

HEE North West Interim Guidance for Education Faculty and Trainees: Outline principles for management of training during phases of COVID-19

1. Introduction

We recognise that this is a difficult and challenging time for everyone and our aim is to enable you to train and practise safely, to keep you and your families safe, to enable your training to continue and be as flexible as possible about progression decisions that might be affected by COVID.

A series of frequently asked questions (FAQs) to address concerns and anxieties about COVID 19 and the impact it will have on training, are being developed these will be updated regularly and available on the national website (<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/coronavirus-information-trainees>). We will also provide regular updates (at least weekly) to the Heads of Schools for wider dissemination to trainees and education faculty. Therefore, your primary point of contact should be through your School.

This is an emergent complex problem with many confounding factors and interdependencies. Plans are likely to change as the disease progresses through the four expected phases of Containment, Delay, Mitigation and Research (CDMR). HEE will endeavour to update guidance and website links regularly to reflect the pace of change and outbreak progression.

2. Agreed principles for managing training during COVID

2.1 Principles

It is likely that during the peak of COVID activity that teaching events may be cancelled or delivered differently, that conferences/study leave may be cancelled and that you may be required to work in other areas of your trust to support safe care and service delivery. Whilst decisions will be made locally in consultation with HEE North West they will be focused on patient and staff safety. We will be working to agreed principles:

- Cancellation of teaching/study leave should be kept to minimal disruption and where possible delivered in different way avoiding face to face contacts and cohorting large groups of clinicians.
- Trainees will be asked to record the impact of movement or cancellation of teaching on their training (through your specialty school you will be provided with a simple self-declaration form) to enable us to identify deficits that need to be addressed at progression points (ARCPs)
- There will be flexibility on ARCP outcomes to recognise satisfactory progression but some competencies will be frustrated by COVID.
- ARCPs will be streamlined, deferred with progression & CCT decisions prioritised
- Trainees may be able to volunteer for extra duties e.g. academic trainees may wish to volunteer to undertake on call in acute trusts but this should be voluntary, without coercion.
- Less than full time trainees may be able to temporarily increase their hours to volunteer to support the service on a voluntary basis.

- You will be advised separately on study leave (see details in section 4) but the position is that trainees will not be disadvantaged if study leave is cancelled due to COVID and expenses incurred will be honoured.
- Currently, the national advice is that trainees due to rotate in April will not rotate and will stay in post. You should receive specific advice from your specialty or foundation school shortly.

We are seeking clarity on the criteria for exclusion from suspected COVID patients for those groups identified by the Chief Medical Officer as high risk, which includes immunosuppressed, significant chronic illness and pregnant women, the aim is to keep staff safe in the workplace. We will update you regularly, in the meantime if you consider you are in the risk group please discuss with your employer, local clinical supervisor and training programme director.

2.2 Trainees as employees

Trainees should manage self-isolation in the same way as sickness absence in accordance with the employer absence management policy.

- We are aware that the Chief Medical Officer has put the pregnant individual in the same category as over 70s and those with significant co-morbidities in terms of risk and COVID-19. Please understand that we are trying to get some more detail on what this means for those of you who are pregnant, and we will make sure that we look after you safely. If you are pregnant and attend work, follow the PPE guidance for your Trust, and for the time being do not work in areas where there are known or suspected COVID-19 patients.
- If a trainee is advised or considers that they should self - isolate they should inform their employer (for North West postgraduate specialty trainees, this will be the Lead Employer St Helen's and Knowsley NHS Trust) as soon as practically possible (by phone or email). Please follow this link for the contact details: <http://www.sthk.nhs.uk/workwithus/lead-employer-service/contact-us>
- Inform the local host organisation, normally through the training programme director/clinical tutor/educational supervisor and inform the school manager for foundation or specialty.
- The government has recently updated its guidance on eligibility for statutory sick pay where self -isolation is required and early notification to the employer is essential for correct management.
- Trainees should be aware of and follow local procedures for management of outbreaks in the local/host organisation.
- Trainees working in Trusts assessing patients at risk of infection will be required to follow and comply with local procedures to protect patients and staff from transmission such as complying with the requirements for fitting of face masks
- Where face mask fitting is required for trainees in the workplace, trainees may be required to be clean shaven
- It is anticipated that the supply of hoods (as an alternative for those who wish to grow facial hair) may become depleted early in the delay stage
- **Therefore, employers and Trusts would reasonably request employees to be clean shaven at work to allow fit testing for masks unless there are exceptional reasons not to do so.**

3. Movement/redistribution of trainees

3.1 HEE have recently added this statement to the national guidance

HEE recognises and values the significant contribution all our healthcare learners, including doctors in training, make to the delivery of care for patients. We know our learners are dedicated and committed professionals who act to help patients in need.

In exceptional circumstances this may mean they need to work in different clinical areas or even in a different provider within their local healthcare system. However, it is important that these circumstances are truly exceptional and any that diversion of doctors, or others from their training/ normal professional responsibilities does not become normalised.

HEE provides guidance for Trusts; GP practices or other healthcare settings facing exceptional pressures and will do everything we can to reduce the impact on learning and training progression of any placement move or change in service provision. The exceptional nature of such circumstances will be taken into account when assessing progress against curricula during this time.

Our Postgraduate Deans and Regional teams will monitor any exceptional circumstances and liaise closely with our education providers.

4. Study Leave

We are all aware of the changes happening nationwide as a result of Covid-19 and an important area to clarify for you relates to study leave so below is a list of areas relating to this and clarification for you:

4.1 Study leave expenses for cancelled courses

We will honour agreed payments, but you will need to confirm you have been refused a refund (most colleges and national organisations are refunding costs). For travel you may find you are able to get refunds exceptionally. We will handle these claims as rapidly as we can. Please use the normal claim forms and include a statement cancelled course and refund sought and unobtainable.

4.2 Cancellation of study leave by local Trusts

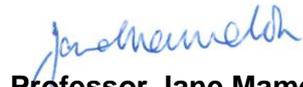
Schools will sometimes use distance learning methods to deliver learning events and these should be attended as normal and if you are asked not to attend please ensure your TPD knows as a detailed record is being kept of missed events and also those training events locally being totally cancelled will be recorded together with plans to provide later.

4.3 HEE Nationally are working on FAQs related to study leave and other areas and we will highlight these when available.

At this difficult time, we appreciate that you are supporting the clinical services and working as professionals with trainers to assess whether to participate in events based on your training requirements and patient safety issues. We remain focused on ensuring your training is supported and has the minimum disruption but appreciate the flexibility needed to ensure a safe service and thank you for your contribution.

I know that as doctors that you will remain professional and uphold your duties as a doctor during these difficult and challenging times. Stay safe, be kind, look after yourself, your family and your team.

Yours sincerely



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