

SAM NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2025

Contents

- 2** Welcome from Dr Ragit Varia, SAM President Elect
- 3** Upcoming conferences and webinars
- 4** SAMCardiff & SAMGlasgow
- 5-6** AIM ST4 Recruitment Process Summary
- 7** Other News:
 - Department Head WhatsApp Group
 - SAM Social Media
 - President's November Update
 - England Representative Election Outcome
- 8** Wellbeing Committee Update
- 9** GIRFT Guidance & Other News:
 - Combined AIM/GIM Decision Aid
 - ESIM Winter School Outcome
- 10** November AWESAM



The SAM Administration office will be closed from midday on Tuesday 23rd December until Monday 5th January.

WELCOME, DR RAGIT VARIA



Welcome to the December edition of the SAM newsletter, that magical time of year when the daylight disappears before most of us have finished our first coffee, and the clerking list has already stretched itself out like it is training for a marathon.

As I begin my journey as President-Elect, I'm delighted to be here and promise to repay it with **enthusiasm, curiosity and the occasional burst of fresh perspective. But I'm genuinely excited to work alongside such a dedicated community.** Acute Medicine is full of people who make the impossible look routine, and who still manage to share a laugh in the corridor at 3am. **That's no small thing.**

This time of year, is always demanding. The admissions climb, winter bugs run rife, the staffing thins, and somehow the days get shorter even though the shifts feel longer. Yet across the country, Acute Medicine teams are doing what they always do: supporting each other, improvising, innovating, and quietly delivering excellent care while the system sways around them. **You are extraordinary and I do hope someone near you has already told you that today!**

Meanwhile, SAM continues the expansion of educational resources, the [CPD as you Wee!](#) snapshots that are designed to make **bitesize learning** possible, and the ever-growing programme of [webinars](#) and [podcasts](#) all reflect our determination to **keep learning alive**, even when winter tries its best to extinguish it.

We also have plenty to look forward to with our [joint conference with the Fellowship of Postgraduate Medicine](#) in February that promises a **chance to recharge intellectually.** [SAMCardiff](#) is on **30th April – 1st May** and is already shaping up to be a fantastic celebration of everything vibrant in Acute Medicine and likely to be fully booked very quickly. Therefore, **please consider this your nudge** to submit that interesting case, curious audit or project you've been meaning to write up and book early! Also don't forget the [President's fully funded places](#); we want enthusiasm and ideas, not study budgets, to decide who can attend.

Nationally, SAM continues to have a stronger voice with DHSC and respective four national health systems and collaboration with our national colleges and societies advocating for our specialty. **We are stronger together**, and if you have someone in your department who isn't a member, **it is your society**, so please invite them to [join SAM](#).

I hope, amidst the mayhem, you each find a moment of stillness whether that's a proper break, a warm mince pie, or simply sitting down for once. **Whatever rest looks like for you this year, I hope you find some. Wishing you a peaceful, restorative and good-humoured December.**

We hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter, and as always please send feedback about this or any area of our work to administrator@acutemedicine.org.uk.

Ragit

President Elect, The Society for Acute Medicine

A photograph showing a panel of four people, three men and one woman, seated at a table with microphones, likely during a conference or webinar. The image is partially obscured by a green diagonal overlay on the left side.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES & WEBINARS

SAM & FPM Joint Conference | The Acute Medical Take: Tackling Difficult Cases

Royal College of Physicians, London | 6 February 2026

For the first time, the **Society for Acute Medicine (SAM)** and the **Fellowship of Postgraduate Medicine (FPM)** have joined forces for a one-day, high-impact event at the Royal College of Physicians, London. This unique conference brings together leading experts to explore some of the toughest challenges faced on the acute medical take. Spaces will be limited - [register now!](#)

Programme Highlights

- **Cardiology:** Cardiovascular emergencies in pregnancy, acute hypertension, ACS updates
- **Neurology:** Head injury pathways, headache diagnosis, encephalitis guidance
- **Respiratory:** Pleural disease, type 2 respiratory failure, innovations in sleep medicine
- **Toxicology:** Substance misuse, paracetamol poisoning, alcohol withdrawal

Why attend?

- **Expert updates** from national and international leaders — including Professors Cathy Nelson-Piercy, Tom Solomon, Paul Dargan, Sir Peter Barnes, and other experts.
- **Practical, case-based teaching** to sharpen front-line decision-making.
- **Multidisciplinary sessions** linking acute medicine, specialty expertise, and guidelines.

Educational Evening | Innovation and Excellence in the Care of People Living with Frailty

Wednesday 28 January 2026 | 7.30-9.00pm

Registration for this webinar will open in January.





SAMCARDIFF & SAMGLASGOW

SAMCardiff | Together Stronger: AIMing Higher

Cardiff Holland House Hotel | 30 April - 1 May 2026

[Register now](#) for **The Society for Acute Medicine's Spring Conference in Cardiff 2026**.

The conference will take place in person and all sessions will be live streamed for virtual attendees. Book early to attend in person as places will be limited. We expect the conference to sell out. **12 External CPD Points** will be applied for with the Federation of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of the United Kingdom.



President's Fully Funded Conference Places: Supporting Access to SAMCardiff 2026

SAM is committed to supporting the development of the entire acute medicine workforce. As part of this, we're offering **President's Fully Funded Places** to help members who face financial barriers and lack access to study budgets. Open to **nurses, AHPs, ACPs, doctors in training, and undergraduate members**, these awards cover **full conference fees and a contribution to travel and accommodation costs**. Applicants must be SAM members with an **accepted abstract**, and all applications will be judged anonymously.

This initiative is part of SAM's commitment to developing the whole acute medicine workforce and supporting professional growth across the MDT.

[Click here for further details including application process.](#) **Deadline for applications is 29 March 2026.**

SAVE THE DATE for SAMGlasgow

Glasgow | 8-9 October 2026

SAM's 20th International Conference will take place in Glasgow on 8-9 October 2026. Registration and Abstract Submission will open in June 2026.



AIM ST4 RECRUITMENT PROCESS SUMMARY

Given the bottlenecks in training, it is more important than ever that we really increase the capacity for interviewing potential new Spr's. Over the years Nick Scriven and Tom Cozens from the West Midlands have done an amazing job pulling this together but with a very small pool of volunteers to interview. We really need your help! Nick and Tom have kindly put together the information below on the process:

1. **ST4 recruitment is a long-standing national process** run centrally; we therefore have limited control as the process is standardised across all Group 1 specialties. We can feed into reviews and seek exemptions, but the core process is fixed. One change we successfully implemented for autumn 2025 was the increased weighting of specialty-commitment scoring.
2. **All recruitment rounds are managed by HEE teams in local offices.** These teams typically oversee recruitment for 2–3 specialties simultaneously, often with very limited staffing. Our process is managed out of the West Midlands, where two staff oversee all recruitment for that office.
3. **Application and interview windows are set approximately 12 months in advance.**
4. **We must supply prospective interview dates around 7 months before the event** attempting to avoid peak clinical periods, bank holidays, and SAM conferences. We also try to take school holidays into account, though these vary widely across the four nations. For 2026, the interview window was 05/01/26–10/04/26.
5. **There are differing views on whether early or late interviewing** results in stronger outcomes—interviewing early means meeting candidates who may later accept other offers, while interviewing late risks reduced overall numbers.
6. **Candidates have a three-week application window.** For the next round, this was 20/11/25–10/12/25.
7. **After applications close, the HEE team undertakes the long-listing process** to remove clearly unappointable applicants on technical grounds.

8. **The next stage is clinician review of the specialty-commitment score**, removing those with no demonstrable evidence of AIM commitment.
9. **Remaining applicants then have their evidence verified by two clinicians per applicant.** This stage has tight deadlines, working backwards from interview dates, and includes verifying evidence, communicating scores to applicants, and handling the large volume of appeals.
10. **Recruitment clinical leads check all zero scores and any significant discrepancies**, and they also manage and review the appeals.
11. **Each stage must be completed within a 48–72-hour timeframe.**
12. **Applicants then book their interviews online** and are offered all available slots within the window we have set.
13. **Interview capacity depends heavily on the number of clinicians who volunteer.** We aim for three interviewers per panel, meaning six people per interview stream per day.

As you can see, this process is extremely demanding of clinician time, and we try to remain as flexible as possible throughout. Requests for volunteers for evidence verification and interview panels are issued primarily via TPDs and the SAC, but also through SAM. Volunteers are asked to indicate the days they are available to interview—**it is crucial that you list only days you genuinely expect to be free**, as you may be allocated to any of them. The recruitment office faces a complex task matching volunteers to interview slots while considering factors such as prior experience and any requests for half-day commitments.

The team fully understands that plans may change and simply asks that you let them know **as early as possible—definitely not the day before.**

We know many of you wish to prepare by reviewing the form in advance, but HEE does not permit release of any materials until the **evening before interviews.** Please be reassured that **each station includes built-in time for preparation, so extensive reading beforehand is not required.**

We hope this helps clarify the process and—most importantly—does not put you off supporting and nurturing the future of our workforce.

Tom, Nick and the West Midlands Team



OTHER NEWS

Department Head WhatsApp Group

SAM is establishing a new community for Clinical Leads and Clinical Directors within SAM. The goal is to foster a **supportive environment where we can assist one another, enhance collaboration opportunities, and create a tracker for key metrics** to monitor the challenges our departments face during this challenging winter season. If you are a Head of Department of an Acute Medicine Unit click the link below and lets come together!


[WhatsApp Group - Head of Department](#)

Follow us on Social Media


Follow us on social media to keep up to date with our regular news updates, podcasts, webinars, guidelines, and case studies:

 [Society for Acute Medicine](#)


 [linkedin.com/in/sam](https://www.linkedin.com/in/sam)

 [SAM Instagram](#)

 x.com/acutemedicine

 [youtube.com/@SAM](https://www.youtube.com/@SAM)

 [SAM Threads](#)

 bsky.app/acutemedicine

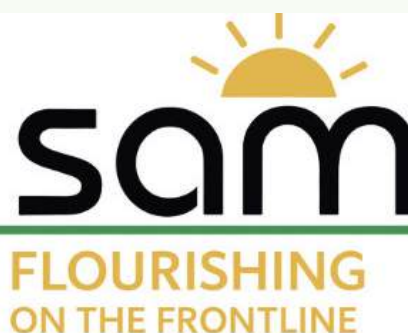
President's November Update

Catch up on the latest activities and priorities from SAM President, Dr Vicky Price. November's update covers how SAM is Championing Acute Medicine & Strengthening Our Data and Research. [View the November Update here.](#)

England Representative Election Result

Following the recent election, **Anika Wijewardane** has been elected to Council as England Representative.

SAM WELLBEING COMMITTEE



Wellbeing Committee Update

The Wellbeing Committee has already met twice, and we are delighted by the enthusiasm and engagement from across the multidisciplinary team. Representation is strong, but we are still welcoming new members—particularly SAS and Locally Employed Doctors. **If you're interested, please get in touch!**

Our mission is to help SAM members flourish on the frontline, and we've already started work on several exciting projects:

- **Mentorship Scheme:** A pilot will launch in the New Year to support professional growth and wellbeing.
- **Podcast Series:** Exploring themes of wellbeing and flourishing—coming soon!
- **Conference Contributions:** We'll be championing wellbeing at the Spring Conference in Cardiff (Together Stronger: AIMing Higher) and at SAMGlasgow in the autumn.
- **Lifestyle Medicine:** Investigating how its principles can support staff wellbeing.

We're keen to hear about wellbeing-related Quality Improvement projects and hope to support research in this area in the future. One opportunity to highlight is the National Wellbeing Research Fellowship hosted by the Royal College of Physicians—an 18-month full-time role for a doctor in higher specialty training (or senior SAS/LED equivalent), starting flexibly in 2026. Find out more here: [National Wellbeing Research Fellow](#)

The Wellbeing Committee wishes you health and happiness over the festive season. Watch this space for more exciting updates in 2026!

Emma Rowlandson
Wellbeing Committee Lead

GIRFT & OTHER NEWS



GIRFT Front Door Guidance for Adults with Diabetes

[GIRFT have published a new guidance poster](#) bringing together all their front-door adult diabetes pathways in one accessible place. Designed for colleagues in Acute and Emergency care, the poster provides QR-code access to pathways covering hyperglycaemia, hypoglycaemia, diabetic foot presentations, diabetes emergencies, and peri-operative diabetes care – along with practical decision-support tools to guide admission, SDEC referral, observation or safe discharge. Early data from the University Hospitals Birmingham pilot of the hyperglycaemia pathway showed reduced overnight stays, improved clinician confidence, and smoother ambulatory management – highlighting the value of clear, standardised processes at the medical front door.

This GIRFT guidance also complements SAM's ongoing work as part of an NHSE working group on diabetes technology and acute care. This was formed in response to the [updated NICE guidance](#) which supports increased access to hybrid closed-loop technology.

Our Technology toolkit, which will be launched at the upcoming SAMCardiff conference, is aimed at acute and general physicians, and will provide practical guidance on safely managing patients using insulin pumps, CGM, hybrid closed-loop systems and emerging technologies on the acute take, by supporting front-door teams to recognise, troubleshoot, and optimise care for the increasing number of people with diabetes who use this technology.

Combined AIM/GIM Decision Aid

There's been a lot of debate recently about the difference between Acute Internal Medicine (AIM) training and General Internal Medicine (GIM) training, particularly when it comes to the number of workplace-based assessments AIM trainees need to complete to finish training and become a consultant.

We've published guidance clarifying exactly what is expected of a trainee dual certifying in the specialties. This can be found [on the SAM website](#).

ESIM Winter School

We received a large volume of excellent applications for the ESIM Winter School. Competition was fierce but congratulations to **Drs Jamie Phillips and Jude Fleming**, who will be off to Bari, Italy in February. We look forward to hearing all about their experiences at a SAM event in future.

AWESAM



AWESAM Week in November

AWESAM, our bespoke finishing school for those approaching CCT in AIM, returned in November, in the beautiful surroundings of Burgate Manor Farm on the edge of New Forest. **The three-day residential course aims to equip our future consultants with the knowledge and skills in a unique, informal and immersive setting.** Our 20 attendees attended sessions on workshops covering everything from NHS structures and finances, managing complaints, interview preparation, quality improvement, and job planning. A real highlight was hearing from our fantastic speakers, including our fantastic core faculty of new and experienced AIM consultants from across the UK. We were also joined by guest speakers including senior executives from University Hospitals Dorset, whose open Q&A gave delegates a **rare and refreshingly honest insight into leadership at the top of the NHS.**



Sessions on Imposter Syndrome, Making the most out of ST7, and Management Structures were highly valued for **covering the "hidden curriculum" not taught in standard training**, and the course feedback speaks for itself – with **100% of attendees indicating that they would recommend the course to colleagues.**

What made the week truly special, though, was the atmosphere. Delegates consistently fed back that the residential format created a **warm, relaxed space to learn, talk openly and build genuine connections with peers.** Whether over shared meals, the walk-and-talk through the countryside, or late-night boardgames in the accommodation, the networking was one of the most celebrated parts of the course. **With its mix of expert teaching, supportive faculty and brilliant company, AWESAM once again proved to be an energising and confidence-boosting stepping stone towards life as an Acute Medicine consultant.**