Managing Trainees in Difficulty - a summary for GP Educators

1. Identification of a Trainee in Difficulty (TID)

1.1 A trainee in difficulty is one whose progress is causing concern or who is not meeting curricular requirements.

1.2 This may be due to ill health, life events, difficulties with learning or through less than satisfactory professional conduct.

1.3 It is the responsibility of the Clinical Supervisor (CS) and other colleagues with whom the trainee is working to identify early warning signs of a TID.

2. Managing concerns

2.1 Wherever possible, concerns should be discussed with the TID, recorded in the e-portfolio and reported to the Educational Supervisor (ES) and Training Programme Director (TPD).

2.2 The scale of concern regarding a TID will vary. The CS, ES and TPD should classify the concern and make a judgment regarding its severity: low, intermediate or high level.

2.3 For low level concerns, the CS, ES and/or TPD should discuss these with the trainee and document the discussion in the e-portfolio.

2.4 With early intervention and appropriate focused remedial action, low level concerns should be resolved without further escalation.

2.5 However any concerns, even if resolved, should be documented and communicated through the Educational Supervisor's Report and e-portfolio for consideration by the panel during the trainee's next ARCP panel. It is the responsibility of the ES to inform the Deanery of all such reports, especially when a panel opinion is requested.

2.6 If the issue cannot be resolved informally the concern will be escalated to an intermediate or high level concern.

2.7 Where the concerns are of an intermediate or serious nature, the TPD should discuss the concern with the Patch Associate Postgraduate Dean (APD).

2.8 A meeting will usually be arranged with the trainee and CS, ES, TPD and/or the APD depending on their level of involvement.

2.9 A report and an action plan should be implemented and communicated to the trainee, the TPD, APD and HR where relevant.

2.10 An action plan should be developed against clearly defined measurable outcomes in consultation with the trainee.

2.11 Further meetings between the trainee and those supervising the trainee with senior educator support should be scheduled to review progress.

2.12 The APD along with HR should consider if additional support from Occupational Health or NCAS should be sought at any stage.

2.13 All concerns, even if resolved, must be documented and brought to the attention of the ARCP panel.
3. Further considerations

3.1 If sufficiently serious, the employing organisation’s disciplinary or serious untoward incident policy should be followed alongside Deanery policies such as the ARCP policy or the Removal of NTN / Deanery Reference Number in Exceptional Circumstances policy.

3.2 If an unsatisfactory ARCP outcome is thought to be possible, the trainee must be informed and all documentation shared with the trainee prior to the ARCP panel hearing.

3.3 An unsatisfactory ARCP outcome may lead to a period of targeted training or a requirement to undergo a defined further period of training.

3.4 Additional support may also be identified including careers support, a recommendation for less than full time training, an occupational health and/or specialist referral. The Deanery will where possible provide additional resource to support recommendations.

3.5 Rarely, it may be necessary to consider withdrawal of the trainee’s NTN, in accordance with the processes set out in the Gold Guide and the Deanery policy on Removal of NTN / Deanery reference number in Exceptional Circumstances.

3.6 The Deanery may also refer the trainee to NCAS and/or the GMC if this has not already been undertaken by the Local Education Provider.

The full Trainees in Difficulty Policy and Deanery report form are available from the Deanery website.

Management Flowchart for Managing Trainees in Difficulty

[Diagram showing flowchart with steps and decision points]

- Trainee in Difficulty
- Meeting with Educational Supervisor / Clinical Supervisor to define the problem and classify the concern
- Consider involvement of OH / HR / Deanery T.D.O. Group

Low Level:
- Review Meeting
  - ES / CS meet with trainee to seek resolution
  - Report & Action Plan
  - Copied to ES / CS / Trainee (Programme Director / IR / Clinical Tutor / College Tutor)
  - Review progress against action plan
  - Concern addressed. Report sent to ARCP panel within 10 working days
  - Concern not received
  - Concern escalated to intermediate or high level

Intermediate Level:
- Review Meeting
  - Clinical Tutor / College Tutor / ES / (FTPD meet with trainee to discuss concern and identify need of additional support if required
  - Report & Action Plan
  - Copied to ES / CS / Trainee (Programme Director / IR / Clinical Tutor / College Tutor)
  - Review progress against action plan
  - Concern addressed. Report sent to ARCP panel within 10 working days
  - Concern not received
  - Concern escalated to high level. Report to ARCP panel

High Level:
- Follow procedure as in intermediate level concern.
  - HR, Medical Director and Postgraduate Dean to be involved at earliest stage.
- Postgraduate Dean and TID group to consider further action, including referral to external organisation (e.g. GMC / NCAS)
- ARCP Policy / Removal of NTN / Deanery Reference Number. In exceptional circumstances, Employer Disciplinary Policy to be used.