



# Society for Social Medicine & Population Health

**SOCIETY FOR SOCIAL MEDICINE & POPULATION HEALTH**

**HANDBOOK FOR COMMITTEE AND MEMBERS**

**APRIL 2022**

## Foreword

This web-based handbook is intended to be a useful manual for new members of the Society for Social Medicine & Population Health (SSM) Committee and Section sub-committees, particularly for officers of the Society. It was originally prepared by members of the SSM Committee in 2011/2012 and then revised and updated in 2015 and 2022 to:

- help new members of the Committee understand the work of the Society and how it is organised
- detail the roles and responsibilities of different members of the Committee
- act as an aide memoire for what needs to be done, when, how, and by whom and
- be a repository for 'institutional memory' for the Society.

It now includes key information for the Annual Scientific Meeting Organising committees and spells out people's respective responsibilities.

The handbook is updated periodically as roles evolve. It is thus a valuable resource for existing and new committee members in the future. We are extremely grateful to colleagues for their hard work and perseverance in establishing this valuable resource:

Jenny Mindell 2012

Janis Baird & Michaela Benzeval 2015

Lucy Griffiths, Simon Capewell & colleagues 2022

April 2022

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## 1 Introduction

This web-based handbook is intended to be a useful manual for new members of the Society for Social Medicine & Population Health (SSM) Committee and Section sub-committees, particularly for officers of the Society. Where information is already available on the SSM website, this handbook is limited to pointing readers to the relevant web-based information.

It complements and does not replace the existing information for organisers of the Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM), which is updated and passed annually from the chair of that year's local organising committee (LOC) to the chair of the local committee organising the following year's ASM. The material to assist ASM Organising Committees is currently being developed into an ASM Handbook.

ASM tasks for which the SSM officers and SSM committee, not the ASM organising committee, are responsible are itemised in this handbook. It also includes items that pertain to the ASM where there is confusion about who does what. For example, individuals to give the named lectures are discussed and then proposed by the SSM Committee and invited by the SSM President; speakers are written to afterwards by the SSM President. The liaison over the timing and title of the lecture, and an invitation to dinner on the evening preceding the conference are from the ASM Chair (although the dinner is paid for by the SSM).

### 1.1 History of the Association

The SSM was founded in 1957. Professor John Pemberton wrote a history of the early years of the Society (Pemberton J. Origins and early history of the SSM in the UK and Ireland. *J. Epidemiology Community Health*, May 2002; 56: 342–6). The then editors of the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* gave Professor Pemberton permission to reproduce the article on the SSM website for the benefit of our members (see [Pemberton Lecture – Society for Social Medicine & Population Health \(socsocmed.org.uk\)](https://www.socsocmed.org.uk/Pemberton-Lecture)).

### 1.2 Purpose of the Society

The current purpose of the Society is to advance knowledge for population health. That means promoting the development of scientific knowledge in a broad range of disciplines ranging across population health (including public health, epidemiology, statistics, social sciences, economics, psychology, health services research, disease prevention, policy and political science), studying the health care needs of society, the provision and organisation of health services, the promotion of health and the prevention of disease.

### 1.3 Links with the Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health

Formal links between the Society and the British Journal of Preventive and Social Medicine, later to become *The Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, were established in 1959 and two representatives of the Society were added to the editorial board. The SSM Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Secretary represent the Society on the JECH Editorial Board because JECH publishes oral abstracts for the ASM. This is a titular role and, they have not been called upon for anything else concerned with the journal in recent years.

Initially, just the titles of papers to be read at the AMS were published in the journal and in 1962 fuller accounts of the Society's proceedings and abstracts of papers, given at the scientific meetings, were included. Since then, the abstracts of oral presentations have been published annually. Abstracts for poster presentations were also included in 2010 and from

2012 onwards. In 2010/2011, it was agreed that the supplement should be online only. All abstracts published in the supplement are still entered into relevant databases such as PubMed and Web of Knowledge. Since 2020, a hardcopy version has not been required for conference delegates.

## 1.4 The Role of the Society in the 21st Century

The Society is known for its high quality and friendly annual meetings, its interdisciplinary nature, and its value for money. It is seen within academia and government circles, by other professional societies and national and international groups as the main learned society of epidemiology, public health, and health services research in Britain. In a sense its potential for growth is due, in part, to this successful outside recognition. The Society may be asked by these other groups, for example, to provide scientific evidence, to comment on policy issues, to nominate representatives to sit on Committees, and to provide further training for health professionals and certification of health researchers. Our response has historically been limited, in acknowledgement of the time limitations of Officers.

## 2 The Constitution and By-Laws of the Association

### 2.1 Introduction

The original Constitution and by-laws were drafted and approved before the Society's electronic archive was started. The Constitution has been amended on several occasions. Changes are discussed at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) (referred to in constitution as the 'Business meeting') and if that does not have sufficient quorate, then confirmed by subsequent ballots of all members.

Changes to the constitution	
2003	Added bylaw 7: to allow Society to establish Sections
2011/12	Wording changes to make constitution more gender neutral Change to wording to allow electronic ballots and communication, Changes to allow committee to vary the annual subscription fee, and for these to be paid by direct debit Changes to allow other Executive Officers to sign cheques in Treasurer's absence
2012/13	Honorary members given same rights in Society and ordinary members Chair's role to last for two years and become an elected post Chair to be called president henceforth
2014/15	Update objective of the Society Increase number of ordinary members from 6 to 9 Formalise role and status of co-opted committee members Make Communications Officer executive role a 5 year term

The full current constitution can be found at: [Constitution – Society for Social Medicine & Population Health \(socsocmed.org.uk\)](https://socsocmed.org.uk)

## 2.2 Bye-laws

The Bye-laws are generally amended in parallel with the Constitution. The current version can be read at [Constitution – Society for Social Medicine & Population Health \(socsocmed.org.uk\)](https://socsocmed.org.uk). The headings are listed here, for convenience.

1. Ordinary Members
2. Subscription
3. Attendance at Business Meetings
4. Scientific meetings
5. Locations of meetings
6. Publications
7. Sections

## 3 SSM Sections

Section 7 of the Bye-laws enables the Society to have specific sections. These can be set up by submitting a proposal to the Committee. Each section must have at least 20 Society members in good standing. A list of members and a report of the section's activities must be submitted annually to the Committee, a month before the AGM.

### 3.1 Early Career Researchers

The ECR (early career researchers) Section was set-up in 2010, to aid the Society in supporting members at early stages of a research career in social medicine.

The ECR section is organised by an SSM ECR sub-committee with a minimum of six members. Two (the ECR Chair and Chair-elect) are also co-opted onto the Society's Committee (for one year in each role).

### 3.2 Mid-Career Researchers

The MCR (mid-career researchers) Section was set up in 2015, to aid the Society in supporting members who are no longer at an early stage of their research career but not yet fully established autonomous researchers.

The MCR section is organised by an SSM MCR sub-committee with a minimum of four members. The MCR Chair (or up to two Co-chairs) are also co-opted onto the Society's Committee (one year for a single Chair or two years each for Co-chairs).

### 3.3 Senior Career Researchers

The SCR (senior career researchers) committee was formed in 2019. The SCR committee provides a forum for supporting senior career researchers within SSM in relation to their work and career planning (for example, keeping up to date with research methodology, leadership issues, succession planning & mentoring). The committee works with mid- and



early-career researchers within the Society to identify ways in which SCRs can support researchers at earlier stages of their careers.

The SCR section is organised by an SSM SCR sub-committee with a minimum of four members. The SR Chair is co-opted onto the Society's Committee. The SCR committee has agreed that each Chair should serve a three-year term in the role.

## 4 Officers roles

### 4.1 The President

The duties of the President are to:

- Provide strategic and organisational leadership to promote and develop the Society
- Chair Committee meetings
- Liaise with Honorary Secretary to determine agendas for meetings
- Conduct Society business between committee meetings, notably the four-monthly Officers Teleconference to review and action any outstanding committee decisions, and draft an agenda for the next committee.
- Chair the AGM (the 'Business meeting') and any Extra-ordinary General Meeting
- Invite the eponymous lecturers for the following year. (Contacting the chosen lecturers for the current year to confirm arrangements is the responsibility of the ASM Chair).
- Write to that year's eponymous lecturers to thank them, on behalf of the SSM Committee. (as well as the ASM Chair doing soon behalf of the Organising Committee)
- Write offering honorary membership to those chosen by the Committee
- Make preliminary arrangements for the venue for future ASMs.

### 4.2 The Honorary Secretary

The Honorary Secretary's role is to

- Organise three Committee meetings, and three Officer teleconferences, each year
- Organise the AGM (referred to in the constitution as the 'business meeting')
- Respond to calls to organise an Extraordinary General Meeting (i.e. an additional meeting if required during the year)
- Provide oversight of the Constitution and advise on processes and amendments
- Arrange nominations and elections for Committee and other Society roles
- Act as liaison between Committee Officers
- Coordinate and support Committee members in their roles, including supporting ad hoc working groups, updating handbooks and action points
- Liaise with the ASM Organising Committee and other partners (e.g. JECH and our administrative partner, currently HG3)
- Communicate with members proactively and respond to issues raised by members, including contributing to the Newsletter and consulting members on key SSM and other issues.
- Maintain the Society's paper and electronic Archive
- Update the handbook annually

### 4.3 The Honorary Treasurer

The Honorary Treasurer is responsible for the financial status of the Society, including reviewing periodically whether to be a Charity or a Limited Company. More specific responsibilities involve the following areas of work:

- SSM's financial transactions, including approval of the payment of bills, generating invoices, monthly reconciliation of bank statements, and preparing books for annual audit.
- Presenting audited accounts to AGM for approval by the membership, which must then be minuted as approved.
- Presenting a financial update at each Committee meeting.
- Strategic role making recommendations about changes in membership fee, financial status of the Society, and advice on Society expenditure, to ensure there remains a minimal financial risk to the membership (who are accountable were the Society to become a debtor and there to be insufficient funds within the Society accounts).
- Maintaining appropriate processes for membership renewal and membership database maintenance, approving membership applications and vetting new members who do not have their own proposers, plus overseeing ongoing development of the membership area of the Society website (currently managed by HG3).
- Liaising with EUPHA in order to maintain a database of SSM members who want to be able to access the EJPH (currently managed by HG3), and paying EUPHA the appropriate dues for this facility.
- Administration of the Free Place scheme at the ASM.
- Providing a point of contact to support the other roles within the Committee relevant to membership recruitment and the ASM, providing advice on financial planning of the ASM to local organisers.
- Overseeing the work of HG3 for the day-to-day administration of the above tasks. HG3 also currently acts as the Membership Secretary (see section 5 below).

#### 4.4 Communications Officer

The Communications Officer's role is to:

- Chair the Communications Sub-committee
- To arrange the communications sub-committee meetings
- Report to the AGM (update on the website, newsletter, social media etc.)
- Update the website and liaise with the webmaster for specific maintenance issues
- Assist the newsletter editors in producing the newsletter when requested
- Ensure that a coherent approach is taken across all society communications
- Maintain, or delegate the maintenance of, an appropriate social media presence (e.g. Blogs, Twitter, Facebook)
- Conduct regular reviews of the Society's website to ensure it is up to date
- Coordinate the activities of the Communications Sub-committee and ensure that the sub-committee has the right composition of members to ensure that it can fulfil its functions.

### 5 The Membership Secretary/ administrative partner

The Membership Secretary (currently HG3) is responsible for maintaining the Society's electronic database of all members (past and present) and for processing annual subscriptions, new membership applications and for updated membership details within this database. Specific roles and responsibilities include the following:

- Developing and maintaining the SSM main website and the ASM site, including:
  - a. Managing the membership area of the Society website
  - b. post material related to the Society's members' interests, in particular information about conferences
  - c. Amending the sites to conform with any changes in branding

- provide information to the Communications Officer as requested (e.g., for his/her annual report to the Committee and contributions to the Newsletter)
- Sending out reminders to members for overdue subscriptions
- Distributing information to printers for any journals
- Working with the Honorary Secretary to organise, and attend, three committee meetings per year and the AGM
- Organising periodic teleconferences for sub-committees
- Producing and distributing minutes for all meetings (including the AGM) attended
- Organising web-based elections and providing the Committee with final votes.
- Preparing the abstracts for publication in a JECH supplement (supported by the ASM LOC)

## 6 Officer responsibilities

### 6.1 The Honorary Secretary's responsibilities

#### 6.1.1 Organising the SSM Committee's meetings

Tasks include: setting the dates, finding a venue, organising refreshments (coffee on arrival, lunch for January & May meetings) agreeing the agenda with the President, circulating the papers beforehand, reviewing the minutes taken by the Membership Secretary, and circulating these afterwards with action notes.

#### 6.1.2 Outline Agenda for Committee Meeting

- 1) President's welcome and opening remarks
- 2) Apologies for absence
- 3) Minutes of the [insert number] meeting
- 4) Matters arising from the  $n^{\text{th}}$  meeting not covered elsewhere
- 5) Any strategic agenda item (e.g. discussion of any proposed policy changes, initiatives to develop or improve the operation of the society etc.)
- 6) Arrangements for the [current year] ASM
- 7) *September meeting only AGM agenda*
- 8) SSM Sections
  - a. Early Career Researchers
  - b. Others...
- 9) Future ASMs:
- 10) *May meeting only* - Cochrane & Pemberton Lectures [next year]
- 11) One-day meetings
- 12) SSM finances (accounts received at the September meeting before the AGM)
- 13) Report of communications sub-committee
  - a. Newsletter
  - b. Website
  - c. Social media
- 14) *May meeting only* - Nominations/elections for President elect (alternate years), two Ordinary members, Honorary Members of the Society and, if necessary, Honorary Treasurer, and/or Secretary
- 15) Relationships and affiliations with other organisations
  - a. EUPHA
  - b. IEA European Federation
  - c. Other...
- 16) Any other business

### 6.1.3 The Annual General Meeting

The AGM is held at the ASM, usually but not always at the end of the first afternoon. It is the Honorary Secretary's role to ensure that all necessary notifications are sent out with sufficient time, as specified in the constitution, according to the timetable in Table 1. The AGM is quorate if 35 members are present. For online meetings the Membership Secretary will record numbers present.

**Table 1.** Notifications prior to the AGM (Business meeting)

To arrive by	Notification	Example dates
At least 8 weeks before AGM	Notify members of honorary officers and ordinary committee members due to retire at the end of the year	by 17/07
	Call for nominations	
At least 6 weeks before AGM	Deadline for receipt of nominations.	31/07
At least 21 days before AGM	Ballot papers sent to members if more nominations than vacancies	by 21/08
	Formal notice of the Scientific meeting and the programme sent to each member	
	Formal notice of and the agenda papers for the Business meeting	
At the AGM	Copies of the Secretary's and Treasurer's reports and the Agenda are distributed	12/09

Any business which requires a quorum of at least one-third of the membership, such as changes to the constitution, is voted on electronically after the meeting if the AGM is not quorate for that purpose.

#### 6.1.3.1 Papers for the AGM

The agenda is sent to all members at least three weeks before the AGM, as specified in Table 1 above, together with any proposed constitutional changes, and notification of any proposed change to the annual membership fee.

The agenda, Honorary Secretary's report, Honorary Treasurer's report, audited accounts, report from Sections, and any proposed constitutional changes are circulated to the SSM Committee in advance of the September Committee meeting for information and, where necessary, discussion. These papers, together with the minutes of the previous year's AGM, are printed and distributed to members attending the AGM, or sent via email if held online.

The Secretary's and Treasurer's reports (but not the accounts) are placed on the main SSM website, and reports on sections on relevant section pages of the SSM website, after the AGM.

The minutes of the AGM are checked at the January Committee meeting and are then placed on the SSM website.

### 6.1.3.2 Outline Agenda for the AGM

1. President's welcome and opening remarks
2. Minutes of the [insert number] AGM held in [city]
3. Any matters arising in the minutes not specified below
4. Any major policy issues (e.g. constitutional reforms etc.) to be discussed with the membership, where a vote may be needed
5. Honorary Secretary's Report
6. Honorary Treasurer's Report, including any recommendation on changes to the annual membership fee
7. Communications Officer's report
8. Reports from Sections
  - a) Early Career Researchers
  - b) Others
9. Organisational affiliations: Treasurer / Secretary, if relevant)
  - a) Report on EUPHA
  - b) Report on IEA European Federation of Epidemiological Societies
  - c) Others
10. Election of:
  - a) President-Elect (on alternate years, to take office to coincide with the President's second year as President),
  - b) Two Ordinary Committee Members,
  - c) Honorary Members of the Society
  - d) Other officers, if required
11. Future scientific meetings
12. Any other business

### 6.1.4 Honorary Secretary's Report

This covers the following:

1. ASM [previous year]
  - Details of previous year's ASM
  - Thank the organising committee.
2. ASM [current year]
  - No. of abstracts submitted, selected for plenary, oral or poster presentations
  - Thank the reviewers
  - This year's invited speakers for Cochrane and Pemberton lectures
  - Thank the organising committee.
3. Archive
  - Report on the integrity of the Society's archive, available via the SSM website (with the appropriate reference code) and at the Wellcome Trust.
4. Future Meetings
  - Dates and location of following year's ASM, and the year after that.
5. One day meetings
  - In past year
  - Planned
6. The Committee
  - Membership of that year's committee
  - Committee Changes – who is leaving (and thanks)
  - Results of elections – who is joining the committee
7. Thank
  - Those providing administrative support
  - Newsletter editors
  - Outgoing president and the committee

- Any others who have made substantive contribution to the SSM's functioning that year (e.g. people who have help formulate policy or responses to external documents)

### 6.1.5 The SSM Archive

SSM papers have been archived since the Society was founded in 1957. The SSM paper archive was transferred to the Wellcome Trust in 1988 (see Honorary Secretary's Report 1988, page 2). Paper documents have been transferred to the Wellcome Trust subsequently, covering the period 2003 to 2012. In more recent years, there have been three sets of archival material, stored on the web (papers for Committee meetings and ASM papers as above, details of the ASM, including those giving the named lecturers, previous officers); and electronic and paper records kept by the Secretary. Electronic records may be inspected by SSM members, by application to the Honorary Secretary. The paper archives are given to the Wellcome Trust every three years or so.

It is the Honorary Secretary's responsibility to maintain the SSM archive.

An online archive of ASM programmes and abstracts is available at [www.socsocmed.org.uk/archive.htm](http://www.socsocmed.org.uk/archive.htm).

### 6.1.6 Honorary Secretary's jobs by month

Table 2 outlines standard routine tasks by month.

Jan	Committee meeting	Organise agenda and papers
	Email	Oversee committee meeting minutes – send draft to President, then final version to committee Ask membership secretary to notify members of ASM. Advertise call for abstracts (in recent years these tasks haven been carried out by the Membership Secretary (Hg3) – secretary to support as needed)
March	Abstract deadline	Deadline for submission of abstracts – ask membership secretary to email reminder a few days beforehand
April	Email	Send out agenda and papers for May Committee meeting
April/May	Committee meeting for abstract review	Organise agenda and papers; liaise with abstract moderators about papers on review process
		Oversee committee meeting minutes Remind the President / LOC Officer to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• invite the Cochrane &amp; Pemberton lecturers for the following year</li> <li>• offer honorary membership to the agreed individuals</li> </ul>
July		Circulate nomination forms for committee membership (including President-elect in alternate years)
August		Circulate agenda for AGM, and ballot form for committee membership if required Send out agenda and papers for September committee meeting
September	Committee meeting	Organise agenda and papers for the morning of the 1 <sup>st</sup> day of the AGM (usually Wednesday)

	ASM	Give secretary's report at the AGM Give result of committee membership ballot(s) at AGM
	Email	Oversee AGM minutes (to be drafted by the Membership Secretary) Send notification to elected honorary members
October	Email	Circulate reports and AGM minutes Organise dates for next year's January and April committee meetings and book rooms
November	Email	Send thank you letters to retiring committee members
December	Email	Send out agenda for January committee meeting

## 6.2 The Honorary Treasurer's role

### 6.2.1 Setting and collecting the annual subscription fee

The Honorary Treasurer brings a recommendation to the May Committee meeting if s/he feels the annual subscription needs to rise. An agreed figure is then notified to the membership with the papers for the AGM. If approved by the AGM, the changed fee is collected the following January and from new members joining thereafter.

When the annual subscription was collected by standing order (and therefore changes were difficult to implement), it was £10 from 1989-1999 and £20 from 2000- 2012. The proposal to increase the annual subscription to £35 was brought to the 2012 AGM and took effect from January 2013.

### 6.2.2 Reviewing the status of the society

As it stands, the Committee and its members are correctly liable for any debts incurred by the Society. The issue is therefore around assessing the financial risks we all face. Referring to the Q&A section of the Charity Commission document ([www.charitycommission.gov.uk/Charity\\_requirements\\_guidance/Charity\\_governance/Good\\_governance/incqanda.aspx](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/Charity_requirements_guidance/Charity_governance/Good_governance/incqanda.aspx)), which covers this issue, section B4 addresses the question "When should a charity consider incorporation as a company?", for which the short answer is that it may be appropriate to establish a company where some or all of the following apply:

- the charity is or will be quite large – our membership is not that large
- the charity has or will have employees – it does not directly employ anyone: it only contracts services
- the charity does or will deliver charitable services under contractual agreements – we are not under contract for any such services, though we incur financial risk with the ASM
- the charity does or will regularly enter into commercial contracts – we have no contracts beyond publishing abstracts for the ASM which does not incur risk beyond the ASM
- the charity is or will be the owner of freehold or leasehold land or other property – this does not apply.

The only financial risks we face are the cost of the ASM, underwriting other meetings, and contracting administrative support. The worst-case-scenario is that: (a) the ASM is fully booked and does not go ahead - the financial risk could be of the order of £80k (and rising in line with inflation); (b) all potentially incurred financial risks within year are realised for other meetings of the order of £15k (and rising in line with inflation); and (c) we are unable to receive any subscriptions before closing the Society to curtail our liabilities - a further risk,



depending upon the income/expenditure cycle of the year, of around £25k (and rising in line with increased subscriptions and expanding membership).

The financial risk to the committee and the membership is therefore approaching £100k though annual insurance is taken out for the ASM and can be extended to cover other meetings. Realistically, therefore, the Society carries negligible risk provided the insurance is in place. It would, nevertheless, seem sensible to have modest contingency funds of at least £60k.

The conclusion was reached in 2012 that we do not need to become a company.

### 6.3 The Communications Officer

The Communications Officer will:

Appointment

- be a member of the Society
- have demonstrated evidence of basic web site management (or a willingness to learn same) and authoring skills before appointment
- have proven reliable access to the Internet
- be appointed by the Committee for a period of three years, renewable
- be a co-opted member of the main Committee
- chair the Communications subcommittee
- be responsible to the Committee

During tenure

- oversee the work of the Membership Secretary (currently HG3) on the SSM website, and remind the Treasurer to pay when payment is due
- oversee development and maintenance of the SSM main site and the ASM site
- report annually to the Committee and contribute to the Newsletter when requested
- inform the Committee of a wish to resign at least three months before termination

### 6.4 Mentoring Officer

The SSM mentoring officer, supported by the Deputy Mentoring Officer, leads the SSM Mentoring Scheme. Beginning in 2014, and relaunched in 2021, the Scheme provides training for mentors, and links aspirant mentees with available mentor, and then monitors the outcome. The general approach is for SCRs to mentor MCRs, and MCRs in turn to mentor ECRs.

## 7 Communications

### 7.1 Website

The Society's website is: <https://socsocmed.org.uk/>

The website is currently maintained by the Membership Secretary (currently HG3) and overseen by the Communications Officer.



## 7.2 Newsletter

### 7.2.1 Aims

The aim of the newsletter is to provide the membership with regular updates of news and events relevant to the Society. Short pieces on new methods or public health practice will also be included if deemed of interest to members. Its purpose is to keep the SSM membership engaged with the Society as well as to provide information and advertise events.

### 7.2.2 Intended audience

The *intended audience* is primarily current SSM members

Editor(s)

*Job description:*

Newsletter editors are responsible for coordinating the production of a regular society newsletter. This includes producing, eliciting, typesetting and editing content for the newsletter. All editors must have proven authoring skills. They must be members of the Society, sit on the Communications Sub-committee and report to the Communications Officer. Newsletter editors will serve a term of three years. At least one editor will also be an early career researcher. One editor will be appointed by the Communications Officer to represent the newsletter on the main Committee. The lead editor for each issue will rotate around the editorial team.

*Reporting:*

Drafts of newsletters should be circulated to the Communications sub-committee at least one week prior to distribution to allow time for feedback. Newsletter editors will provide an activity report to the Communications Sub-committee at each meeting.

### 7.2.3 Content

Contribution is mainly from the SSM members. It is open to anybody as long as the content is relevant to the Society, social medicine or international/global health. The current newsletter is published quarterly and as it is now published electronically, the format and length can be more flexible.

The content depends on the editors, and on what submissions are received. The SSM newsletter editorial members meet, including tele/video conference, prior to each issue to discuss themes and possible contributors. Each editorial member takes on responsibility for ensuring specific items are ready for an issue. Recent issues have included:

- a note from the President (cover page)
- a note from the Honorary secretary
- content provided by SSM Sections (e.g. ECR corner, including reports from holders of free SSM places);
- features such as a public health showcase highlighting examples of good public health practice around the UK or overview of a particular methodology
- membership issues, including listing new members who have joined the Society, and
- miscellaneous items, such as Dates for diary, Notes from Editors, and Housekeeping, and advertising other organisations' events (conferences, courses, etc) if considered of interest to SSM members

In general, contributions of 500 words or less are preferred (enough to cover one side of A4 size paper); the copy date for contributing articles is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to the publication date (e.g. 15<sup>th</sup> March for April issue). Artwork/photographs are also encouraged.

### 7.2.4 Preparation

The editor in charge formats each issue within the boundaries of the general SSM 'look' that has been decided by the main Committee, such as inserting the SSM logo on the cover to ensure the identity of the SSM. Currently MS Publisher is used to compile each issue. Editors can choose different software, but it is recommended that they choose one that is user-friendly. The President and Honorary secretary need to be contacted one month in advance for their content, copying-in the Communications Officer. The draft is circulated to the other editors for proofreading.

### 7.2.5 Distribution

The Newsletter team member in charge sends a pdf file (converted from the Ms Publisher file) to the SSM Honorary Secretary, President and the Communications Officer for a final proofread. The Membership Secretary (currently Hg3) distributes each newsletter electronically to the members at the end of the month along with the news email and also sends a newsletter (pdf) to the webmaster for the SSM website.

## 8 SSM Ordinary Committee Members

From 2015 three Ordinary Committee members are elected each year, for a three-year term. From 2014 each member of the committee was allocated a specified role. These are reviewed annually as new opportunities arise for the Society or roles come to a natural end. The kinds of roles include:

- Abstract scoring moderator
- Training and capacity building coordinator
- Newsletter editor
- Membership secretary
- Social media officer
- External relations officer
- Handbook editor
- Mentoring Officer & Deputy

### 8.1 General

SSM sections are formed by groups of at least 20 members putting a proposal for a section to the main committee. Once approved, a committee is elected to oversee their activities. Generally the committee will have a chair and chair elect who report to and represent their views to the main committee. The main Committee will monitor the appropriateness and viability of Sections. Sections can organise their own parallel sessions at the SSM ASM and/or their own section meetings.

Each section holds its own elections.

### 8.2 Early Career Researchers

*What is an early career researcher?*

ECRs are defined as members of SSM who are an undergraduate or postgraduate student within five years (or part time equivalent) of completing their higher degree. Alternatively, anyone who is new to this research field could be considered an ECR.

The activities of the ECR Section are overseen by an elected committee, which aims to:

1. Represent the views of ECRs to the SSM committee.
2. Provide a point of call to ECRs wishing to become more involved with the SSM research community and to facilitate ECRs involvement in SSM conferences.
3. Provide and facilitate peer-to-peer support amongst ECRs.
4. Plan, organise and deliver the ECR Day preceding the main annual conference.

### **8.3 Mid-Career Researchers**

*What is a mid-career researcher?*

MCRs are defined as members of SSM who are (in an academic career structure) between five years post-doctorate and reader/professor level. Alternatively, anyone who does not consider themselves to be either an ECR or SCR could be considered an MCR.

The activities of the MCR Section are overseen by an elected committee, which aims to:

1. Represent the views of MCRs to the SSM committee.
2. Provide a point of call to MCRs wishing to become more involved with the SSM research community and to facilitate MCR involvement in SSM conferences and other events.
3. Provide and facilitate peer-to-peer support amongst MCRs, as well as offering mentorship to ECRs.

### **8.4 Senior Career Researcher**

SCRs are defined as someone who considers themselves to be a SCR AND holds (or has held) a Readership, Full Professorship, an equivalent (e.g. Associate Professorship) or more senior position, having at least a decade of relevant experience.

The SCR committee provides a forum for supporting senior career researchers within SSM in relation to their work and career planning (for example, keeping up to date with research methodology, leadership issues, succession planning & mentoring). The committee works with mid- and early-career researchers within the Society to identify ways in which SCRs can support researchers at earlier stages of their careers.

The term of office for the chair would be 2-3 years, with the Chair-elect in place for the last six months of that term.

### **8.5 Representatives of other organisations**

Currently, the SSM committee includes representatives from the European Public Health Association (EUPHA) and the European Epidemiology Federation (EEF) – the European chapter of the International Epidemiological Association (IEA). Representatives are expected to attend committee meetings of these related societies and be an active presence at scientific gatherings.

### **8.6 Committee Claim for Reimbursement of Expenses**

Committee members can claim travel expenses for attending Committee meetings, where reasonable expenditure would be for standard rail class travel only (apart from advanced

booking of First Class where this is the cheapest option). Expenses should also cover food and non-alcoholic refreshments for subsistence where the total time committed to travel and attendance at the meeting involves the majority of the working day and is in addition to normal attendance at the ASM. An overnight stay for the January or May Committee meetings may be required. Claims are made by completing the expense claim form available from the Hon Treasurer; receipts are required.

## **9 Scientific Meetings**

### **9.1 Introduction**

The ASM, more often simply termed “the Conference”, represents the flagship of the Society. The major event of each year, it delivers the Society’s key objectives of promoting excellent science and developing researchers at all levels. Since 2011, it has been supported by a professional conference organiser, Hg3. They handle the greater part of the administrative workload. However, responsibility for the detailed planning and implementation obviously rests with the Society, as described below.

Very much a team effort, the work is led by the ASM chair working hand in glove with the SSM President. Much of the preparatory work can initially be done by the LOC and ASM Chair. However, the workload increases steadily as the conference approaches. Every member of the main SSM Committee is thus usually invited to contribute their wisdom, skills, experience and expertise.

### **9.2 LOC responsibilities**

The person / institution whose offer to host an ASM is accepted is responsible for setting up a LOC and for arranging for administrative support. That can come from within the institution and/or from an inexpensive conference provider, (for example, Hg3 has assisted with the ASM since 2011).

The LOC has lead responsibility for organising and hosting most of the ASM. Appendix A itemises responsibilities that are usually shared between the two Committees, with the details discussed and agreed each year by the President and LOC Chair.

### **9.3 How to set up an ASM**

The venue of future ASMs is usually set three years in advance. Individuals / university departments may approach the SSM President, or vice versa in the absence of acceptable volunteers. Such offers are discussed and agreed by the Committee.

### **9.4 Initial Planning**

Two to three years prior to the ASM, the ASM chair, once appointed, needs to progressively recruit a LOC. Additional members will need to be recruited nearer the event. Subgroups might then be created to deal with the detailed planning of diverse activities, notably the evening social events, day-trips, workshops, ECR day etc.

The LOC can the progressively address and firm up the key items, which include:

Conference venue: lecture theatres and rooms large enough for parallel sessions & workshops

Social events: often booking venues for a Reception on Wednesday evening, a Society dinner & disco/ceilidh on Thursday evening, and half-day trips on the Thursday afternoon.

Sponsors: need to be approached early, after a longlist has been brainstormed by national and local committees.

Publicity & Comms: need to be regularly reviewed, and material drafted and fed to SSM.

(An indicative planning countdown timetable of key milestones is shown below (Table 3))

Table 3. Main Planning Milestones for the SSM Annual Conference

<p><i>Two – Three years ahead</i> Discussions with HoD and Institute Dean to ensure their support</p> <p><i>30 months before event</i> Shortlist conference venues</p> <p><i>28 months before</i> ASM Chair convenes a LOC of ~ 14 (recognising that only 6-8 may be active) Liaise with University management, emphasising no financial risk, admin done by Hg3</p> <p><i>24 months before</i> Hotel appraisal: cost &amp; quality</p> <p><i>20 months before</i> Reviewing possible venues for evening events a) Civic Reception with drinks &amp; nibbles b) Society Conference Dinner, Ceilidh or entertainment + Venue visits and menu tasting</p> <p><i>16 months before</i> Assisting Central SSM Committee &amp; ASM team for September conference (and seeing organisation at first hand)</p> <p><i>9 months</i> Briefing Main SSM Committee, and eliciting decisions on key issues. Finalising and publishing call for abstracts (Abstract deadline 6 months before Conference) Detailed event planning &amp; discussions with Hg3 conference organisers. Send out invitations to host conference educational workshops</p> <p><i>7 months</i> ASM Chair reconvenes LOC Recruiting abstract reviewers, &amp; offering training</p> <p><i>1-6 months</i> Finalising everything else, notably: Publicity &amp; Conference Programme Keynote speakers Panels, debates, other events Educational Workshops</p>
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## 9.5 Twelve Months to go: conference approaching rapidly

**Conference venue:** Confirm bookings for lecture theatres and rooms large enough for parallel sessions & workshops

**Social events:** often booking venues for a Reception on Wednesday evening, a Society dinner & disco/celidh on Thursday evening, and half-day trips on the Thursday afternoon.

**Sponsors:** need to be approached early, after a longlist has been brainstormed by national and local committees.

**Publicity:** SSM Comms team to publicise every exciting new item, including keynote speakers, panels, debates, training workshops, ECR Day, networking, oral & poster sessions, etc

**Event Programme:** informed by feedback from previous ASM participants.

The tried and tested core involves a stimulating mix of entertainments. These can span oral presentations, poster presentations, panels, debates, keynote lectures and numerous opportunities for informal mixing and networking. Some years, a theme is chosen, eg *inequalities, partnering with the service*; other times one emerges naturally, eg COVID.

## 9.6 Comms & Media

SSM Comms team, supported by colleagues, are responsible for publicity via the Conference Website, Newsletter, SSM email updates, Social media and any other opportunities which appear.

It is important to publicise every new item as it is agree, thus building excitement among SSM members, and far beyond. News items can focus on a keynote speaker, panel, debate, training workshops, ECR Day, networking, oral & poster sessions, etc

## 9.7 Abstracts

Each January, the Membership Secretary advertises the call for abstracts to SSM members.

The national SSM and LOC committee members assist in publicising the ASM and the call for abstracts.

The guidelines for authors and for reviewers are sent to SSM members and are placed on the ASM and abstract websites, so that those submitting abstracts can see how they are assessed.

Guidelines for authors are updated each year by the ASM Chair. (Appendix B)

Abstracts are submitted online, administered by commercial conference organisers Hg3.

The abstract submission deadline in recent years has been early March. That provides sufficient time to enable random allocation of abstracts to reviewers (matched by skill-set Quat/Qual/Mixed, and not from the same department as any of the authors), reviewing and scoring of the abstracts, then moderation of the scores.

All in time for a Committee meeting in late April, to notify successful presenters, ensure they then register for the conference and obtain confirmation by the end of May.

## 9.8 Six Months to Go: All Hands on Deck, please

**Publicity:** provide a steady flow of draft news items for Comms team to publicise

**Conference Programme:** Publish current draft on Website (can update anytime)

**Keynote speakers:** finalise arrangements. Consider discussant or panelists

**Panels.** Great opportunity to address hot topics, e.g. 2020: inequalities; 2021: Healthy Weight Strategy, #ClimateEmergency.

**Debates.** Always fun. Need lively debaters able to entertain as well as educate.

Other events, as determined by LOC & national committee.

Aim to innovate, and keep conference feeling fresh

**Educational Workshops:** choose best proposals, invite authors to flesh out

## 9.9 Promoting Excellent Science: Oral & Poster Presentations

**Abstract management:** finalise scoring, score adjustment.

SSM Committee meeting in late April. Finalises 90 selected for Oral Presentations and 90-100 selected for posters.

Hg3 notifies successful authors iteratively, adjusting for any drop-outs.

Authors then invited to register for conference by [May] deadline

## 9.10 Guidance for reviewers assessing abstracts

Each abstract is randomly assigned to four reviewers. All members of all the SSM Committees and appropriate members of the LOC are expected to review abstracts. Other academics and researchers at the host institution are also eligible to be invited to review abstracts. (Aiming for about 40 reviewers in total, as in 2020, 2021). The reviewers are given the following guidelines, which are also made available on the abstract submission site to those wishing to submit an abstract:

### 9.10.1 General

Abstracts will be anonymised, then assessed by at least four reviewers, independently, and the final score derived. Reviewers will remain masked to the authors and their institution throughout. Abstracts submitted from the same institution as a reviewer will not be assessed by that reviewer and subject to this constraint, abstracts will otherwise be allocated randomly to reviewers, after adjusting for reviewer skills (Quant/Qual/Mixed or All). The scoring system ranges between 0 and 10, with zero given to abstracts not compliant with the Guidelines for Abstraction Submission and will be rejected at this stage; this includes abstracts not written in English, not written in a structured abstract style as appropriate. The online abstract submission form has been set-up so that a structured abstract is now readily adhered to and it will not allow the author to exceed the word count of 400 (excluding title).

The top 10 scoring abstracts will be highlighted as high scoring in the abstract booklet.

The top ten scoring posters can also be highlighted (in a different way), at the discretion of the LOC chair.

### 9.10.2 Judging criteria for SSM abstract reviewers

The criteria are reviewed and updated each year by the ASM chair.

At present, up to 10 points are allocated for scientific quality, and 0-5 points for “interest”. Please check with LOC Chair.



A specific points system (Appendix C) was used by SSM for some years, and has been adopted by the Lancet PHS Conference.

### Interest, appeal and impact: 0 – 5 points

Is it interesting? Is it topical? Would it appeal to a broad ASM audience? Does it have the potential to create impact (i.e. change clinical or public health practice or policy, improve health, reduce inequalities in health, change the course of science)? Is it novel/exciting/much better methodologically than other studies in the area?

#### 9.10.3 Moderation of marks

Abstracts are anonymised, then assessed by at least four reviewers, independently, and the final score derived. Either as an arithmetic mean, or, as present, using a multiple-membership model software programme. The latter adjusts for inter-reviewer variation, using a method developed by Prof Mark Gilthorpe (Leeds University) (see Appendix D).

The scoresheet (with adjusted and unadjusted scores and ranks) is circulated CONFIDENTIALLY, along with copies of the 10 highest scoring abstracts (adjusted scores) to the SSM Committee members prior to the April meeting, at which the committee selects:

- About 90 abstracts for oral presentation during parallel sessions;
- 60+ abstracts for poster presentations; and
- The threshold below which abstracts should not be offered a presentation, should vacancies occur.
- Prizewinners

At the final plenary session of the ASM, the pre-PhD ECR and the post-PhD ECR who submitted the abstract with the highest score are each presented with vouchers (amount increased to £100 each in 2012), paid for by the Society.

In some years, the three highest scoring abstracts are presented at a plenary session (because a range of topics, studies, and institutions is desirable, these are not necessarily the three highest scoring abstracts); See Appendix E.

#### 9.10.4 Abstract processing

**Deadlines: The timeline for #SSM2021 is shown below**

STAGE	Action	Suggested Deadline for 2021	Responsible parties
1	Prepare abstract form. SSM to send updated guidelines, categories, award information, conference logos	8 January or earlier	Hg3 / SSM Local Committee
2	Finalise and set up abstract form	29 January or earlier	Hg3 / SSM Local Committee
3	Conference page: send website structure, colour scheme, SSM & Conference logos to Comms Officer		SSM Local Committee/Hg3
4	Get form live and link on conference web page - include advert for Free Place for SSM members, with emphasis on preference going to abstracts accepted	1 February,	Hg3 / SSM Local Committee



5	Send out email to all members of the Society advising them the abstract form is live - include advert for Free Place for SSM members	As soon as form is live	SSM National Committee
6	Send Hg3 a list of peer reviewers' contact details so that the reviewers website can be set up	8 February	SSM Local Committee
7	Send updated peer reviewer guidelines	8 February	SSM Local Committee
8	Abstract Submission Deadline, at least 4 weeks after call published. (expect~250 abstracts)	Monday 15 March	
9	Send Scientific Officer spreadsheet with submitting author's ID No, Title, presenting author, co-authors and affiliations	16 March	Hg3
10	Receive randomised allocation of abstracts to reviewers from Scientific Officer -	22 March	SSM National Committee/ Scientific Officer
11	Allocate individual abstracts to reviewers and create pdf's	22 - 24 March	Hg3
12	Send pdf and spreadsheet to webmaster so he can allocate abstracts on reviewer's site	25 March	Hg3
13	Email reviewers with instructions as to how to log onto the reviewers website	25 March	Hg3
14	Reviewers to complete their scores on line (allow them 2 weeks)	25 Mar - 8 April	Reviewers
15	Scores are collated and sent out to Scientific Officer	w/c 12 April	Hg3
16	Updated Registration form to Hg3, bookings open in May	12 April	SSM Local Committee
17	Scientific Officer to review the collated score sheets in preparation for the meeting	12 - 23 April	Scientific Officer / SSM National Committee
18	Meeting of the Society's Committee to make abstract selection	27 April	SSM National committee
19	Registration form goes live	Week/b 3 May	Hg3/ SSM National Committee
20	Initial author letters are sent out advising submitting authors whether they have been selected or rejected, asking them to register and pay by 31 May (if giving deadline)	Week/b 3 May	Hg3

21	FREE PLACE APPLICATIONS NOTIFIED - priority to those who have abstracts accepted; and those who have submitted		SSM National Committee
22	Send updated guidelines for posters & speakers to Hg3 (these will be sent out with confirmation letters)	Week/b 17 May	SSM Local Committee
24	Send out author notification letters confirming oral presentation slots/poster numbers	Week/b 17 May	Hg3
25	Final list of presenters agreed and reminder sent to author asking them to register and pay by 27 May (if giving deadline)	Week/b 17 May	Hg3
26	Local committee Chair plus 1 or 2 others meet to batch abstracts into session themes		SSM Local Committee
27	Programme Files to be prepared for Printers (not needed 2021)		Hg3
28	Prepare provisional oral programme, publish on website so authors can check when and where they need to attend		SSM Local Committee
29	DEADLINE for authors to register and pay - you need to chase up those who have not (if necessary extend the deadline) [remember to follow-up later on, amending the programme if some drop out]		Hg3 then SSM Local Committee
30	JECH Copy Deadline (not needed in 2021))		SSM Local Committee
31	Chase Authors who have not registered		Hg3 / SSM Local Committee

### Detailed roles

*Informing presenters:* This is currently done by the professional conference organisers, HG3.

*Penalties for withdrawal:* None, apart from losing some or all of their registration fee if they have already registered (except where specific extenuating circumstances lead the ASM chair to decide this should be reimbursed).

*Preparing the abstracts for publication in a JECH supplement, if required:* This is done by HG3, under the guidance of the ASM committee. See the timeline. It is important that negotiations with JECH commence early in the calendar year, to agree a cost and the timings to ensure delivery of printed supplements in time for distribution to conference participants. HOWEVER, a hardcopy version has NOT been required since 2020.

### **Preparing the Conference Programme.**

This is done jointly by the ASM Chair, LOC and ASM committee.

## 9.11 Session chairs & co-chairs

Session chairs & co-chairs are progressively identified, as Programme is finalised. If a virtual conference, need training. For a F2F, written guidelines should suffice.

## 9.12 ECR Day (Day 1 of the Main Conference)

The ECR Day has been running for nearly the last decade of the conference. This workshop, specifically relevant to ECRs, have included topics such as 'How to publish in leading journals', 'Preparing a successful research proposal' and 'How to get started with a systematic review'. In 2020, a shorter event focused on collaborations. In 2021, we focused on ECR wellbeing and research culture. Both the 2020 and 2021 events were held online. Being online allowed for a larger breadth of speakers who may not usually attend SSM. In the past, often other ECRs, mid- and senior- career researchers who are SSM members have been asked to participate as chairs and speakers as this means they are already likely attending the event in-person. Alternatively, local speakers have also been invited to cut down on costs of hosting an out-of-town guest.

It is the role of the two Local Officers to lead the event with the support and guidance of the whole ECR Subcommittee. When held in-person, the Local Officers will work to identify a location and (in some cases) obtain additional funding in coordination with the AGM LOC Chair. The ECR Subcommittee will liaise with the SSM Treasurer and the LOC to determine the budget of the ECR day. Hg3 support communications and registration for the day and it is good to understand their role early on by planning a call with them or getting clear direction from the AGM Local Committee Chair.

More information about the past events are on the website: <https://socsocmed.org.uk/ecr-workshops-and-events/>. An example save the date from 2021 is below.



**Society for Social Medicine & Population Health**  
Annual Scientific Virtual Meeting 2021  
**UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL**

Pre-Conference Networking Evening & ECR Day

# RESEARCHER PATHWAYS - Looking ahead as an ECR

Join us in conversation about how we support each other, ourselves, and our careers as ECRs. Featuring guest speakers, interactive sessions, panel discussions, and much more!

Networking: Monday 13 September 2021| Time: 4pm-6pm BST  
ECR Day: Tuesday 14 September 2021| Time: 9.30am-2.30pm BST  
Register: <https://socsocmed.org.uk/annualscientificmeeting/>

Hosted by the SSM ECR Subcommittee  
@ECR\_SSM  
<https://socsocmed.org.uk/ecr-committee/>

Example timeline/check list for a September event (not detailed):

- As soon as possible: determine location and consider budget requirements; understand catering options, prices, and key dates for final numbers
- Begin discussing themes and topics for the event – January/February

- Determine theme and initial speaker invite list – April
- First round speaker/chair invites – beginning of May
- Send *Save the Date* with the main theme and description – May
- Final confirmation of speakers/chair – beginning of July
- Share event information with Hg3 for website and for registrants – July
- Consider when you need to “close” registration, especially if in-person
- Finalise catering, order any additional stationary or materials needed (i.e. name badges)
- Email communications to all registrants with basic information – August
- Printing and organising of all materials – 1-2 weeks before
- Detailed event information to all registrants – week before

#### Day-of considerations

- What support do you need from the ECR subcommittee or other local organisers (sign in, A/V, welcome/intro, twitter, etc.)?
- Develop a detailed facilitators’ agenda to share with key organisers, run through it ahead of the day
- Evaluation shared immediately after the event (same day gets most responses; share with Hg3 ahead of time)
- Speaker thank you emails or notes, honorarium or dinner (traditionally invited the night before)

## 9.13 Eponymous lectures at the ASM

### 9.13.1 The Cochrane Lecture (1990 onwards)

Archie Cochrane (1909-1988) made many highly significant contributions to medicine, medical research and public health. He is particularly remembered for his challenge that the reports of medical research, and in particular, randomised trials, should be organised, evaluated and up-dated at intervals to give a valid evidence-base for medical and surgical practice. His frequent challenges led Iain Chalmers to set up the Cochrane Collaboration, which, in turn, led to a paradigm shift in clinical practice summarised in the phrase: ‘evidence-based medicine’.

Archie Cochrane was a founding member of both the Society of Social Medicine and the International Epidemiological Association. He valued both and was a very frequent attendee at their meetings. He often expressed delight at the inclusion of disciplines other than medicine, and later, in playing a key role in the setting up of the Faculty of Community Medicine (now the Faculty of Public Health) he was concerned lest this, being within the Royal College of Medicine, might otherwise become exclusive to those who were medically qualified.

Archie was a lateral thinker with almost unlimited interests in medicine. The encouragement he gave to others, and especially to junior research workers – whatever the topic of their research – enriched many a career. He was also deeply concerned at the lack of rigour in the evaluation of clinical interventions. He yearned for more attention to be given to the prevention, rather than the treatment of disease. Furthermore, that concern predates his involvement in [clinical activities](#). A written obituary can be found at: [Obituary of medical pioneer Archie Cochrane, written 19 September 1983 \[image 1 of 4\] \(peoplescollection.wales\)](#)

The first Cochrane Lecture of the Society of Social Medicine was given by Peter Elwood at the Annual meeting of the Society in Glasgow in 1990. More information is available on the

SSM website ([Cochrane Lecture – Society for Social Medicine & Population Health \(socsocmed.org.uk\)](http://socsocmed.org.uk)), where a list of previous lecturers can also be found ([Past Lectures – Society for Social Medicine & Population Health \(socsocmed.org.uk\)](http://socsocmed.org.uk))

### 9.13.2 The Pemberton Lecture (2007 onwards)

In 1933 John Pemberton with other medical students at University College London offered first aid to the Jarrow Hunger Marchers. Concerned by the Marchers' condition, he wrote an article on "Malnutrition in England", linking malnutrition to the level of unemployment benefits. After completing medical training, he worked with Sir John Boyd Orr on a nutrition survey of some 5,000 British children. In 1941 he was appointed tutor (later senior lecturer and reader) in the University of Sheffield Medical School and worked on vitamin deficiency with Professor Sir Hans Krebs. In 1958 he took up the Chair of Social and Preventative Medicine at Queen's University, Belfast, a position he held until retirement in 1976. Professor Pemberton died on 7 February 2010 (see obituary [www.guardian.co.uk/science/2010/apr/14/john-pemberton-obituary](http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2010/apr/14/john-pemberton-obituary)).

Whilst on study leave in the USA during 1954-5 John Pemberton met Harold Willard. Together they started the 'International Corresponding Club', which became the International Epidemiological Association (IEA). On return to the UK in 1956 he took a leading role in founding SSM (see [Origins and early history of the Society for Social Medicine in the UK and Ireland | Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health \(bmj.com\)](http://bmj.com)).

In September 2007, the Society for Social Medicine ASM was held jointly with the European section of the International Epidemiological Association. This meeting at University College Cork, Ireland was the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first meetings of both the IEA and SSM. In celebration of these fiftieth anniversaries and in recognition of Professor Pemberton's role in the foundation of both societies, SSM established an annual John Pemberton lecture. The inaugural John Pemberton lecture was presented by Professor Jørn Olsen (president of the IEA). More information is available on the SSM website ([Pemberton Lecture – Society for Social Medicine & Population Health \(socsocmed.org.uk\)](http://socsocmed.org.uk)), where a list of previous lecturers can also be found ([Past Lectures – Society for Social Medicine & Population Health \(socsocmed.org.uk\)](http://socsocmed.org.uk)).

### 9.13.3 Election & Invitation – SSM President

This is the responsibility of the SSM Committee. At the April/May Committee meeting, the President seeks suggestions for eminent speakers to invite to give these two lectures the following year. Usually there will be two names agreed for each, one to be invited and one in reserve, to be invited if the first declines or is unable to accept. In line with the work of Cochrane and Pemberton, the Cochrane Lecture typically focuses more on policy and evidence-based practice, and the Pemberton lecture more on epidemiology.

A list of past Cochrane and Pemberton lecturers is available on the SSM website at [www.socsocmed.org.uk/ssminfo.htm](http://www.socsocmed.org.uk/ssminfo.htm).

The President invites the two speakers (and the reserve if necessary) and notifies the Committee at the September meeting (and the chair of the ASM organising committee earlier, if desired) of the outcome.

If the LOC has a particular reason for wanting a specific individual to be invited, they can contact the SSM Committee by the beginning of April 17 months before their ASM to make the case. However, it is the SSM President and Committee who make the final decision.

### 9.13.4 Practical arrangements – ASM Chair

This is the responsibility of the ASM chair and LOC. The Chair (or other designated person) needs to contact the invited speakers to ascertain the title of the lectures (for the

programme), agree the timing of the lecture, and, nearer the time, ascertain their travel details.

The speakers have their accommodation and registration at the ASM paid for by the ASM, including the ASM dinner. Their travel costs are also reimbursed by the ASM. It is customary for the SSM Committee to take the invited speakers out to dinner on the evening prior to the ASM (paid for by SSM but organised by the ASM Chair) and for the ASM Chair to take the speakers out to dinner after the reception on the first evening of the ASM (paid for by the ASM). The ASM Chair and SSM President each thank the speakers afterwards.

## 9.14 Conference Budget Issues

The ASM Chair will work closely with the SSM Treasurer and SSM President on these issues, with regular reviews.

A conference budget spreadsheet with typical headings is detailed in Appendix F.

### 9.14.1 Bursaries

The SSM Committee is committed to continue funding at least 25 free places at each ASM for students, early career researchers or others with limited funding<sup>1</sup> to attend, subject to a healthy financial status.

At the same time as abstract submission deadlines are advertised a notice is posted on the SSM and ASM websites announcing that a number of bursaries are available. Applicants are asked to complete an application, and the deadline for this matches the abstract submission process. Previous recipients of a bursary are eligible to apply again, but the maximum number of awards is two.

Bursaries are offered to all those eligible who have an abstract accepted. If places remain, a selection panel is convened comprising the Honorary Treasurer and one other Committee member. If necessary, the President has the casting vote.

After the application deadline, the applicants' supporting statements are anonymised and sent to the selection panel.

The bursary covers the cost of registration, accommodation for the two nights, conference dinner and social events up front from the local ASM budget. The award holder arranges their own travel and keeps tickets/receipts which they send to the Treasurer's administrative assistant after the conference. Travel expenses up to £200 (standard class and only absolutely essential taxis) are reimbursed from the central SSM budget. Award holders submit a report to the SSM communications officer on their experience of the meeting (about 200 words) and this must be received before travel costs can be reimbursed.

### 9.14.2 Free places at the ASM

The ASM covers the costs of the ASM registration fee, accommodation, and travel for:

- the SSM Committee President, Honorary Treasurer, Honorary Secretary and Communications Officer
- the invited Pemberton and Cochrane lecturers
- students, ECRs and others with limited funding who are awarded bursaries (see above).

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<sup>1</sup> Eligibility criteria may change from year to year. Previously this has been based for example on evidence of low income.



## 9.15 Delivering a Virtual Conference

The ASM sections above, are generic, and apply equally well to either the traditional face-to-face (F2F) format, or to a Virtual Conference, as delivered in 2020 and 2021 because of the ongoing pandemic.

### Principles

The key objective is to elicit and maintain engagement with each participant, isolated in front of their screen at home or in an office.

### Practical issues

That means:

- Building and marketing a programme designed to appeal to a wide audience
- Providing the material in short, digestible “snackable bites”
- Pre-recording & submitting almost all the presentations in advance, in order to pre-empt any glitches in connectivity on the day itself
- Recording each session Q&A & discussion, and providing it for participants to view later, at their leisure.
- Creating lots of spaces and opportunities for social interaction (we used Gather Town in 2021)
- Facilitating a live Q&A to maximise participant engagement in live sessions
- Using Zoom rather than Slido for Q&A questions when feasible.

Also:

- Using professional conference organisers able to provide high quality, responsive and agile support to faculty and participants
- Using professionals to deliver a tried-and-tested conference platform
- Providing user-friendly instructions, to ensure all participants could navigate easily around the Conference Platform (some were very IT literate, some less so)
- Providing user-friendly instructions and training sessions for all presenters, chairs, co-chairs, workshop hosts, panellists etc.

## 9.16 Post ASM Evaluation

Post ASM Evaluation – each year an online evaluation survey is conducted for those who attend the ASM. SSM has often appointed a survey officer to do this. Findings are discussed at the January committee meeting.

A typical ASM Evaluation form is detailed in Appendix G

## 10 One Day Meetings

### 10.1 Principles

An application process for holding one day SSM meetings and workshops has been developed, agreed by the committee and implemented in 2015.

## 10.2 Checklist for organising a one-day meeting

A list of previous one-day meetings can be found at [Previous Events – Society for Social Medicine & Population Health \(socsocmed.org.uk\)](http://socsocmed.org.uk/Previous%20Events%20-%20Society%20for%20Social%20Medicine%20&%20Population%20Health)

The checklist for organising a workshop at the ASM could be found here: [Workshop Guide – Society for Social Medicine & Population Health \(socsocmed.org.uk\)](http://socsocmed.org.uk/Workshop%20Guide%20-%20Society%20for%20Social%20Medicine%20&%20Population%20Health)

*Target audience and purpose:* Consider target audience. This will determine the theme, specific objectives, publicity strategy, venue and estimates of attendance. Each one-day meeting should have a clear purpose, with a clear understanding of what the meeting is intended to achieve

*Speakers:* Invite speakers

*Date:* Set date

*Venue:* One-day meetings, like the ASM, can take place anywhere. The cost of the venue has to be covered by charging for attendance, though the Society underwrites these events.

*Financial administration:* Set up a financial system within your own university and approach SSM at the end with financial records and a cheque if there is a profit, and financial records and a request for a cheque if there is a loss.

*Costs:* When estimating the cost, include the cost of conference facilities including lunch and refreshments for attendees; speakers' costs for travel, accommodation, subsistence and a token of appreciation; and printing, telephone, post and administrative help.

When determining how much to charge for attendance, go for breakeven, with an estimate of attendance between 30 and 80 people. Charge less for SSM members and low-income groups. For example, £35-£70 for SSM members, £60-£90 for non-SSM members, and £10-£20 for non-waged (2012 prices). The fee will depend on both the numbers expected and the costs, for example whether rooms can be obtained without charge, and whether speakers and facilitators require reimbursement of expenses. SSM encourages events to be inexpensive, to enable more people to attend.

*Advertising:* The conference details can be placed on the SSM website, Twitter, Facebook and in issues of the SSM Newsletter and a monthly SSM email free of charge.

If it suits your target audience, advertise free in monthly emails from Faculty of Public Health, via Public Health Observatories / Public Health England, Heads of Academic Departments of Public Health (HOADS), relevant jiscmail lists, newsletters and websites of other organisations, etc.

*Evaluation:* Report back to the SSM committee. You may want to evaluate the day using a short evaluation sheet in the delegate pack. Higher response rates are generally achieved by emailing delegates shortly afterwards with a link to an online survey, e.g. using Survey Monkey, than from paper forms distributed at the time.

Example survey sheets can be found at the end of this handbook, at Appendix H.

## 11 Links with other organisations

As described, provision is made for representatives on the SSM committee of related societies. These should be in the fields of epidemiology, public health and/or health services research.



## 11.1 EUPHA: the European Public Health Association

Members of the Society are automatically members of EUPHA under a special arrangement. Martin McKee, a founder member of EUPHA and active in SSM, provided a strong link between the organisations. This has financial implications for the Society, which have to be considered when agreeing membership fees.

Both the Faculty of Public Health (FPH) and the SSM are constituent organisations of EUPHA. The two organisations will take turns in representing the UK.

A second member also sits on the EUPHA Scientific Committee (which reviews abstracts). This is an elected role, but the elected person is not eligible to be on the SSM committee.

## 11.2 International Epidemiology Association (IEA)

SSM and IEA share the same origins, and almost the same founding group. Each was started in 1957, with very similar aims and objectives. They have also shared conferences (e.g. Oxford and Cork). SSM is the society representing the UK (and also still Ireland) on the European regional board of the IEA, as IEA is administered along the lines of WHO regions. IEA offers reduced membership subscriptions for members of recognized / signed up national (epidemiology) societies.

## 11.3 Other links

Health Services Research UK; Society for Behavioural Medicine, Royal Statistical Society, Faculty of Public Health Medicine.

# 12 Applying for Membership

## 12.1 Eligibility

Membership of the Society is open to those who contribute to the objectives of the Society. For nomination to Membership of the Society, the Committee requires confirmation of eligibility from a proposer who is already a member. That confirmation might consider references to published work, accounts of current research and/or accounts of teaching responsibility or position held.

## 12.2 Process of application

### 12.2.1 Application

The application form and direct debit mandate form can be found at [Membership – Society for Social Medicine & Population Health \(socsocmed.org.uk\)](http://socsocmed.org.uk).

Prospective members must complete the online membership application forms. New members are generally proposed by an existing member who knows them in a work context.

Prospective members must include the name of a current member willing to nominate them. Where they do not know any members, or do not know who is a member locally, the Committee can email current members working in the same geographical area or institution to ask whether any of them would be willing to nominate that individual.

When someone applies who does not know an existing member, they are asked to send in a short CV and the Honorary Treasurer will make a decision.

To avoid financial scams, confirmation is sought from their employer for non-EU applicants not known to SSM members.

The individual requesting membership will receive information from the Membership Secretary (Hg3) for payment of that year's annual fee (£35 in 2021) and to complete a Standing Order mandate.

### 12.2.2 Approval and publicity

The Honorary Treasurer circulates the list of proposed new members to the current SSM Committee. The purpose of sending the list round to the committee is a double-check to make sure that none of the Committee has any previous experience of that person that would make them concerned about consenting to membership, e.g. someone known to lobby for the Tobacco Industry (true example). Sometimes there are names on the list that have no proposer yet. This is the Committee's chance to raise any objections, but even if no-one objects, they are not instated as a member until they have been proposed by an existing member, or the Honorary Treasurer has read and approved their CV. This order of activities ensures that genuine applicants are able to join the society as soon as possible. In summary, no-one becomes a member until they have been proposed by another member, approved by the Committee and their membership fee has been received.

The names of new members admitted since the last newsletter are published in the following newsletter.

## 12.3 Privacy Policy for Membership Data

Full information on the SSM privacy policy is available here:

<https://socsocmed.org.uk/constitution-of-the-society/ssm-privacy-policy-2/>

We appreciate that privacy is very important to members. We welcome comments regarding this policy so it may be improved. Members are asked to send comments to the Honorary Secretary, at [secretary.ssm@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.ssm@gmail.com).

As a result of comments and legislation, the Society reserves the right to modify its Privacy Statement from time to time.

## 12.4 Proposal for Election to Honorary Membership

Honorary members are generally around retirement age, having normally been long standing members of the Society, and have made a significant contribution to the Society and/or to social medicine.

Historically the decision on who to invite has been made entirely by the Committee. The Honorary Secretary ensures this item is on the agenda for the April/May committee meeting.

Suggestions are discussed, and two or more proposals accepted The President then contacts the proposed individuals to invite them to become honorary life members. The names of those so proposed who have accepted are included in the Honorary Secretary's report to the AGM. Names of honorary members (including those who are deceased) are listed at [Honorary Members – Society for Social Medicine & Population Health \(socsocmed.org.uk\)](https://socsocmed.org.uk).

From 2015, a new system was adopted where members are asked for nominations for honorary membership based on i) contribution to population health and ii) contribution to the

Society. The Committee will then decide on which members should be offered honorary status.

## **13 Committee Procedures**

### **13.1 Nominations to committees**

#### **13.1.1 President-elect**

Following amendments to the constitution in 2021, the term of office was changed from one year as Chair to two years as President. That increased continuity and enabled successful Presidents to develop and implement improvements. In alternate years, the Honorary Secretary issues a call in July to SSM members for nominations for President-elect - in time for the elected individual to be named at the AGM preceding their term of office. The elected officer will be President-elect for one year from 1<sup>st</sup> January of the year following their election, President from 1<sup>st</sup> January of the subsequent two years, and Immediate past President from 1<sup>st</sup> January until 31<sup>st</sup> December of their fourth year.

#### **13.1.2 Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and Communications Officer**

The term of office is for up to five years. In the office-holder's final year or earlier, the Honorary Secretary issues a call for nominations to all members. Ideally this is also in July, to enable election results to be announced at the AGM before the change of officer.

#### **13.1.3 Ordinary Committee members**

The term of office is for three years. Each July, the Honorary Secretary issues a call for nominations to all members.

#### **13.1.4 Co-opted members**

The Committee has the power to co-opt members to join the committee for specific roles that can't be undertaken by ordinary committee members. These include co-ordinating the LOC for the ASM, acting as liaison of a related professional society, and other roles as required at different times. The length of service of a co-opted member should relate to their role in the society, but not usually be any longer than that of an ordinary member (3 years). If appropriate, co-opted members could serve more than one term of office. Overall, the committee should always have more elected than co-opted members.

#### **13.1.5 Section sub-committees**

At least one member of the section sub-committee (usually the chair) sits on the main SSM Committee.

Only Section members are eligible to vote for members of Section sub-committees.

#### **13.1.6 Section subcommittee members**

The term of office is for three years. Each year, each Section subcommittee issues a call for nominations to all members of that section. Each subcommittee decides which of them will chair the subcommittee and which of them will represent the section on the main SSM Committee. While there are few enough sections for this not to impact adversely on the Committee, each of these tasks should usually be undertaken for at least two years, to ensure continuity, so there are two representatives from each section on the main SSM Committee, with staggered terms.

The ECR section may include non-SSM members on their mailing list for certain activities, if they feel this will introduce a larger range of individuals to the Society but only individuals who are members of the Society in good standing can be deemed Section members; other sections are expected to include only SSM members on their mailing list. If the call for nominations is circulated to the entire ECR mailing list, those wishing to stand would need to join the SSM if not already members, as nominations for an SSM Section committee can be accepted only from Society members. Unlike other nominations, the call for new Section subcommittee members can be made *after* the ASM, to attract more interest. Other sections can also make a case to the main Committee to have this timing.

### 13.1.7 SSM representatives to other organisations

The SSM Committee includes SSM members co-opted to represent SSM on the following organisations:

- The International Epidemiology Association European Epidemiology Federation (IEA-EEF)
- The European Public Health Association (EUPHA) – membership of the Governing Board rotates between the SSM and the Faculty of Public Health but representatives of each body receive full documentation from EUPHA. Therefore, the Committee also discussed in 2011 inviting a representative from the Faculty of Public Health (FPH) to join the SSM Committee, and would propose reciprocal representation but no decision or action has yet been taken.

The SSM Committee identifies such individuals; and they can use the newsletter to call for volunteers for and/or election to these roles.

### 13.1.8 Eligibility criteria and procedures

All committee members, including those on SSM Section subcommittees, must be SSM members in good standing at the time of their nomination and throughout their tenure. Nominations must be signed by both a proposer and a seconder, each of whom must be SSM members in good standing. Electronic signatures are acceptable but not typed forms without signatures. Interested potential nominees who do not know any SSM members can contact the Honorary Secretary, who will try to help, for example by contacting SSM members local to that individual.

If more nominations are received than there are vacancies (i.e. more than one for Officer posts or more than two for Ordinary committee membership), the Honorary Secretary will arrange an electronic ballot. Each candidate is asked to provide a 50 word statement about what they would contribute to the Society, which is sent electronically to all members together with the names of each candidate, instructions for voting (one vote is allowed per vacancy, so two votes for committee membership), the deadline for voting, and a link to the ballot. The Honorary Secretary usually notifies the membership of the results through the AGM report.

If too few nominations are received, the Honorary Secretary can re-issue the call for nominations and conduct the ballot subsequently. In that case, the membership is notified of the results through the monthly email or quarterly newsletter.

## 13.2 Organising SSM Committee meetings

There are three full committee meetings each year, usually in January, April and September. There are also three teleconference meetings of officers only, to take forward key actions. The Honorary Secretary organises all of these meetings supported by the administrative support organisation, currently Hg3.

The Secretary prepares a draft agenda, based on the template above (section 3.6.2 above) plus additional items that have been sent to him/her. The draft is agreed with the President, then circulated to all the committee members, together with other relevant papers. In 2011, a numbering system was introduced for committee meeting papers. Each paper is identified using three numbers:

- The year of the meeting
- The number of the meeting (numbered continuously since the first committee meeting, not renumbered each year)
- The agenda item to which it refers.

So, for example, the minutes of the 183<sup>rd</sup> meeting, to be considered at the 184<sup>th</sup> meeting, were identified as 2011\_184\_2 (as it was the second item on the agenda).

This number forms the filename of the document and is added as a footer to the document.

## 14 SSM Information: Lists

- SSM Blogs: [blog – Society for Social Medicine & Population Health \(socsocmed.org.uk\)](http://blog-society-for-social-medicine-and-population-health.socsocmed.org.uk)
- Newsletters: [Newsletters – Society for Social Medicine & Population Health \(socsocmed.org.uk\)](http://newsletters-society-for-social-medicine-and-population-health.socsocmed.org.uk)
- Workshop guide: [Workshop Guide – Society for Social Medicine & Population Health \(socsocmed.org.uk\)](http://workshop-guide-society-for-social-medicine-and-population-health.socsocmed.org.uk)
- Honorary Members: [Honorary Members – Society for Social Medicine & Population Health \(socsocmed.org.uk\)](http://honorary-members-society-for-social-medicine-and-population-health.socsocmed.org.uk)
- ASMs held: [ASM Venues – Society for Social Medicine & Population Health \(socsocmed.org.uk\)](http://asm-venues-society-for-social-medicine-and-population-health.socsocmed.org.uk)
- Pemberton and Cochrane lecture speakers: [Past Lectures – Society for Social Medicine & Population Health \(socsocmed.org.uk\)](http://past-lectures-society-for-social-medicine-and-population-health.socsocmed.org.uk)
- Early Career Researchers [Early Career Researchers – Society for Social Medicine & Population Health \(socsocmed.org.uk\)](http://early-career-researchers-society-for-social-medicine-and-population-health.socsocmed.org.uk)
- Mid Career Researchers [Mid Career Researchers – Society for Social Medicine & Population Health \(socsocmed.org.uk\)](http://mid-career-researchers-society-for-social-medicine-and-population-health.socsocmed.org.uk)
- Senior Career Researchers [Senior Career Researchers – Society for Social Medicine & Population Health \(socsocmed.org.uk\)](http://senior-career-researchers-society-for-social-medicine-and-population-health.socsocmed.org.uk)
- Network Platform [Network Platform – Society for Social Medicine & Population Health \(socsocmed.org.uk\)](http://network-platform-society-for-social-medicine-and-population-health.socsocmed.org.uk)
- Mentoring [Mentoring – Society for Social Medicine & Population Health \(socsocmed.org.uk\)](http://mentoring-society-for-social-medicine-and-population-health.socsocmed.org.uk)
- Past Committee Members [Past Committees – Society for Social Medicine & Population Health \(socsocmed.org.uk\)](http://past-committees-society-for-social-medicine-and-population-health.socsocmed.org.uk)

## 15 Appendices

### Appendix A Division<sup>3</sup> of labour between the national SSM Committee and the Annual Conference LOC

In general, the content of this handbook describes what the main SSM Committee does. The person / institution whose offer to host an ASM is accepted is responsible for setting up a LOC and arranging for administrative support (from within the institution and/or from an inexpensive conference provider, for example Hg3, which has assisted with the ASMs since 2011). The LOC is responsible for everything associated with organising and hosting the ASM, except as listed in the table below, which itemises responsibilities that are shared between the two Committees. These SSM responsibilities are described in more detail in the sub-sections that follow.

<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>SSM Committee role</b>	<b>ASM LOC role</b>
Setting up ASM website	Membership secretary (Hg3) will do this	Supply information to the webmaster
Abstract submission & selection	Membership secretary sends emails to membership; Webmaster places guidance, etc on SSM and ASM websites and link to submission site;  The Abstract Moderator randomly allocates abstracts to reviewers (adjusting for reviewer skills, and removing potential institutional conflicts of interest). Every SSM Committee member (main, ECR, MCR and local) peer-reviews 20-30 abstracts; The abstract moderator moderates the scores; The SSM Committee reviews the scores at the April meeting.	Everything else, including setting up submission site; sending information to SSM Secretary & Webmaster; publicity; recruiting reviewers; acknowledging submissions; sending instructions and abstracts to reviewers; notifying authors; arranging the programme; LOC chair provides text for webpages.
JECH	Hg3 negotiates the JECH fee. Treasurer approves the JECH fee & pays the JECH invoice. Big saving in 2020 and 2021- online only, no hardcopy.	Negotiating the JECH fee; preparing the JECH supplement; liaising with JECH re publication timetable & delivery
Free place applications	Membership Secretary sends emails to membership;	Hg3 arranges free registration

	Webmaster places on SSM and ASM websites; Treasurer & small group adjudicate, once accepted presentations are known.	
Pemberton & Cochrane lecturers	Chosen by the SSM committee; invited by the SSM President & LOC Chair	Can suggest names to the SSM Secretary before the May meeting the preceding year. Arrange free registration and accommodation. ASM Chair takes the speakers out to dinner after the reception on the first evening of the ASM (paid for by SSM).
	Thanked by the SSM President	Thanked by the ASM Chair
Hospitality around the ASM	SSM Committee & invited speakers (those who are already there) & LOC go out for an informal dinner the night before the ASM. Paid by the Treasurer.	The dinner is arranged by the LOC
Prizes	In 2021 - £50 for pre-doc and post-doc ECR with the highest scoring abstracts: generic book voucher bought by HG3, paid by SSM	Given by LOC Chair at final plenary

## Appendix B Conference Abstract Guidelines for authors

(updated each year by the ASM Chair).

4

1. We welcome abstracts on health services research, epidemiology, public health, statistics, sociology, psychology, health policy and/or mixed methods research.
2. Abstracts can only be submitted via the conference website at [Annual Scientific Meeting – Society for Social Medicine & Population Health \(socsocmed.org.uk\)](http://AnnualScientificMeeting-SocietyforSocialMedicine&PopulationHealth.socsocmed.org.uk)
3. The abstract should be 400 words or fewer, structured with up to four subheadings, as appropriate, chosen from the following: background; setting; data; methods; results; and conclusion. Some results must be included in the abstract, including statistical tests where appropriate; abstracts stating that ‘results will be presented’ will not generally be considered. Results of ongoing analyses are acceptable. Results of systematic reviews are welcome. No references or tables are permitted.
4. An abstract may be submitted for oral or poster presentation or for either.
5. While you can submit multiple abstracts, a submitting author can only make one oral presentation at the ASM. If more than one of your abstracts is selected, you will have to identify a co-author/investigator to present or withdraw your abstract. No such restrictions apply to poster presentations.
6. **The deadline for submission is 23:59 GMT on DATE March YEAR.**
7. You will be sent an acknowledgement of receipt of your submission with a reference number. Please keep a record of this. If you do not receive a reference number for each abstract, please contact HG3 via [ssm@Hg3.co.uk](mailto:ssm@Hg3.co.uk) in the first instance.
8. Your abstract will be assessed by four reviewers - see “Guidance for those assessing abstracts” below.
9. The submitting author will be notified in May whether or not their paper has been accepted for a verbal or poster presentation or rejected.
10. The named presenter or a co-author must be available to present their paper at the meeting. After you have confirmed, you should only withdraw your abstract in exceptional circumstances, as late withdrawal denies someone else the chance of presenting their paper. All those agreeing to present an oral or poster presentation must register for the conference as early as possible.
11. The abstracts for oral presentations will be published in an electronic supplement to the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* and the poster abstracts in a standalone conference booklet.



## Appendix C Specific points system judging criteria for SSM abstract reviewers

Please score the abstract according to the following guidelines. Scores are to be awarded in two parts: 0-10 points for the abstract '*structure & detail*' plus 0-5 points for '*interest, appeal & impact*'; reviewer variability in each score will be assessed. Only the 0-10 score will be used to rank the abstracts, though 0-5 score may be used to inform decisions on tied scores or plenary selection amongst the top scoring abstracts.

Tables, charts or references should not be included in the abstract. The PICO format may be a helpful reference: <http://www.usc.edu/hsc/ebnet/ebframe/PICO.htm>.

Reviewers have the option to score 'zero' any abstract deemed to be seriously flawed; all zero scores will be reviewed by the SSM committee.

### **Title / Structured Headings / Overall Presentation: 0 – 1 point**

Is the title specific, adequate and concise? Does it accurately describe the population studied, the study design or method of data collection or analysis, the research objective or question?

### **Introduction/ Objectives / Hypotheses or Research Question(s): 0 – 1 points**

Is the context made clear? Is the scientific rationale clearly stated? Are the aims, objectives, hypotheses or research question(s) clearly stated?

### **Methods: 0 – 3 points**

**For all types of study**, are the Methods **clearly described**? Are the data sources clearly specified? Are the methods, analytical techniques and software tools specified? Are the methods appropriate to the question being investigated?

**For qualitative studies**: Are qualitative methods appropriate to answering the research questions/addressing research objectives? Are the recruitment method(s), sample population(s), methods of data collection, and methods of data analyses described and appropriate?

**For quantitative, observational experimental or modelling studies**: Are the sample frame(s), sampling method(s), sample population(s), intervention and control conditions, methods of data collection, main outcome measures, assumptions and statistical methods all clear and appropriate?

**For mixed methods**: Is there appropriate use of quantitative/qualitative methods, each clearly described, in an order that makes sense, and each appropriately integrated at the right stage of the analysis/interpretation?

**Systematic reviews**: Should state objectives; data sources; study eligibility criteria, search strategy (e.g. data/text mining), participants, and interventions; study appraisal and synthesis methods (e.g. meta-analysis, meta-regression, narrative synthesis, meta-ethnography). Has the risk of bias and quality of the included studies been considered?

### **Results: 0 – 3 points**

Are results available and described appropriately to be confident that sufficient material will be presented at the conference? Abstracts should not say only that 'results will be presented'.

**For quantitative, observational experimental or mixed methods studies**: Do data presented give a clear indication of precision, favouring confidence intervals over p-values? Do modelling studies present sensitivity analyses?

**For qualitative and mixed methods studies**: Are the sample characteristics described? Are themes and/or categories presented systematically and meaningfully? Is the context in which data were produced recognised in the language used, for example, are data recognised as reported? 30

**For mixed methods:** Describe the data resulting from each method as well as integrated analyses.

**Systematic reviews:** Should report search results at each stage plus main outcomes.

**Conclusions: 0 – 2 points** <sup>4</sup>

Are the conclusions clear and concise? Do they reflect the aims and objectives? Are they supported by the results presented? Are key study limitations acknowledged? Where appropriate, are the implications made clear for policy, practice and further research?

**Interest, appeal and impact: 0 – 5 points**

Is it interesting? Is it topical? Would it appeal to a broad ASM audience? Does it have the potential to create impact (i.e. change clinical or public health practice or policy, improve health, reduce inequalities in health, change the course of science)? Is it novel/exciting/much better methodologically than other studies in the area?

## Appendix D Moderating reviewers' marks for ASM abstracts

A file containing a row for each abstract and a column for each reviewer recording the scores of each reviewer for the abstracts they were assigned is created.

This file is read into a statistical computer package. A multilevel model is fitted to these scores with random intercepts for each reviewer and fixed effects for each abstract ID. The fixed effects are used to produce estimates of the average abstract scores, removing the reviewer effect.

These estimates are ranked and the highest scoring abstracts chosen.

Reviewer residuals are plotted and reported back to all those who reviewed to provide feedback.

R code to perform the above is available.

## **Appendix E Plenary session for the three top scoring abstracts**

The three top scoring abstracts submitted for oral presentations will be selected for the plenary sessions. This will be based on the number of available slots at each conference. For example, if there are five plenary sessions and 90 slots in the parallel sessions, amongst the 95 top scoring abstracts, 3-5 will be selected for plenary presentations and 90 will be selected for the parallel sessions. For the plenary session, the Society committee will consider the extent that abstracts overlap to avoid two presentations from the same study or on very similar themes.

## Appendix F Budget Spreadsheet headings

ASM 2021 Virtual Conference Sept 2021. Draft Budget

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Rate £</b>	<b>Line total</b>	<b>VAT</b>	<b>Total £</b>
Customised Virtual Platform to include ePoster site					
Technical support for ECR day					
Allowance for tech support per room per day					
Allowance for training and briefing sessions					
On Demand per month					
Allowance for Gathertown networking platform					
<b>Hg3 Costs</b>					
Design and build on-line abstract form to include workshops					
Abstract processing fee					
Design and build on-line registration form					
Build ECR Workshop Registration Form					
Delegate management fee (allowance)					
Event Management Fee to upload the content to the virtual platform					
Hg3 virtual on the day management of the platform					
Credit/Debit Card banking charges (allowance)					
<b>Income</b>					
SSM Member					
SSM Member concession					
Non-member					
Complimentary delegates (including speakers)					
<i>Total delegates</i>					
CLOSER sponsorship					
FPH Support					
<i>Total sponsorship</i>					
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>					

## Appendix G Sample evaluation forms

### SSM2021 Annual Scientific virtual meeting

4

#### Section 1 Introduction

Do you consent for your survey responses to be shared with the conference organisers and representatives of the Society for Social Medicine and Population Health? \*

- Yes
- No

Did you attend the ECR pre-conference workshop on Tuesday 14th September? (These will be evaluated with a separate questionnaire that you should receive shortly)

- Yes
- No

#### Section 2 Registration

Please give us your view of the registration process and conference

Abstract submission easy

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Registration easy

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Conference information clear and up to date

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Guidelines for preparing abstract submissions sufficient

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Conference website clearly showed how to access online sessions and workshops

- Strongly agree

- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

### Section 3 Conference attendance and access<sup>4</sup>

Which days did you attend the main conference (via the internet)? \*

- Wednesday 15th September
- Thursday 16th September
- Friday 17th September
- All three days

Was this your first SSM Conference?

- Yes
- No

The Conference Website <https://ssmasmonline.co.uk/> was easy to access and navigate around

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please indicate your top three reasons for attending the online 2021 SSM

- Recommended by a colleague
- Chance to present my research
- To learn about new research
- To hear about new research methods
- To participate in workshops
- To interact with other ECRs
- To interact with other MCRs
- To interact with SCRs
- Low fee (£99 for members)
- Other reasons (please specify)

How did you learn that the 2021 conference was going to be online. Tick all that apply

- via SSM email or SSM newsletter
- via SSM twitter account
- from an SSM member
- From Hg3 (conference organisers)
- Other (please specify)

Using the internet, how easy did you find it to watch/hear your preferred presentations? \*

- Easy
- Somewhat easy
- Neutral
- Somewhat difficult

- Difficult

#### Section 4 Tuesday afternoon Workshops<sub>4</sub>

Which workshops did you attend, if any?

- Smoke-free homes research: Learning from progress and identifying priorities for future multidisciplinary work
- The new MRC/NIHR Framework for developing and evaluating complex interventions: supporting practical application of some of the key recommendations
- Conceptualising an Agent Based Model: the role of simulation in health improvement

Please share your view of the workshop you attended

Well delivered?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Interesting?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Participative?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Relevant?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Duration about right?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please feel free to add any comments on the workshop you attended:

a) things you liked



b) things that could be improved

## Section 5 Plenary sessions<sub>4</sub>

Please rate the Plenary sessions you attended on a scale 1-5, 1 being poor, 5 excellent \*

- Pemberton Lecture by Clare Bamba: Unequal Pandemic: COVID19 and Health Inequalities
- Cochrane Lecture by Susan Michie: Applying Behavioural Science to COVID19
- Expert Panel- Turning the tide: A 10-year Healthy Weight Strategy
- Expert Panel -Climate Emergency: Determinants, impacts and solutions

## Section 6 Oral Sessions

Did you attend any Oral sessions?

- Yes
- No

Thinking of the parallel session oral presentations that you attended, how frequently was the following true? \*

Scientific quality high

- Always
- Most of the time
- About half the time
- Rarely
- Never

Presentations well timed

- Always
- Most of the time
- About half the time
- Rarely
- Never

Gained new ideas for research

- Always
- Most of the time
- About half the time
- Rarely
- Never

Could hear and see presentations clearly

- Always
- Most of the time
- About half the time

- Rarely
- Never

Please share your view on the CHOICE & RANGE of presentations available \*

Enough of interest

Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, strongly agree

Could not see all the presentations I wanted because they overlapped

Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, strongly agree

Please feel free to provide feedback on the parallel sessions or to make suggestions for future ASMs (online or not)

## Section 7 Posters

Did you attend any poster sessions?

- Yes
- No

Were there enough posters of interest to you? \*

- Yes
- No

Thinking of the posters you looked at, how do you rate them?

Scientific quality high

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Gained new ideas for research

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Posters easily read online

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

## Section 8 Gather Town Networking

Did you join any Gather Town networking sessions?

- Yes

- No

Please give us your view of the process and experience

Guidance/Instructions easy to<sup>5</sup> get

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Logging on to Gather Town and building your avatar easy

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Moving around different parts of Gather Town easy

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Locating and talking to specific people in Gather Town easy

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Gather Town gave me a great social experience, networking and interacting with a range of individuals and small groups

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Please feel free to comment on

- a) what you liked, and
- b) how we could provide an even better networking experience for you

## **Section 9 Suggested innovations**

Please feel free to tell us what worked well for you at this online SSM2021

Please feel free to suggest ways we could improve on an online SSM conference

Next year's SSM2022 conference will be hosted by Exeter. It may be provided online. If so, please feel free to give your thoughts on what could be improved in the organization

With continuing uncertainties<sup>5</sup> about large meetings and Covid-19, we will need to decide by spring 2022 whether to run an online or in-person conference next year. Assuming both are possible, and the registration fee would be somewhat lower for an online conference (but not free), which would you be more likely to attend? \*

- Face-to-Face conference
- Online virtual conference

## Section 10. About you

Are you an SSM member? \*

- Yes
- No

Do you consider yourself to be: \*

- An early career researcher (ECR)
- Mid-career researcher (MCR)
- A senior career researcher (SCR)
- or none of these

Which of the following most accurately describes your current employment status (select one answer only) \*

- Full-time taught student (undergraduate, masters)
- Full-time research student
- Full-time employed/self-employed
- Part-time employed/self-employed
- Part-time student (taught or research)
- Both part-time student and part-time employed
- Retired/ not in employment
- Prefer not to say
- Other

In which country do you mainly work/live?

- UK
- Other (please specify)

Which of the following most accurately describes your place of employment? (Select one answer only) \*

- Public sector academic &/or research (e.g. university)
- Public sector health &/or service (e.g. NHS, government)
- Third-sector research (e.g. Charity)
- Private-sector research (e.g. Pharmaceutical company)
- Not in employment
- Other (please specify)

Which of the following best describe your research discipline(s)? (please select all that apply)

- Epidemiology<sub>5</sub>
- Public Health
- Health Services Research
- Health Statistics
- Biostatistics Other statistics
- Health Policy
- Psychology
- Social Science
- Economics
- Primary Care
- Other (specify)

What types of data do you routinely research? (select all that apply)

- Quantitative (experimental/trial) data
- Quantitative (observational)
- Quantitative (simulation/modelling)
- Qualitative (interview-derived)
- Qualitative (observation-derived)
- Qualitative (narrative)
- Other
- Not applicable

### **Section 11 Final comments**

Thank you very much indeed for answering the questionnaire.  
Please add here any additional comments you have about the SSM2021 Annual Scientific Virtual Meeting

**One Day Conference for SSM**

**Title of Day**

A. Please tick one box for each<sup>5</sup> aspect of the conference:

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Very poor</b>
The whole event	•	•	•	•	•
The talks	•	•	•	•	•
The discussion	•	•	•	•	•
The opportunity for meeting people	•	•	•	•	•
The venue	•	•	•	•	•
The conference organisation	•	•	•	•	•
Value for money	•	•	•	•	•

B. Any other comments?

**Thank you.** Please leave your completed form at the conference desk at the end of the meeting or post it to NAME / Organisation / ADDRESS

**Title of Day: evaluation form**

DATE

5

Please indicate your evaluation of this one-day meeting by circling the number that corresponds to your view for each item

1) Format/ Structure of the meeting

Inappropriate

Very appropriate

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Comments

2) How much did you learn from the meeting?

I learnt nothing

I learnt a lot

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Comments

3) Quality of the morning presentations

Very poor

Excellent

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Comments

4) Quality of the afternoon workshop sessions

Very poor

Excellent

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Comments

5) Overall quality of the conference centre, facilities, meals and refreshments

Very poor

Excellent

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Comments



6) Booking arrangements and other admin prior to the meeting

Very poor			5					Excellent		
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Comments

7) Where did you find out about this meeting? (Tick box)

Public Health News	<input type="checkbox"/>
HTA Mailing	<input type="checkbox"/>
SSM Mailing	<input type="checkbox"/>
SSM Website	<input type="checkbox"/>
R & D Support	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

If yes, please specify.....

8) Please identify any particular things that went well (say what you liked about them)

9) Please identify any particular things that could be improved (with suggestions about how they may be improved)

Thank you for your feedback.  
WHERE IT SHOULD BE SENT if not handed in on the day