GUIDANCE FOR SECONDMENT OF SAS DOCTORS INTO GAPS IN TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN HEALTH EDUCATION EAST OF ENGLAND

Background

Health Education East of England (HEEoE) has no direct responsibility for SAS doctors, who are appointed and employed by individual Trusts. However, they do work alongside doctors in training posts and often contribute considerably to that training, increasingly in roles such as Educational & Clinical Supervisors. Furthermore many of our trainees may spend some time in these grades at some stage of their career and for some it is an attractive career choice after completing core training.

There are currently over 1000 SAS Doctors working in Trusts in the East of England, and they constitute an important part of the NHS work force. HEEoE is responsible for the SAS Development Fund, first allocated in 2007-2008 to support SAS Doctors, and has an Associate Dean for SAS Doctors both to administer the fund and provide support for SAS Doctors across the region. Much of the fund is allocated to each Trust. Each Trust has appointed an SAS tutor who is responsible locally for this distribution and for providing support for these doctors.

There is evidence that many SAS Doctors feel marginalised and unable to reach their potential. It is important that all doctors are able to develop during their careers and it is likely that if the career aspirations of SAS doctors are assessed sensibly and help given where needed, that they will be of greater value in their Trust.

Secondments into training programme

Key Principles

1. The SAS Doctor appointed to a secondment opportunity in a training programme will have the same educational & clinical supervision assessment and documentation of progress as trainees within the programme.

2. Secondments should be for a reasonable duration, long enough to acquire new skills, and will usually be for 6 to 24 months.

3. Where a secondment opportunity is considered by the Trust prior to advertisement, this must be discussed with the Training Programme Director or Head of School.

4. Where a secondment opportunity is identified, the Trust should contact the SAS Tutor / the Associate Postgraduate Dean for SAS Doctors, who will cascade this opportunity to all SAS Tutors.

5. Where it is identified by the SAS Doctor that a secondment into a training programme might be appropriate, this should be discussed initially with the SAS Tutor, and then with the local College/ Specialty Tutor. The local Clinical Tutor/ Director of Medical Education might also be consulted.
Benefits of Secondment Opportunities for SAS Doctors

Some SAS doctors will benefit from a secondment into a training programme. Benefits of such an opportunity for both SAS Doctors and Trusts include;

1. Opportunity to enhance skills of SAS doctors
2. Opportunity for the SAS doctor to enhance their CV, which might be useful in supporting an application for the Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration (CESR)
3. The skills gained would allow the SAS doctor to practice at an enhanced and more effective level when they return to their SAS post.

Trusts may use secondments to fill gaps that may otherwise remain vacant, or to fill gaps that might otherwise be filled with less experienced doctors whose competencies are unknown and who may leave at short notice.

Please note that secondment opportunities are not suitable for all specialties. Any possible secondments must take into consideration national workforce planning in the relevant specialty and any Royal College recommendations regarding training opportunities.

Suggested Process

The individual SAS doctors will be already discussing their developmental needs with their local SAS tutor and the clinical lead within their department.

Any secondment opportunities will be filled by local Trust appointment processes.

1. In order to advertise the Secondment opportunity, it is recommended that the recruiting Trust circulate details of the available post to all Trusts with SAS Doctors in the relevant specialty.

2. Any SAS Doctor wishing to apply must then get written consent from their local Clinical Specialty Lead, Human Resources and the relevant members of the senior management team in their employing Trust. The terms of secondment arrangement will be determined by the employing Trusts.

3. Interviews for secondment opportunities must meet HEEoE guidelines; this includes the Training Programme Director sitting as a member of the interview panel, or being represented by a colleague from the specialty.

4. The HEEoE recruitment unit, the Associate Postgraduate Dean for SAS Doctors and the TPD will be informed of the outcome.

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14 November 2013