

## SAPC Heads of Departments (HODs) Annual Report 2020-21

### The role of HODs

The SAPC [Heads of Departments](#) group (HODs) is one of three Executive groups<sup>1</sup> within SAPC. HODs is made up of the heads of department of general practice and primary care from medical schools and universities in the UK and Ireland. HODs main role is to oversee the strategic and practical support for academic primary care within its member departments. In practice, it offers peer support to its members whilst being engaged in a number of areas of work including:

- Profile and Advocacy: raising the profile of the specialty of primary care with its integral academic discipline within host Universities as well as with external partners
- Workforce and career progression: working closely with SAPC executive bodies and external partners to describe and address the workforce needs and challenges facing our discipline
- Engagement: working with external partners to advocate for, and champion development of, the specialty of academic primary care. Partners include Primary Care CRN (HODS Chair attends the CRN steering group), NIHR Academy (several of our members are on the Academy board), RCGP (HODS attends the biannual SAPC-RCGP partnership meeting) and others.

### Changes to HODS

Since the last SAPC AGM, we have said farewell to our previous Chair and Secretary:

Professor Michael Moore (Southampton) – past Chair of HODS

Professor Nick Frances (formally Cardiff, now Southampton) – past Secretary of HODS

We extend our warmest thanks to Mike and Nick for their work for, and leadership of, the HODS group.

In June 2020, we welcomed our new officers:

Professor Joanne Reeve (Hull York Medical School) – Chair

Dr Judith Ibison (St Georges) – Secretary

As we welcome new medical schools to our UK community, we are delighted to welcome new HODS members including Dr Kate Neden (Kent and Medway Medical School) Dr Greg Irving (Edge Hill); as well as new HODS to existing departments (Dr Liz Orton, Nottingham)

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<sup>1</sup> SAPC Executive, SAPC Heads of Teaching (HOTs) and SAPC Heads of Departments (HODs) are the 3 executive groups

Further details about the HODS group including its meeting dates and constitution can be found on our webpage: <https://sapc.ac.uk/article/heads-of-department-hods-group>. We will shortly be adding an updated list of all current Heads of Department.

HODs now meets three times a year. IN 2021 we met in March, will meet at the ASM in June and hopefully will have a face-to-face meeting in December.

## Update on HODS activities

### Sharing experience and expertise

HODS is a valuable forum for sharing questions and answers about the issues which regularly challenge HODs, and scoping issues which are on the horizon.

### Career Progression and workforce

HODs has been engaged in a number of discussions and consultation exercises around

- Academic training pathways and career progression for PHOCUS and clinical academic training: including ongoing discussions with NIHR, RCGP and through the NIHR Academy around the 'pinch points' within academic pathways
- Clinical Excellence Awards: HODs supports the SAPC wide processes involved in the CEA scheme. We have also been working with John Campbell, Tony Avery, SAPC Exec and RCGP in feeding in to the national consultation exercise on future directions for CEA
- Clinical academic contracts and pathways: whilst contract details are BMA territory, the HODS group continues to feed into national conversations including with NIHR/SPCR and RCGP on the particular challenges facing clinical academics in a changing NHS context
- HODS continues to meet regularly in issues of mutual interest with the RCGP.

HODS has recently launched a new **Future Leaders Programme**:

<https://sapc.ac.uk/news/2021/05/29/sapc-hods-launch-new-future-leaders-initiative-applications-now-invited> The scheme recognises the challenges facing some middle career primary care academics in gaining the breadth of leadership experience that supports promotion to Reader and Professor. The Future Leaders programme has described a number of priority areas of leadership work for SAPC which it is using to create a series of mentored opportunities for practical leadership training. Details of the first phase of the scheme are on the SAPC website. We welcome feedback from SAPC members on 3 questions: is this the right scheme? Is Valuing Diversity the right priority area to start with? What are the potential barriers to people engaging with/applying for the scheme (e.g. existing pressure of work).

## Profile and Advocacy

SAPC works closely with the CRN Primary Care Specialty – with reciprocal seats on each other's executive bodies. SAPC-HODs are working with Prof Phil Evans, CRN Primary Care Specialty lead, and Dr Robert Peveler, CRN Research Engagement lead, to identify areas of synergy in implementing the

new CRN Primary Care Strategy: <https://www.ukrdleaders.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NIHR-Primary-Care-strategy.pdf>

SAPC-HODs have re-started an internal departmental update process to informally share news, successes and challenges within our community. We are exploring the interest in, and feasibility of, extending to this to re-establish an annual SAPC (departmental) members 'magazine' – perhaps as an activity within the Future Leaders Programme.

Joanne Reeve, Judith Ibison

June 2021