

Sent to all GPSTs, APDs, TPDs, MEMs, DMEs, Patch Teams and GP Admin Team on behalf of Dr Simon Newton

Dear Colleagues

Here's a further update and some FAQs covering GP training and how it has been affected by the current Covid emergency.

GP programmes have had to cancel all face-to-face teaching and 1-1 meetings. Work is in hand to develop virtual training support. The precise nature of this will vary from patch to patch; your local patch can provide details of how this is working for your area. We want to maintain support in your patch via regular video group sessions and 1-1 chats as needed. If a trainee has concerns about their training which their ES/CS can't solve, then they should contact their patch team, as in the past, and they will do their best to help.

We need to try to reduce the number of non-urgent queries, especially where answers can be found elsewhere, or when we're awaiting a national decision; HEE has developed some on-line resources for trainees: <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/coronavirus-information-trainees>. This currently contains the latest updates on a variety of topics. Here's a link to the recently published RCGP FAQs <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/-/media/Files/GP-training-and-exams/MRCGP/RCGP-MRCGP-faqs-march-2020.ashx?la=en>

As practising GPs, Associate GP Deans and GP Training Programme Directors are also currently under significant pressure due to their clinical commitments. However they will do their best to support you with your queries. Questions from GP practices & ES/CS about supervision and training should be directed in the first instance to the local Associate Dean at their local patch office

Urgent and Unscheduled Care. GPST1/2s no longer have to undertake UUSC sessions in OOH providers. These services don't currently have the capacity to supervise these trainees effectively. However ST3s still need to undertake UUSC sessions as before, and can support OOH providers with their service delivery.

Self-isolation. If a trainee is self-isolating or has to work from home for health reasons they should still be able to do useful work. In Trusts they should talk to their supervisor to see what project/audit/Quality Improvement work may be available. They may be able to undertake some telephone work or could be temporarily redeployed to another department to help with work there which is deliverable from home. In GP they can undertake telephone/video consultations if the appropriate IT is available. If necessary, they will first need to be trained and supervised in this skill. We are developing resources to help trainees and supervisors with this. We will publish them shortly. If telephone/video consulting is not possible they may still be able to make a useful contribution. Examples include audit and Quality improvement work and work on practice policies and procedures.

Working week. The current 7/3 split of clinical/education sessions in the working week has been suspended during the Covid emergency, and education sessions can be rebadged as clinical sessions. This change is likely to lead to increased workload pressure on trainees. Time will therefore still be needed during the working week for debriefing and supervision/support in practice. It's also important that trainees are allowed time to engage with the group support and sessions organised by each patch. Supervisors should actively monitor the wellbeing of their trainees and take action if they have concerns about the impact of this workload on the trainee.

Support resources

If trainees feel that they are in need of extra support, we encourage them to discuss this in the first instance with their CS or ES, and their patch team. There are also several additional sources of assistance that might be helpful:

- The Deanery Professional Support Unit <https://severndeanery.nhs.uk/about-us/professional-support-and-wellbeing/>
- The Well and Resilient Doctors (WARD) website <https://www.welldoctors.org/>
- The individual's own GP
- BMA wellbeing support, including counselling, not just for members <https://www.bma.org.uk/advice/work-life-support/your-wellbeing>
- LMC support schemes for GPs https://www.gpsafefhouseglos.co.uk/self_help.php <https://www.somersetssafehouse.co.uk/> <https://www.gpsafefhouse-avon.co.uk/> <https://www.wessexlmcs.com/supportforgpswhatisavailable>
- Practitioner Health Service: <https://www.practitionerhealth.nhs.uk>

Apart from the first two all of these routes are also available to GP Supervisors who need support. Attached is more detailed information on support options for doctors at this time

Some (but not all) Questions we don't yet have the answer to;

- What arrangements are being made for GPSTs who are in ST3 to get their CCT if they still need to sit the CSA and/or AKT?
- Who will still need to have an ARCP during this period of disrupted working due to Covid-19?
- What are the current WPBA evidence requirements for trainees?
- How will time out of training for self-isolation be treated when counting training time?
- If I have to be redeployed to a different post will this automatically still count towards my GP training?
- How will trainees be paid for additional hours they work during the Covid emergency?
- How will arrangements for Study and Annual leave work if GPSTs have had to cancel SL or are unable to take all their Annual Leave?
- Will all trainees still need a full ESR completing by their supervisor every 6 months?

We will pass on the answers to these questions as soon we get them

Some questions we think we can answer;

Q.1 I am a GP trainee who has been told that I am being redeployed inside my Trust to a different post. Can they do this?

A.1 Yes. In the current crisis if the Trust you are working in wants to move you to new duties they can do this and they don't need your agreement to do so, although I would hope they would discuss this with you sensitively. They still need to follow the health guidance outlined elsewhere in this email. They also still need to ensure an appropriate induction to your new role and that you are properly supervised and supported. The GP School is not supporting redeployments from GP back to Trusts.

Q.2 I am a trainee with specific specialist skills from previous training. Can I ask to be transferred to a different post to be able to use those skills?

A.2 If you are in Trust post you should discuss this with your current Clinical Supervisor and staff in the dept where you feel you could help. Your DME will also need to be involved in those discussions. If the Trust decide to support your move to a different post then this should be possible, as long as appropriate induction is available, and supervision and support are in place. Moves between different Trusts are unlikely to be supported. Moves from General Practice into secondary care will not be supported as workload pressures in primary care are also rising rapidly.

Q.3 I am a GP Educational/Clinical Supervisor and I am struggling to find time to teach my GP trainee due to workload pressures. What can I do?

A.3 In the current situation we are not expecting supervisors to be providing 1-1 teaching in protected time. We are exploring in each patch whether groups of Supervisors can work together to teach trainees; e.g. a PCN or other practice grouping could arrange for one Supervisor to run a session for all GP trainees in the PCN. We believe the main priority at the moment is to continue supervising trainees effectively so they can practise safely, and supporting them by debriefing as necessary on the issues raised by working during a pandemic. If you are finding it difficult to provide safe supervision and support please discuss this urgently with your local Associate Dean

Q.4 I am a trainee in a high risk group as defined by PHE/RCOG for coming into contact with patients with Covid-19. What do I do?

A.4 Please discuss this first with the supervisor in your host placement (practice or trust). The practice/Trust will if necessary conduct a risk assessment to determine whether and how your duties should be changed. If you have queries about this process please contact the GP trainee lead employer, Gloucester Hospitals: ghn-tr.gptrainee@nhs.net

Thank you for all of your efforts in supporting the NHS; we hope that you and your colleagues can continue to look after one another, and you & your loved ones stay safe & well,

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