



A WORD FROM DR MARIANNE COBHAM

APMJ Careers and Mentorship Coordinator

Welcome to the April newsletter!

Allocations for jobs from August for final year medical students and resident doctors are being released. We hope everyone is pleased with their offers.

The PCC held in Belfast last month was a great success and we hope you enjoyed the event if you were able to attend. Please let us know if you have any feedback or thoughts you'd like to share.

This month we hear from Dr Anne Hounsell about her path to becoming a specialty doctor in palliative medicine. A role that offers challenge and variety while providing the opportunity to build connections within a team and to a geographical area longer term.

We're highlighting an upcoming event on research and are working on some upcoming articles about combining a career in research with palliative medicine.



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MRCP Marking Error

The Royal College of Physicians recently announced an error in marking MRCP Part 2 written exams from September 2023. 222 doctors were told they'd passed an exam they had in fact failed, and 61 were told they had failed but had actually passed.

The implications of this for the doctors affected are huge and if any of our members have been affected please get in contact to let us know what has happened and of any concerns moving forwards.

NIHR - Is a career in research for me?

Are you interested in a career in research? The NIHR are holding a virtual event on Thursday 1st May. The link to register can be found on the last page of this newsletter.

Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill

Following the discussions at the Palliative Care Congress in March 2025 there is an updated member communication on the terminally ill adults bill which can be accessed [here](#).



APM Juniors Survey

Please fill in our survey to help us better understand what our members want from an APM junior membership. The survey will take no more than five minutes to complete and can be found [here](#). Thank you!

APM Medical Students Survey

Please fill in this survey to help guide our future events and resources for medical students. The survey will take no more than five minutes to complete and can be found [here](#). Thank you!

Free Six Part Series

We have some excellent resources available on the APM online, as highlighted on page 7 of this newsletter. There is a six part series available covering palliative care in several common conditions encountered on the wards or the acute medical take.

- Palliative Care in Neurological Disorders
- Palliative Care in Chronic Liver Disease
- Palliative Care in Heart Failure
- Palliative Care in Chronic Kidney Disease
- Palliative Care on the Respiratory Ward
- Palliative Care in Dementia and Frailty

Please email bookings@apmeducationhub.org to request access to these recordings



Careers - Speciality Doctor Role

Dr Anne Hounsell is an speciality doctor in Rowans Hospice

Hi there, my name is Anne, and I am a Speciality Doctor at Rowans Hospice in Purbrook (Wessex deanery). I would like to share with you how I became a Speciality Doctor in Palliative Medicine, what my job is like and why I love it.

I have had rather a convoluted journey, starting by applying for Core Medical Training in 2008, not really sure exactly what Speciality I wanted to do. However my first job within that was at Arthur Rank Hospice in Cambridge. Here I realised how much I loved the Speciality and how it suited my personality and skills.

After completed my Core Medical Training (CT1/2) in August 2010, I decided to step out of training for a bit and I worked as a locum Speciality Doctor in Palliative Medicine for two years (mainly maternity covers). During this time I worked in two different Hospices and for a Hospital Palliative Care Team. I also completed by MRCP. I then decided to apply for Palliative Medicine Registrar training. After two years I decided to become a Speciality Doctor again (I will explain why further down) and I worked as a locum at two more hospices. At this point all my jobs had been in the Eastern Deanery and most of them-for health reasons - had been less than full time (60%).

I then decided I wanted to be closer to my family, so I decided to move to Portsmouth. I was fortunate to obtain a permanent position as a Speciality Doctor at Rowans hospice in 2017.

My current role is within the Community Palliative Care Team. This is within an NHS trust though I am officially employed by the hospice. I work clinically two days per week-attending case review meetings, visiting patients at home (by myself or alongside another healthcare professional) and giving advice. My third full day of work is nonclinical with more of a managerial feel. I oversee the hospice doctors on call rota and am the medical lead for clinical guidelines. I also have one session per week for continuing professional development. I can undertake these sessions remotely, unless required to attend face to face meetings. I am on the on-call rota -1 in 5 weekdays, covering the hospice inpatient unit.

Though my current role is within the community team, most of my work until now has been on the Hospice inpatient unit.

My job does not involve any General Internal Medicine work -indeed none of my Speciality Doctor jobs in Palliative Medicine have.

I really enjoy being a Speciality doctor in Palliative Medicine. And would recommend it to anyone! A significant reason why I stepped out of training was because I found that the expected rate of progression and the degree of responsibility at each stage was very stressful. Being a Speciality Doctor is more flexible, and my role is tailored to my strengths and skills. It also allows me to develop at my own pace, which is really important for me. There are three other permanent Speciality Doctors at the Hospice and their roles are also flexible and individualised. This means that among us, alongside our general patient care, we all have quite distinctively different roles and areas of responsibility within the team and hospice as a whole. For example one has taken on more of a teaching role, supporting community hospital staff having advance care planning conversations with patients. And another is involved in helping develop palliative care services at our local hospital.



We are really fortunate that our Medical Director is very encouraging towards Speciality Doctors and keen for us to each reach our potential and be aware of our value within the workplace.

Another advantage is that you have more control over where you can live geographically rather than having to rotate to the different locations needed as a trainee. This can be helpful for those with family commitments for example.

As people progress in their career, they may become a Specialist Doctor (equivalent to a Consultant in terms of roles and responsibilities). However they can also, through the Portfolio Pathway (formally known as CESR), achieve Specialist Registration and become a Consultant.

In summary, being a Speciality Doctor can provide a fulfilling rewarding, flexible and varied career. It allows for bespoke development, at a pace that suits the individual. I couldn't recommend it more!



UPCOMING EVENTS

1st May 2025

NIHR - Is a career in research for me?

<https://web.cvent.com/event/e384ad5c-967b-4eab-abde-5207f741cfd2/websitePage:b17b2cf4-e79b-4fa4-b864-48ddd3d31b2f?rt=QplIODN0PQ062j-Ab8yPU8A>

May - June 2025

Clinical Updates Series - Oncology, Acute Medicine and Hot Topics in Specialist Palliative Care

<https://apmonline.org/events/clinical-update-series/>

26 - 27th March 2026

PCC Congress 2026

<https://pccongress.org.uk/registration/>



USEFUL RESOURCES

APM/ PCRS Research directory

<https://apmeducationhub.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Palliative-Care-Network-April-2023.pdf>

Palliative Medicine Curriculum

<https://www.jrcptb.org.uk/sites/default/files/Palliative%20Medicine%202022%20curriculum%20FINAL.pdf>

e-ELCA

https://portal.e-lfh.org.uk/myElearning/Index?HierarchyId=0_29&programmId=29

Junior Doctor and Medical Student Resources

<https://apmonline.org/junior-doctor-medical-student-resources/>

PREVIOUS WEBINARS TO WATCH

Palliative Care for FY1 Doctors

Vimeo Link <https://vimeo.com/apmeducationhub/pallcarefy1?share=copy>

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