



## **RCPE responds to extreme-weather PACES cancellations**

The Beast from the East wreaked havoc across the UK at the start of March and the PACES exams in Edinburgh were no exception as to the storm's impact: the exams at CSAC (Western General) were cancelled on both 1 and 2 March. This affected 40 candidates, over 20 examiners as well as staff, surrogates and patients. Despite the stress and confusion of those two days, the Edinburgh Exams team stepped up immediately to address the situation, and we are proud of the two main outcomes of our efforts.

Firstly, we worked hard to offer candidates as many options as possible to mitigate the pressure they were under. This included offering a full refund of fees and attempts; placing candidates in gap spaces for existing exam dates where there were withdrawals, and finally the organisation of an additional exam day on 27 March. We pulled this together with extremely limited lead time, and note in particular the generous response from our pool of examiners who were asked to help with only three weeks' notice.

Secondly, our Director of Examinations, College President and College Council all considered carefully the impact and consequences of the cancellations on the affected candidates. It was agreed that a sympathetic view should be implemented. Some of the candidates had travelled from overseas countries and had arrived in time only to have their exam cancelled at the last minute. As a result it was decided to offer refunds of expenses where applicable to Edinburgh candidates affected by the disruptions, with the caveat that the decision is due to the exceptional nature of the circumstances, and does not create a precedent for the future, for the other UK Colleges or for MRCP(UK).

As a team we are very happy with these two outcomes, as constructive and positive responses to an extremely difficult situation. We're proud that our College Council stood with us in doing as much as possible to help our candidates, even where this created an additional expense on top of already costly cancellations.