

BY EMAIL

East of England Office  
Directorate of  
Education & Quality  
Victoria House  
Capital Park, Fulbourn  
Cambridge, CB21 5XB

13 March 2020

To: All East of England Trainees (with specific guidance for GP and Foundation Trainees)

We know that you will be reviewing the developing situation in respect to the NHS's response to COVID-19. We are writing to ensure that all our trainees know where to access information in relation to your training over the coming weeks.

## **Information sharing**

As necessary, HEE will be contacting you on the email address that you have provided. If you would like to update this address, please email the HEE EoE Programmes Team at [edit.eoe@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:edit.eoe@hee.nhs.uk). Can we also highlight that it is extremely important that your local medical staffing teams have the correct mobile phone and contact details for you, please update these if required. (Trust to insert relevant address)

Key documents will be available on the HEE website <https://heeoee.hee.nhs.uk/>. Direct links for foundation and GP trainees can be found below. FTPDs, DMEs, GP Training Programme Directors and Education Managers will also disseminate information as this becomes available. Please ensure that you check your emails regularly.

## **Welfare**

Your welfare is extremely important to us. These are stressful and difficult times. HEE, hospitals and General Practices are working closely together to provide safe patient care and a supportive environment for our trainees. Please keep in contact with your local Medical Staffing team, Directors of Medical Education and Training Programme Directors regarding any concerns you may have. In addition, HEE is in regular contact with the Chair of the Trainee Forum to ensure we are made aware of any issues raised through this group. As well as Trust occupational health services, you can also contact the HEE Professional Support and Well Being Service to report any concerns [PSW.EoE@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:PSW.EoE@hee.nhs.uk).

We want you to be safe and supported through this period.

- We actively encourage all of our trainees to follow isolation guidance if it should be required. Patient and doctor safety is of paramount importance.

- Carefully consider your wellbeing support networks for home, work and any caring responsibilities
- Identify whether you might be high risk? Talk in advance to your Educational or Clinical Supervisor / occupational health team, and follow the Trusts protocol.
- Keep up to date with information from trusted sources only [government/public health/the Trust].
- As required, ensure you are fit tested for the personal protective equipment, understand when and how to use them and follow trust advice.
- The Trust will be providing training, simulation and teaching as necessary and will prepare you for escalation procedures
- Contact medial staffing for details on rota changes, additional hours and (individual Trust to comment here)

### Education and Training

This is a time of rare, extenuating circumstances and local decisions will be made in terms of responding to patient care needs on the ground. The Trust and local General Practices are regularly reviewing the situation and reporting weekly to HEE. It may be that taught programme opportunities, such as hub events or local teaching, or planned study leave will be temporarily halted so that frontline services can be delivered. However, HEE can provide assurance that this will be recognised by your Training Programme Director as exceptional extenuating circumstances in respect of undertaking an assessment of your e-portfolios. However, please ensure that your portfolio is **currently up to date** to allow a pragmatic and trainee centric approach.

In addition, many of you with external study leave booked may find courses are cancelled. We can confirm that any study leave which HEE has already agreed funding for, will continue to be reimbursed, even if you are not able to now attend.

For our foundation trainees, the Foundation School Director wishes to particularly reassure you that if you pass the 20 days of absence currently mandated by the GMC as a point of review due to self isolation, that this is very unlikely on its own to lead to a requirement for additional time.

### Rotations and Posts

HEE and Trusts are working closely to ensure your safety and patient safety. This may look different in different areas, and we are asking our local healthcare areas to best determine where healthcare workers are most needed. We recognise that there may be some changes at short notice in order to re-deploy staff in to areas of most need. However we will do all we can to minimise impact on your education and training and support you to deliver care within this incredibly difficult time.

Specific guidance for Foundation and GP Trainees can be found below.

## **Foundation Training**

In our most recent assessment of the unfolding local situation, we considered that it is highly likely that in April those anticipating rotating to F1 in psychiatry and F2 in GP and other community placements are going to be redeployed to their acute trust base and not rotate. This is so that we can support the rotas within the acute Trust, increasing the numbers on those rotas so that there can be a better balance of doctors on various shifts and limiting the potential burn out of any individual doctor. We understand that for many of you, the rotations have been chosen because of your passion or career focus, and we appreciate that this is not an easy decision. It is not one that we will come to lightly, and we very much understand that you will have reservations about this and disappointment. However, we can confirm that any final decision;

- will be made at a local Trust level, liaising with the appropriate GP and psychiatry and other leads to ensure that this is the best option.
- will be communicated with HEE through FTPD and GP colleagues and through the DME and Deputy Dean network.
- will ensure the duration of the final placement is sensible and avoids a piecemeal approach
- will be rapidly communicated by the Trust
- will ensure that support and supervision will be provided

As stated above, we will ensure that any changes to the April rotations do not impact upon your final sign off, where necessary this will be escalated to UKFPO.

As part of planning for the coming weeks, please can we ask all those of you in community placements who are due to rotate back to the Acute Trust, to ensure that your login, access, contact information is up to date. Please ensure you have made contact with the medical staffing teams to ensure there are no unnecessary delays to your commencement in role.

Please remember that our Educational Supervisors, the FTPD and medical education department are all within the Trust to support you, listen to your concerns, and aim to support you through the anticipated next few months. Centrally, at HEE we plan to support them to be able to do this. If you have suggestions, please share them. If you have concerns, again please talk first to your local Training Programme Director.

More Detailed Guidance can be found here (please scroll to the bottom):  
<https://heeoee.hee.nhs.uk/foundation>

## **GP Training**

We are advised that the half day release programme and practice based teaching may be halted in order to ensure that all available resources are directed to frontline care. At present, please continue to ensure your e-portfolio is up to date and continue to attend the educational programme as planned. HEE will be kept informed of any changes to planned education on a weekly basis


following an update between the patch GP Associate Deans (ADs) and their Directors of Medical Education (DMEs).

The patch GP ADs and their DMEs will discuss the hospital departments most needing support on a weekly basis. With respect to the departments where GP trainees usually work, this is likely to be in A&E and the medical wards. Please keep in regular contact with your local medical staffing teams and any local What's App groups for information of any changes to rotas or shifts. For example, volunteers may be sought from ST1 and ST2 GP trainees working in other specialities who are prepared to move specialities during the period of increased need. The clinical supervision arrangements for this would follow the HEE winter pressures guidance, <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/HEE%20winter%20pressures%20guidance%20FINAL.pdf>

Please ensure practicalities such as appropriate induction and IT access should be checked now, in advance of any need to move trainees to other specialities.

More detailed guidance can be found here: [https://heeoee.hee.nhs.uk/general\\_practice](https://heeoee.hee.nhs.uk/general_practice)

Yours Sincerely,



**Professor Bill Irish**  
Regional Postgraduate Dean  
(GMC 3132872)