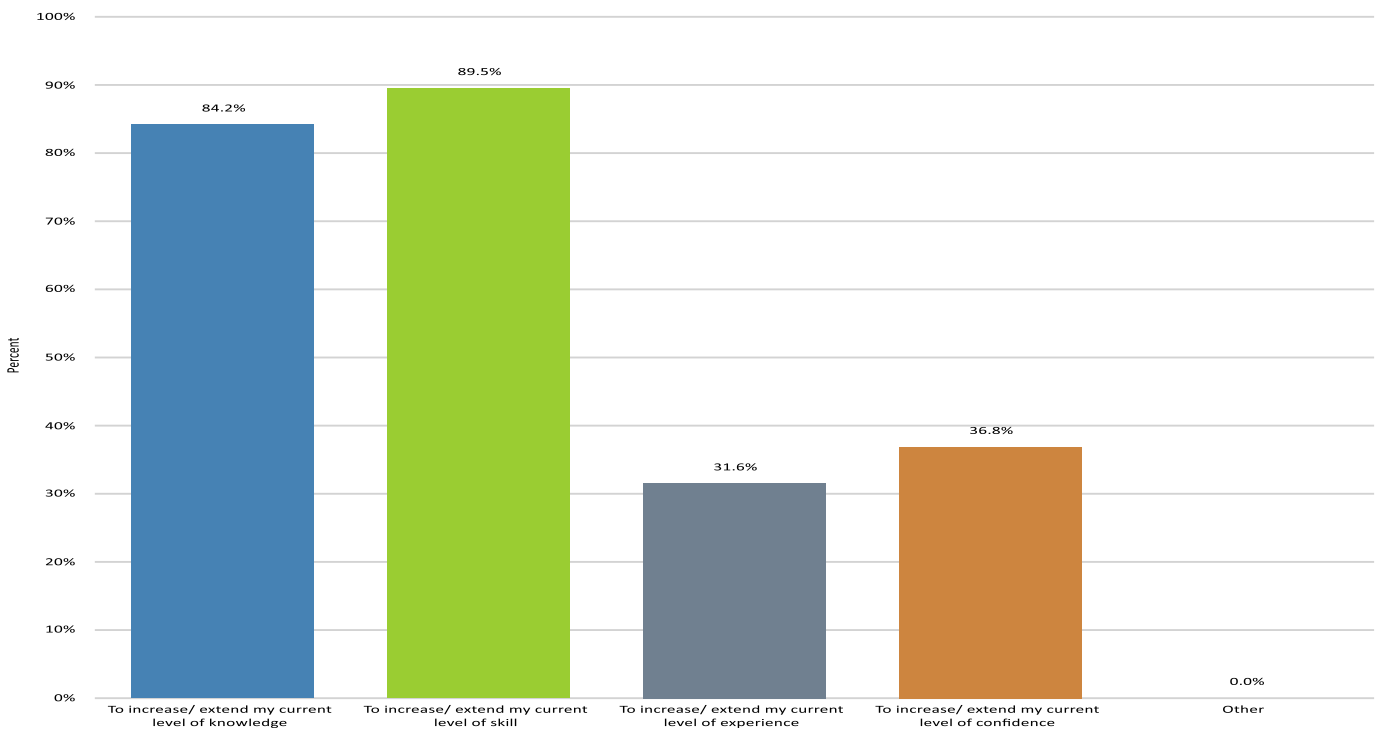
100% indicated improvements to the overall patient journey/experience, and 66.7% indicated there was less need or no need for onward referral to other services.

In what future ways could enhanced SAS development support local service delivery?

- “Developing the specialty interest areas of a SAS to complement others available in a department either service or education and training e.g. simulation lead, undergraduate education lead”
- “Many courses to allow SAS enhanced knowledge and skills are very expensive, well out with study leave budget allocation. Identification of appropriate courses which will allow both SAS personal improvement, as well as service enhancement/increased capacity will always be much appreciated.”

Feedback from Applicants, 2022-23

Purposes of the development activity



Following their training, 100% of the SAS applicants providing feedback indicated that their development activity had improved their own practice, improved their quality of patient care, and contributed to their PDP. 100% would recommend their development activity to others.

52.6% indicated that this funding has contributed towards the development of new initiatives at work, such as new clinics, providing in-house training for junior doctors and ANPs, restarting of IV sedation services, QI projects, and triaging.

For several of the SAS supported through the Development Programme, it has enabled career development, particularly in helping towards achieving CESR.

The SAS Programme in 2023-24 and beyond

SAS doctors and dentists are a key workforce in Scotland's NHS; the SAS Programme is valued by SAS in Scotland. This programme, supported by the team of Territorial Health board based SAS Education Advisers, has enabled individual SAS to continue to develop their skills to improve patient care; has supported groups of SAS in their learning; provided guidance for SAS as they embark on new SAS careers or develop in their roles; and provided vital support for the SAS group, including opportunities to interact at both local meetings and the Scottish SAS conference.

The continued funding of the Scottish SAS Development Programme is essential to ensure that SAS continue to develop and learn, to adapt to meet the needs of a changing population and such that Scotland's NHS values and retains this experienced workforce.

We continue to ask SAS for feedback after attending any of our training courses or having been supported by our fund; this ensures that we adapt to changing training needs, support the needs of this group, and ensure that the programme we offer remains relevant to both SAS themselves and to Scotland's NHS.

The feedback comments from both the SAS who have undertaken training and their Clinical Directors reflects the value that they see to the NHS in Scotland of the support which is provided by the SAS Development Programme.

Applicant feedback comments:

- “This was a really high quality training programme and I feel more equipped in my daily work as a result. Patients and colleagues have commented that there are tangible benefits in terms of how I approach my work now. I have SAS colleagues in psychiatry who are considering taking this training too.”
- “This was an incredible opportunity that I felt supported and encouraged to explore from multiple avenues. It was streamlined and uncomplicated.”
- “I could not have got to this stage in the CESR process without the guidance and support of the SAS team, so thank you”

Appendix 1: Applications to the Fund

We collected data on applications and awards to the Development Fund by the characteristics of: gender, age, disability, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, caregiving responsibility, and remoteness/rurality. We compared the profiles of all applicants against those whose funding was approved and found that the profile of those whose applications were successful reflected the profile of applicants in all categories.

2023-24 SAS Development Fund applications

| NHS Health Board | New applications submitted | New applications approved | Repeat applications submitted | Repeat applications approved | Overall total applications submitted | Overall total applications approved |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| NHS Ayrshire & Arran | 8 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 6 |
| NHS Borders | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| NHS Dumfries & Galloway | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| NHS Fife | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| NHS Forth Valley | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| NHS Grampian | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde | 6 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 6 |
| NHS Highland | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| NHS Lanarkshire | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| NHS Lothian | 15 | 14 | 1 | 1 | 16 | 15 |
| NHS Orkney | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| NHS Shetland | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| NHS Tayside | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| NHS Western Isles | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Golden Jubilee National Hospital | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| NSS | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| State Hospital (Carstairs) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total number of applications | 43 | 38 | 6 | 6 | 49 | 44 |

| Type of development activity | New applications submitted | New applications approved | Repeat applications submitted | Repeat applications approved | Overall total applications submitted | Overall total applications approved |
|--|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Qualification | 20 | 18 | 6 | 6 | 26 | 24 |
| Training course | 18 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 18 | 15 |
| Top up training for CESR purposes | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Secondment for additional experience (Non CESR) | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Secondment for additional experience (Non CESR) & training courses | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Total number of applications | 43 | 38 | 6 | 6 | 49 | 44 |

Summary of SAS Development Programme, 2023-24

This resource may be made available, in full or summary form, in alternative formats and community languages. Please contact us on **0131 656 3200** or email altformats@nes.scot.nhs.uk.

Visit the SAS Development Programme's webpages at:

<https://www.scotlanddeanery.nhs.scot/your-development/specialist-and-associate-specialist-doctors-and-dentists/>

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