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All Trainees

c.c. Chief Executive Officers
Directors of Medical Education
Medical Directors

Dear Colleague

COVID-19 AND YOUR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

We wanted to update you about the effects of the Covid-19 outbreak on your education and training and the steps we are taking to mitigate any risks to this.

HEE is responsible for your education and training and will be working hard to make sure that you will not be disadvantaged by the situation and the steps that are being taken. You may have a number of questions related to your employment which you will need to raise with your employer or medical staffing department (for example if you are pregnant, on maternity leave or have issues relating to your contract).

The situation is changing daily, and we will update you as new guidance emerges. Regarding your own health, please look after yourselves and ensure that you are up to date with your employer's policy on self-isolation and sickness. We realise that this is a stressful time and you should be careful to look after your mental as well your physical well-being. If you feel you need support please do discuss this with your clinical or educational supervisor, members of your Trust's Postgraduate team or those who are responsible for organising your education and training. Some of you may have specific concerns about your health, and HEE will be releasing some information soon on this nationally.

All the guidance below is based upon national recommendations. There is a page with information and FAQ's on the national website that is being added to and updated continually:

<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/coronavirus-information-trainees>

Study Leave

We have now taken the decision to postpone all face to face teaching organised by HEE. This is to relieve any pressures on the service and avoid large gatherings. We will also not be requiring trusts to provide local teaching.

Some of you will have booked onto external courses and you will be disappointed that you are unable to attend. Please try and obtain a refund for these courses. If you are unable to get a refund, we will honour the claim, but you will need to make sure that you can provide evidence that the cost was non-refundable. When business returns to normal all requests for delayed study leave will be looked upon favourably with a focus on allowing people to meet the requirements required for completion of programs.

Recruitment

As far as possible, recruitment processes will continue as far as possible. This is a difficult and complex area which we are seeking national guidance on.

Program Rotations

You will be aware that we have been asked not to rotate trainees as would be usual in April and therefore you will, for the meanwhile remain in your current training post. We realise that, for a lot of you, this may make the full acquisition of your competencies more challenging. This is something we are very aware of and we will be doing all we can to ensure that you are not disadvantaged by these exceptional but necessary measures.

Separate information will shortly be available to trainees who are on academic rotations, on OOP (Out of Programme) or secondment (e.g. as a HEE Fellow). The Military Deanery will be communicating separately with their trainees.

ARCPs

We are making arrangements for ARCPs to be held virtually, so please try to keep up to date with your e-portfolio. Though this is a difficult time, reflecting on how you and the service copes, the leadership issues that arise and your crucial role in maintaining a service can be very beneficial to your own training and development.

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Many of you will be worried that you will not be able to achieve an outcome 1 (or 6) at present, either because your examinations may be cancelled, or your elective clinical work postponed. A lot of you will be in this situation. Please be assured that we are very aware of this issue and work is ongoing nationally looking at how this can be mitigated, and disruption to your training pathway minimised. We are determined that you are not differentially affected by the current situation.

Priority for ARCPS will be given to those of you who have reached critical points for progression in training. Although ARCPs may be delayed, we do not wish any trainee to be disadvantaged by the process. For specialties that undergo a 'Penultimate year Assessment', this will now be discontinued.

Redeployment

It is possible that as the workload pattern changes, with a continuing shift from elective to acute work, staffing levels across the Trusts may have to change and there may be some re-deployment of doctors. I am sure that you will wish to do all you can to help care for our patients, but it is important that you are working in an appropriately supervised manner within your competence and are given appropriate induction to any area you are working in. Trusts are very aware of the need to ensure that you are working safely and within your competence. Please let your educational supervisor know if you have any concerns with this.

We attach with this letter a copy of the guidance that has gone out regarding program rotations, for your information. We will try and limit the amount of e-mails we send you but will update you on any changes you should know about.

As trainees you provide a huge amount of the service the NHS delivers and do so to an extremely high standard. Thank you for the work you do and for the additional efforts you will be making during this outbreak.

Best wishes



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