



Society for Social Medicine & Population Health

HONORARY SECRETARY'S REPORT (YEAR ENDING 31 AUGUST 2020) ANNA PEARCE (ON BEHALF OF THE COMMITTEE)

1. 2020 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

a. Current Main Committee

Name	Institution	Role(s)
Elected officers		
Kate Hunt	Stirling University	President
Hazel Inskip	University of Southampton	Past-President, Mentorship Officer
Dorina Cadar	University College London	Communications Officer
Sarah Gibney*	Department of Health, Ireland	Honorary Secretary
Anna Pearce	University of Glasgow	Honorary Treasurer
Elected members		
Catherine Hayes	University of Sunderland	External relations officer
Rebecca Lacey	University College London	Deputy Mentorship officer
Subcommittee representatives		
Kate O'Neill	University of Cork	Chair of ECR subcommittee
Paul Henery	University of Glasgow	Chair-elect of ECR subcommittee
Emily Petherick	Loughborough University	Joint Chair of MCR subcommittee
Shelina Visram	Newcastle University	Joint Chair of MCR subcommittee
Janis Baird	University of Southampton	Chair of SCR subcommittee
Co-opted members		
Ivan Perry	University of Cork	2019 ASM LOC Chair; IEA Europe Liaison Officer
Declan Whelan-Curtin	University of Cork	2019 ASM Deputy LOC Chair
Alastair Leyland	University of Glasgow	EUPHA liaison officer
Carol Brayne	University of Cambridge	2020 ASM LOC Chair
John Ford	University of Cambridge	2020 ASM LOC Deputy Chair
Simon Capewell	University of Liverpool	Chair of ASM LOC 2021
Administrative support		
Nicola Hardaker	Hg3 Conferencing	Administrative support
Louise Smith	Hg3 Conferencing	Administrative support

*resigned in July 2020

b. ECR Subcommittee

Name	Institution	Role(s)
Kate O'Neill	University College Cork	Chair
Paul Henery	University of Glasgow	Chair-Elect
Niamh McGrath	University College Cork	Mentoring officer
Mairead Ryan	University of Cambridge	Local organising officer
Erika Ikeda	University of Cambridge	Local organising officer
Eftychia Kotronia	Newcastle University	Network platform officer
Catherine Friel	University of Glasgow	Engagement and welfare officer

c. MCR subcommittee:

Name	Institution	Role(s)
Emily Petherick	Loughborough University	Co-chair
Shelina Visram	Newcastle University	Co-chair
Ruth Dundas	University of Glasgow	Past-Chair
Lucy Griffiths	University of Swansea	

a. Newsletter and comms teams

Name	Institution	Role(s)
Marie Murphy	University of Birmingham	Newsletter officer
Anthony Laverty		Newsletter officer
Kate Mason	University of Liverpool	Newsletter officer & committee liaison
Max Barnish	University of Exeter	Newsletter officer
Gilberte Martine-Edith	Loughborough University	Newsletter officer
Samantha Ofili	University of Strathclyde	Newsletter officer & blog liaison
William Ball	Napier University	Newsletter officer
Sandra Pinto da Silva	University of Porto	Newsletter officer
Georgia Chatzi	University of Manchester	Communication officer
Noriko Cable	University College London	Communication officer
Naoimh McMahon	University of Central Lancashire	Communication officer
Elizabeth Breeze	SSM Honorary Member	Survey Officer

b. Departing committee members:

Hazel Inskip, Kate O'Neill, Declan Whelan-Curtin and Anna Pearce will be ending their committee roles at the end of 2020. We would like to offer our thanks on behalf of the committee for contributing their time and energy and we much hope they consider returning for another role again in the future. Thanks also to Sarah Gibney who served on the committee as Secretary-Elect and Secretary and resigned from her position earlier this year. We would also like to thank Anthony Laverty for his contribution as a SSM Newsletter officer for the past 5 years.

2. MAIN COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

a. COVID-19

A major challenge faced by the committee in 2020 has been keeping Society business running during the lockdown and Covid-19 restrictions (which has involved several committee members being drawn back into clinical/service roles and/or with additional Covid-related work), while also dealing with the inevitable changes to work and family life that we have all experienced. Committee meetings have been held via Zoom and these have been much more frequent than usual due to the need for a dramatic shift in the nature and management of the ASM. Very early on in the Covid crisis the committee took the decision to cancel the face-to-face ASM, given huge uncertainties around whether a face-to-face conference would be safe and feasible, and in order to minimise losses to the Society (e.g. deposits) and to individual members and their institutions (e.g. paying for registration, pre-booking travel/accommodation). Having decided that an in-person conference was not feasible, we had to choose between cancellation of the conference in 2020 and attempting to deliver the ASM online. By this stage members and colleagues had already worked hard to produce and submit the abstracts. Given this, the enormous benefits that the ASM offers to members, and the forum that the ASM would provide to discuss the emerging public health crisis that faces us, we opted to attempt a virtual ASM. A very steep learning curve has ensued, with considerations ranging from what platform to use (at a stage when very few of us were yet to be well versed in the limits of Zoom or Teams!), whether to charge a fee, whether to publish abstracts in JECH, and what, as a minimum, we would strive to offer on the programme. Many decisions needed to be made quickly and under duress, and while we won't have got everything right, we are extremely pleased to be looking forward to the conference and to have what we hope will be a strong and exciting ASM. We have an incredible line-up of speakers and we are grateful to everyone who is attending and contributing to the ASM this year.

b. Changes in Committee Membership and recruitment

We would like to again thank Sarah Gibney for her contribution, and we are delighted to welcome Lucy Griffiths as the new Secretary. Lucy will be starting this new role after the ASM. We have been actively seeking a Treasurer-Elect and are hopeful that we will have identified a possible successor to Anna Pearce for next year. We are inviting nominations for President-Elect. Please contact Kate Hunt or Hazel Inskip if you think you might be interested in this role. The MCR sub-committee will also be seeking new members, please get in touch with Shelina Visram (shelina.visram@newcastle.ac.uk) or Emily Petherick (e.petherick@lboro.ac.uk) to discuss.

c. Other portfolio activities

Reports on the Society's Mentoring Scheme, External Relations, and the activities of our ECR Section, MCR and SCR Section are available in their separate reports.

d. Changes to the format of the ASM

Rapid fire presentations, which were introduced in Glasgow and have been enormously successful, have been left out of the programme this year due to the complexities and additional costs of running these sessions online. We hope to reinstate them in future ASMs.

Last year, after discussion at the AGM, we took the decision to dramatically alter the free ASM scheme, which had until that point been offered to those on low incomes (e.g. PhD students). Aware that many of our SSM members lack funds to attend conferences we decided to open up the scheme to anyone without conference funding. We expected demand to increase and thus decided to adopt a lottery scheme, with names being pulled out of hats (with some

stratification by career stage, to ensure a minimum level of support to our ECRs and MCRs, who we think stand to gain most from attendance at the ASM). There is no fee for this year's ASM, so we will consider launching the scheme next year.

e. January committee 'away day'

January away days were introduced in 2017, to give the committee extra time to identify and discuss challenges to the Society's ongoing relevance to its members and the discipline of population health. Over the following three years, exciting ideas emerged, some which were seen through to fruition (e.g. the launch of the SSM blog, changes to free place scheme, and the network platform). However, we also found that the ideas were building up faster than we had the capacity to address them, so took the decision to not hold the Away Day in 2020. It is likely one will be held in 2021 for the lengthier discussions needed about the running of the Society and the planning of the 2021 ASM as the pandemic and / or its impacts continue.

f. IEA membership

In 2019 SSM members became eligible to join the IEA for the reduced cost of \$25, this 'Joint Membership' fee can be arranged via the link for SSM contained in the below:

http://ieaweb.org/IEAWeb/Content/Joint_Membership.aspx

3. ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS

a. ASM 2020 (Virtual, LOC)

The 64th Annual Scientific Meeting is being held on Zoom, virtually during 9th-11th September 2020.

242 abstracts were received, and each was independently scored by 3-4 independent reviewers. Moderated scores were used to designate abstracts to oral and poster presentations. We thank all our reviewers for their hard work and diligence.

The 64th ASM will include 96 papers presented in the oral parallel session, 95 poster presentations, 3 workshops, and an ECR pre-conference half-day event. Abstracts for all oral presentations and posters will be published in a supplement of the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health (JECH)*. Abstracts are only being published in online format this year, by arrangement with JECH, due to the virtual nature of this year's ASM and, mindful of keeping costs to a minimum, at a reduced fee.

There have been some significant changes to the ASM programme this year due to Covid-19. We are delighted that the Cochrane lecture will still be delivered by Professor Danny Dorling (University of Oxford) on Wednesday afternoon (Constructing the story of 2020 - myths, miasma, messaging and models - from Cholera to COVID-19). His plenary will follow a one-hour parallel session of oral presentations. We are grateful to Professor Harry Rutter (University of Bath) for agreeing to give the Pemberton lecture on Thursday afternoon entitled 'Build back better': the role of academia in translating optimistic slogan to meaningful action post-COVID-19. On Friday we will be hosting an additional plenary event – a panel discussion on the impact of COVID-19 on health inequalities. Again, we are grateful to our terrific line-up of speakers for agreeing to take part in this session: Professor Margaret Whitehead, Professor Michael Marmot, Professor Vittal Katikireddi, Dr Gerry McCartney and Dr Michelle Kelly-Irving.

We'd like to extend huge thanks to Carol Brayne, John Forde and the Cambridge LOC, especially since so many of them have been tackling COVID-19 on the frontline in their public health roles. We are also extremely grateful to Hg3, for being so supportive and adaptable. Without their willingness to provide us with such strong support this year, knowing so little about what it was we needed until we needed it, it is hard to imagine how we could have proceeded with the conference. We'd also like to thank colleagues at HSRUK, who hosted one of the earliest virtual academic conferences and generously shared their experience and many helpful tips. We would also like to thank all of our committee members, whose involvement in ASM organisation and time commitment in 2020 has been far greater than normal.

b. ASM 2021 (Liverpool)

The 65th Annual Scientific Meeting will be held on the 15th-17th September 2021, we hope in person, in Liverpool. We await more developments on the progress of COVID-19 and associated restrictions before knowing whether this will, in fact, be in person, online, or a blend of the two. No matter the forum it is still shaping up to be as exciting as always, so watch this space!

c. ASM 2022 (Exeter)

The 66th Annual Scientific Meeting will be held at the University of Exeter. GJ Melendez Torres will be chairing the local organising committee and will be co-opted onto the main committee in 2021.

4. OTHER MEETINGS AND EVENTS

The Society agreed to support a workshop on using of R for Public Health Research, run by the University of Glasgow and Public Health Scotland, which had originally been intended as a face-to-face event last Spring. This was cancelled due to COVID and an adapted online version took place over Zoom on May 28th 2021. The one-day webinar was attended by 60 people and received very positive feedback (overall rating 4.2/5). Many participants welcomed the change to a webinar as it improved accessibility. Interest in R training specific to public health remains high and the organisers hope to run it again as a face-to-face event in the future.