



SAS doctors to be asked about their workplace experiences for the first time

Zosia Kmiotowicz

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The General Medical Council is to ask the fifth of UK doctors who work as specialty and associate specialists (SAS) and locally employed doctors (LEDs) about their workplace experiences for the first time.

The regulator said it wants to learn more about these doctors' working practices, opportunities for career development, and the support they receive in the workplace.

Charlie Massey, chief executive of the GMC, said: "These doctors make a valuable contribution to UK health services, and their numbers are increasing. Yet we understand less about their experiences compared with other parts of the medical workforce. "This survey will be an opportunity for them to tell us about their careers, both good and bad, and the support they can access. We want as many doctors as possible to take part in this survey, so it will give us a robust and rich source of data that will aid our understanding and help us, and others, to give them the support they need."

There are more than 45 000 SAS doctors and LEDs working in the NHS.

A paper just published by the GMC shows that they are more likely to be overseas graduates, particularly from black and

minority ethnic backgrounds, and that there are a growing number of female UK graduates working as SAS doctors.¹

In 2018, 20% of SAS and LEDs were aged between 20 and 29, an increase of around two thirds from 2012, when only 12% belonged to the age group. This is related to the recent growth in the number of doctors taking a break from training, says the paper.

In the past six years, the difference between male and female SAS and LEDs has reduced from 60% male, 40% female in 2012 to 56% male, 44% female in 2018. This could be linked to the increased number of female graduates in recent years, said the GMC.

The GMC's survey will open in the spring with the results published later this year.

¹ General Medical Council. What do we know about specialty and associate specialists doctors and locally employed doctors. March 2019. www.gmc-uk.org/-/media/documents/insight-paper-sas-and-leds.pdf.

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