

SAS professional development funding

Application guidance

To support the implementation of the new 2021 specialty doctor and specialist¹ contracts and the professional development of SAS doctors, NHS England included the SAS development funding in 2021/22 and 2023/24 within commissioner allocations.

Who this funding will cover

This funding is available to all doctors employed under SAS terms and conditions. These doctors are eligible to apply for this funding to support their professional development.

Scope and principles of funding

1. The SAS development funding for years one and three of the multi-year contract deal (2021/22 and 2023/24) was included in commissioner allocations.
2. The specific purpose of the funding is to invest in professional development activities for doctors under SAS terms and conditions, as specified below.
3. This funding represents discrete new investment, separate and in addition to other funding already available to SAS doctors, such as NHS England's SAS Development Fund (which is recurrent).
4. The funding will be used to support specialty doctors and specialists, to enable them to deliver high-quality care for patients, to promote improvements in services, and to help create a collaborative, inclusive and learning-focused culture and work environment.
5. The funding should not be used to supplement or replace any existing funding available to all SAS doctors. The distribution of the funding should be agreed upon by the SAS tutor in agreement with the SAS local negotiation committee (LNC) representatives and the SAS advocate (where they exist).
6. The funding can be used to support both individual, and collective professional development activities, across a greater proportion of the SAS workforce including (but not limited to):
 - a. Supporting individuals undertaking a Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration (CESR) or meeting portfolio development needs, such as undertaking a credential.

¹ Where the term 'specialist' is used in this document, it is used to denote doctors and dentists employed on the [specialist grade](#) (England) 2021 contract.

- b. Leadership and management development (training and other learning opportunities).
 - c. Training in coaching, mentoring and mental health support, to support other members of the workforce.
 - d. Creating and funding specific roles, such as for mentoring locally employed doctors.
 - e. Funding SAS-specific bodies or events, such as establishing a regular SAS Forum or organising teambuilding events.
7. The funding should not be used to support the following activities:
 - a. Mandatory and statutory training courses that SAS doctors are already expected to complete.
 - b. Books, journals, library services, computer equipment and software packages.
 - c. Examination fees.
 - d. To meet the reasonable expenses associated with periods of approved study leave.
8. This guidance should help inform how the SAS development funding could be used locally. Decisions should be made in discussions with SAS doctors, such as through local negotiating committee representatives or a SAS forum, and in consultation with the SAS tutor and SAS advocate (where these exist) and informed by individual needs and organisational priorities.

Allocation of funding

Costs to trusts of providing additional SAS development resources in line with the SAS contract reform [framework agreement](#) are reflected in NHS funding through the NHS Payment Scheme Cost Uplift Factor (CUF) as set out in section 4 of the [2023/25 NHS Payment Scheme](#).

The SAS development fund (£3.5m) for 2023/24 is included in overall 2023/24 ICB allocations and the NHS payment system CUF. In January 2023, the monthly [workforce statistics](#) published by NHS Digital reflected that there were approximately 11,507 SAS doctors on a full time equivalent (FTE) basis. This therefore, translates to £304 per FTE.

To calculate an amount that should be spent on the development of SAS doctors, each organisation should multiply their full time equivalent (FTE) number (based on the January 2023 SAS doctor full time equivalent (FTE) data) by £304.

The total FTE number of SAS doctors in scope in an organisation (across **Associate Specialist, Specialty Doctor, Staff Grade Hospital Practitioner / Clinical Assistant**) can be found at the above link in Table 3: NHS Hospital & Community Health Service (HCHS) monthly workforce statistics: HCHS Staff by NHS England region, Organisation and main staff group - Full Time Equivalent (NHS Digital workforce statistics).

How SAS doctors can access the funding

Each trust should ensure there is a transparent process for eligible specialty doctors and specialists to access this funding and for the funding to be used as per the principles set out above.