



Association for
Palliative Medicine
Of Great Britain and Ireland

Trainees'
NEWS UPDATE

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APM Trainees' News

Welcome to the March edition of the APM Trainees Newsletter. Spring marches on, but are we returning to normal after the pandemic? Perhaps not yet, and it may be a very new normal we're returning to. We already know that the pandemic increased palliative care need to levels not expected until 2040, so how will this affect our future work as palliative care trainees. This report from [Cicely Saunders International](#) details an action plan for future palliative care, which is well worth reading, especially for those approaching consultant interviews.

In this newsletter:

Some of us may still be shielding – read one trainee's experience of [shielding](#) in pregnancy, and consider joining the palliative medicine trainees COVID [shielding group](#).

It's more important than ever to keep in touch with each other, and to make the most of education and training opportunities. We're looking for two motivated trainees to [join the APM trainees committee](#) and take up the Education and Training Representative and Communications Coordinator roles. This is a brilliant chance to represent trainees' views within the APM & contribute to the committee's work, whilst developing useful management and leadership experience. Please see below for more details and how to apply.

This edition's [paper of the month](#) was written by a current trainee. A fascinating systematic review of ethical challenges in palliative care summarized by our new Science and Ethics rep Dr Ting Ta. Don't forget that we have free access to Palliative Medicine, BMJ Supportive and Palliative Care, and the PCF via the APM website.

Simon & Jasmine
Co-chairs, APM trainees committee

TOPS (Trainees Of Palliative medicine Shielding Group)

We are looking to set up a peer-peer network supported by the APMT to connect Palliative Medicine trainees who are currently shielding as a result of Covid-19.

The group aims to increase support through connection between shielding trainees and by doing this encourage sharing of educational and training information between shielding trainees.

It will not aim to act as or replace Educational or Clinical supervision, any currently established trainee wellbeing systems or occupational therapy, but rather offer informal additional support.

The group would also be invited to offer their perspective to help inform the APMT and Specialty Advisory Committee with regards to how training experience can be improved for shielding trainees both now and on return to work.

If you are a shielding trainee and would like to join and/or help facilitate the TOPS group, please join at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/apmttops>

Post of the Month – Shielding in Pregnancy

This time last year I got the happy news that we were expecting our second child. Two weeks later the country had been plunged in to a national lockdown due to a global pandemic, not quite the start to my pregnancy that I was expecting. Tension and anxiety was running high throughout the NHS as people tried to work out what this novel disease may mean, how work patterns would change, how the services we worked for would cope with this influx of sick patients, and how we, as staff, may be affected. At this point it was unclear how or if pregnant women may be affected, creating an unsettling environment in which to go to work. In the end, after several risk assessments and discussions with my very supportive supervisor I opted to continue working on the inpatient hospice unit until 28 weeks. From this point onwards the RCOG guidance at the time, and the risk assessments provided by the trust suggested that I was at too high risk to continue face to face working and therefore I was moved from clinical work. This came with mixed emotions. I thrive in a clinical environment, part of the reason I chose palliative care is that I really value the human connection you experience every day at work, and this was certainly something I missed. I felt that I was potentially hindering my clinical training, with 10 weeks non patient facing and then maternity leave after that, I was concerned that I would come back rusty and behind my colleagues. There was also a feeling of guilt for leaving my hardworking colleagues in the lurch at a time of such intense pressure of the NHS, a feeling which I have carried with me into my maternity leave. Balanced with this I also had to consider the risk to myself and my unborn child, difficult to quantify with a paucity of evidence in the face of a novel and evolving disease.

I tried to ensure that my time spent non-patient facing was useful and productive. While some shielding doctors have managed to do telephone clinics or advice, this was difficult in the placement I was in. Instead I spent my time completing audits, setting up a teaching programme for new CNS's, developing a governance meeting for the hospice, and developing a rapid discharge home to die protocol. I found that ensuring that everyone was aware of my plans to go non patient facing and offering my services to everyone and anyone well in advance meant that there was plenty of work for me to do in that time period. This definitely required me to be more self-motivated than a clinical job where your daily tasks are quite obvious and often have pressing deadlines. In addition I found an upside of COVID has been the wealth of virtual educational opportunities that have sprung up - from virtual study days, to webinars, to the virtual PCC later this month. I was able to utilize these opportunities during my non patient facing time, and into maternity leave.

In the end I was given a mere 48 hours off work before the arrival of my son, and since then have been plunged into what seems like an eternal lockdown. I still am experiencing feelings of guilt that throughout this second wave I have not been helping my colleagues on the front line, and yet also extremely grateful for the safe arrival of my little bundle. This has not been the pregnancy or maternity leave I expected, a feeling I am sure I share with many about the events of the last year. Shielding towards the end of my pregnancy has certainly thrown up many mixed emotions – from fear, guilt, isolation and yet also gratitude that I had supportive supervisors and colleagues. I know that shielding has impacted many trainees in palliative care and across the board, and people have had many different experiences of it. As a trainees committee we have set up a Shielding group – APM TOPS, to support those of us who are or were shielding. The hope is this can be a good way to share resources for education, offer support and help inform us as an APM committee how we might further improve the experience of those who are shielding. Feel free to join our facebook group or email me on l.ison@nhs.net for further information.

Journals

The following journals can be accessed via your login through the APM website:

- Palliative Medicine Journal
- BMJ Supportive & Palliative Care Journal
- EAPC Journal (at a reduced subscription rate)

Publications may also be available through the BMA website, for those with membership. A list of these can be found at: <https://www.bma.org.uk/library/e-resources/e-journals>.

ARTICLE OF THE MONTH

Schofield G, et al: Real-world ethics in palliative care: A systematic review of the ethical challenges reported by specialist palliative care practitioners in their clinical practice. *Palliative Medicine* 2021, Vol. 35(2) 315–334

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0269216320974277>

The authors are the first to synthesise the current evidence on the ethical challenges reported by specialist palliative care practitioners in their daily clinical practice.

A rigorous systematic review with narrative synthesis was undertaken. Thirteen studies from nine countries were included. Participants were multi-professional, including doctors, nurses, social workers and allied health professionals.

Context-based challenges were identified and fell into six key themes: application of ethical principles; delivering clinical care; working with families; engaging with institutional structures and values; navigating societal values and expectations; philosophy of palliative care. The challenges were encountered at multiple levels, from the bedside, to institution, to society and policy.

The authors highlight the mismatch between the ethical content taught in Palliative Care textbooks and ethics resources, and the lived, daily clinical experiences of Palliative Care practitioners, where the breadth of ethical challenges in the latter are much more wide-ranging.

The authors suggest the use of context-based approaches to considering ethical dilemmas.

They also acknowledge a gap in data from different settings and countries, as well as suggesting an exploration of the ethical challenges identified by bioethicists, patients and carers.

The results have implications on Palliative Care training and education, as well as ethics support services, and are particularly interesting given the recent development of a new Palliative Medicine curriculum in the UK.

Trainee Committee Update

Demitting Members

We give a massive thanks to Dr Flic Dewhurst and Dr Anna Grundy for all their hard work on the committee in the last few years. We wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

APM Trainee Juniors Liaison

We're delighted to welcome Dr Isobel Morton to the APMT committee as our APMT Juniors Liaison Representative. Isobel will act as the link between the APM Juniors Committee and the Trainees committee.

APMT Facebook Group

If you are a new ST3 trainee or not yet in our Facebook group please do join to share educational events, discuss topics and for latest APMT news.

Website update - Wellbeing Resource List

Our website has been updated throughout this year. You'll find links to the curriculum including the Covid amended curriculum. Our recent addition is our Wellbeing Resource List compiled by our SAC team.

<https://apmonline.org/trainees-committee/>

Committee Vacancies

We are looking for a **Communications Co-ordinator** and an **Education and Training representative** to join our committee. These are opportunities to represent trainees nationally and develop management and leadership experience. If you would like to apply, please download the nomination form and return to the [APM Secretariat](#) with a short statement of no more than 300 words. Your statement should describe what skills, experience and interest you would bring to the role.

Education and Training Representative role description:

Contribution to the wider work of the APM Trainees committee including

- Attendance at trainees' committee meetings (up to 4 meetings per year)
- Preparation of Education Committee report for trainees' committee meetings, outlining: Forthcoming events by year; Summary of other work of education committee; Summary of updates from education committee (e.g. strategic planning, organisational updates, etc)

APM Trainee Study Days

- Contribute to planning of regional locations for APM trainee study days
- Recruiting APM trainee organisers in relevant locations
- Supporting APM trainee organisers of study days, with the support of the relevant documents (e.g. Event Organiser spreadsheet/ table), in conjunction with Compleat conference personnel

Liaise with the APM Education & Training Committee

- Liaise with the Education Committee chair regarding attendance at committee meetings and possible contribution to relevant aspects of the work of the Education Committee, including co-coordinating trainees' session of APM events where relevant
- Reporting back to Trainees' Committee on work of the Education Committee and vice versa

APM Trainees Committee Communications Co-ordinator role description:

Oversight of the trainees' committee communications, including

- managing our group on Facebook
- running the APM twitter account

As membership grows, these will become useful resources for sharing information and organising formal and informal meetings and events. The Facebook group will also act as a forum for discussion about trainees' issues such as the SCE and research

- Oversight & updating of the trainees' pages of the APM website
- Co-ordinating content for & working with other committee members to put together the bimonthly APM newsletter

Contributing to the wider work of the APM Trainees committee including

- Attendance at trainees' committee meetings (up to 4 meetings per year)
- Preparation of Communications report for trainees' committee meetings, with updates on communications activity

Liaise with the newly formed APM communications committee

- Contribute to development of new APM website
- Ensure the new APM website is relevant and useful for trainees.

Palliative Care Formulary Access

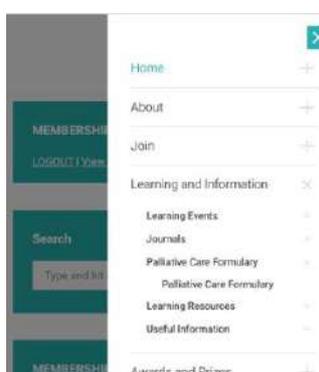
New to 2020, eligible APM members i.e. full members (including reduced subscription) now have access to Palliative Care Formulary Online through MedicinesComplete. Access is via the APM website by logging in and accessing PCF through the learning tab.



1. Login on to the APM website apmonline.org



2. From the list icon (top right corner) select 'Palliative Care Formulary'



COVID-19 Guidance

The APM has issued guidance regarding COVID-19 and Palliative, End of Life and Bereavement Care. The latest guidance can be found on the website: <https://apmonline.org/>



If there is anything else that you have found useful in preparing for the SCE, or for CPD in general, then please contact us and we will endeavour to add this to the next News Update.

Contact the APM Trainees' Committee

We're here to support trainees and our development.

Contact us:

- Via your regional APM Trainees' Representative
- Email us directly via apmtraineescommittee@gmail.com
- On our Facebook page 'APM Trainees'
- On Twitter @apm_trainees



The APM is the world's largest representative body for doctors practicing or interested in palliative medicine.

If you are not already a member join today! <https://apmonline.org/join-pages/join/>

Please remember to upgrade your membership to 'full membership' on commencement of your first consultant post. This can be done by emailing the APM at office@compleat-online.co.uk

This newsletter is for trainees by trainees. We want to hear from you, allow trainees to connect nationally and have a platform to feature your contributions in the upcoming newsletters.

Please contact us at apmtraineescommittee@gmail.com to contribute with a feature article, journal summaries or trainee reflections.