



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

Neil Gray MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care

29 April 2025

Dear Cabinet Secretary

Anaesthesia Associates and Physician Associates

The Health, Social Care and Sport Committee considered the following statutory instrument at its meeting on [16 January 2024](#):

- The Anaesthesia Associates and Physician Associates Order 2024 [draft]

The then Cabinet Secretary for NHS Recovery, Health and Social Care [wrote to the Committee on 14 December 2023](#) in advance of its consideration setting out that the instrument was to be the “first stage of a long-awaited reform programme which initially aims to provide the GMC with the necessary powers and duties to effectively regulate AAs and PAs.”

The Committee raised the following issues in relation to the instrument with the Cabinet Secretary during the evidence session, as detailed in [its report](#), published on 24 January 2024:

- The perceived blurring of boundaries between qualified doctors and the Medical Associate Professions;
- The expanded use of Anaesthesia Associates and Physician Associates in clinical practice;
- The current scope of practice of Anaesthesia Associates and Physician Associates and potential future expansion of that scope;
- How these roles are supervised given a lack of clarity over their precise scope;
- The potential impact of a growth in Anaesthesia Associates and Physician Associates roles on junior doctors' access to training opportunities.

The Cabinet Secretary responded by outlining how the Scottish approach to the deployment of Anaesthesia Associates and Physician Associates was to differ to the approach taken by the UK Government.

The Cabinet Secretary further outlined ongoing work of the Scottish Government in this area, including setting up a programme to develop an implementation process for Anaesthesia Associates and Physician Associates in NHS Scotland, actions by

the national programme board to ensure a consistent approach across regional NHS boards. Scottish Government officials accompanying the Cabinet Secretary also noted that the Faculty of Physician Associates is currently considering producing guidance for Physician Associates, similar to guidance on the scope of practice for Anaesthesia Associates, which was produced in collaboration with the Association of Anaesthesia Associates by the Royal College of Anaesthetists and Association of Anaesthetists.

The Committee would be grateful to receive a written update on the reform programme for the regulation of Anaesthesia Associates and Physician Associates.

I would be grateful if you could respond by Friday 16 May 2025 and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'CHaughey', written in a cursive style.

Clare Haughey MSP
Convener, Health, Social Care and Sport Committee