



Physician associate guidance writing group (also known as the PA writing group)

Terms of reference

October 2024

The need and scope

The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) has committed to the revision and publication of the physician associate guidance for safe and effective practice document currently in draft form post-first consultation stage.

Reporting to the physician associate oversight group (PAOG), the guidance writing group will take a coherent approach to work and issues concerning revision of the draft guidance document, including:

- > undertaking a review of the draft consultation feedback and its commissioned thematic analysis
- > considering RCP guidance and policy positions concerning physician associates (PAs)
- > considering feedback from the September 2024 RCP roundtable meeting with specialist societies and sister royal colleges, as they develop specialty-specific guidance for PAs
- > aligning the document with the development of a longer-term RCP approach to workforce planning (by a group that includes early career doctors and PAs and considers a variety of regional perspectives) and governance, leading to a consistent set of messages for use with external stakeholders.

The life cycle of this group will be completed with the publication of the final revised guidance document.

Ways of working

1. The PA guidance writing group may call on RCP and Faculty of Physician Associates (FPA) officers and staff for insight into issues, relationships, context and complexities.
2. Written work will need to happen outside of the meetings, and tasks may be allocated to group members, who may need to commit time during this period.
3. The chair will keep RCP senior leadership updated on progress through weekly calls with the chair of the PA oversight group.
4. Progress will be shared with RCP Council and the Board of Trustees through PAOG.
5. Confidentiality of discussions and documents should be maintained by all members.

Governance and administration

Membership

Chair: Dr Ben Chadwick

PA oversight group representative

RCP Resident Doctor Committee representatives x 2 (plus a nominated deputy)

Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow (RCPSG) representative

RCPSG Resident Doctor Committee representative

FPA representatives x 2

External RCP membership representatives x 4

RCP executive director, Membership Support and Global Engagement

Note that the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh (RCPE) were invited to send representatives but declined. Other members may be co-opted, that is, invited by the chair with the agreement of the majority of elected members, to provide expertise or gain experience. Staff support will be provided from the following RCP directorates:

- > Communications, Policy and Research (CP&R)
- > Membership Support and Global Engagement (MSGGE)

Attendance

Members of the group are expected to attend the weekly meetings wherever possible and/or provide written comment on documents. Documents may also be available on SharePoint in line with instructions and deadlines.

The working group will meet (on MS Teams) as determined by the chair.

Notice and minutes of meetings

Unless otherwise agreed, notice of each meeting confirming the venue, time and date together with an agenda and supporting papers shall be circulated to each member and any other person required to attend no later than 3 working days before the date of the meeting **as far as possible**. Brief meeting minutes and action points will be provided to PA guidance writing group membership.

Declarations of interest

All members and attendees of the group must declare any relevant personal, non-personal, pecuniary or potential interests at the commencement of any meeting. The chair will determine if there is a conflict of interest such that the member and/or attendee will be required not to participate in a discussion.

Timetable

- > Weekly meetings from the week commencing 14 October 2024 with an exception for England and Wales half-term school holidays (w/c 28 October 2024).
- > Progress reports to PAOG at their monthly meetings in November and December 2024, and RCP Council 2024/25 meetings.
- > Final revised PA guidance for safe and effective practice document to be presented for publication in December 2024.