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NHSS Board Chief Executives

Date: 25 March 2020  
Our Ref: COVID-19 – NHS Education for Scotland Support  
Line: 0131 656 3295  
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Dear Colleague,

### **COVID-19 – NHS Education for Scotland (NES) Support**

I am writing to you all to provide a brief update on the work that NES is undertaking to support the COVID-19 pandemic. These are difficult and challenging times for all of us, and I wanted to take the time to provide Boards with information on the measures that NES have taken and are taking to support the NHS in Scotland.

With the support of my Executive Team and Directorate Leads we have conducted a review of our current programmes of work, including visits and inspections. We have suspended substantial areas of our core business and where activity is required we are adopting a light-touch approach. NES have responded to numerous requests to develop new programmes of work. This has included educational support for the service by delivering educational resources online and providing workforce and digital support for the service.

A priority for NES has been to maximise the contribution that learners and trainees can make to service delivery, while seeking to support trainees at the ‘front-line’ including those in medical, pharmacy, dental, optometry, nursing, midwifery, AHP and psychology programmes.

#### **Educational Resources**

- We are developing a wide range of educational resources to support staff – particularly those who will be working in unfamiliar service areas, or those who are re-joining the workforce.
- These will be hosted on a publicly accessible area of our Turas Learn platform, to ensure that they are available to all.

#### **Redeploying the existing clinical workforce**

- NES funds and manages some 6,000 doctors in training - almost 40% of our medical workforce. We have reached agreement across the UK that all planned rotations will be ‘stood-still’ for the time being, to avoid the disruption of rotations, and we are working with Boards through DMEs to support the effective redeployment of trainees into areas of service need - whilst being mindful of the need to ensure that trainees are properly supported and



Chair: David Garbutt  
Chief Executive: Stewart Irvine

supervised, and can progress if at all possible. Routine training activity has been largely 'stood-down'.

- Doctors in training who are 'out-of-programme' and SCLF posts are being contacted to allow them to be redeployed into service facing roles - we estimate that this represents about 200 doctors across the system. We are working closely with academic partners on this.
- We expect that trained doctors who fulfil educational support roles (such as TPDs and FPDs) and who normally work on a sessional basis for NES, will now be working full time for their employing Board. Although this is a large number of individuals (over 300) most only do one or two sessions with us - but we anticipate that at least 75% of these are being re-deployed across both primary and secondary care.
- We have also conducted a full assessment of clinically qualified NES staff across all professions who could be released to patient facing Boards and non-clinical staff that can be re-deployed to provide support where it is needed. In the first instance, about 130 NMAHP practice education support staff already based in Boards will deploy to clinical roles.
- All of our quality management work, including visits, surveys and the like has been suspended until further notice.

### **Expanding the Clinical Workforce**

- We are working with Scottish Government, Boards, Higher Education Institutes and Professional Regulators to support the return to service of registrants who have recently left, and to bring into service those who are close to qualification. This will include undergraduate nursing students and final year medical students.
- The details are being worked out at pace, but we anticipate deploying very soon a once-for-Scotland digital platform to manage the process of on-boarding and deployment to Boards.

### **Digital Support for the Workforce**

- Working with NHS Board partners to roll out 'Teams' across the whole NHS in Scotland.
- Provisioning Office 365 accounts for Scottish Government so they can continue to communicate and collaborate effectively with NHS Scotland.
- Building an on-line portal to enable the tracking of the availability of the workforce in Scotland to support workforce planning.
- Building a case management system based on our existing FNP platform to enable community staff to log cases of suspected Covid-19 and gain access to remote advice and support.
- Building an on-line system to maintain contact with those high-risk patients who require to be 'shielded' during the current emergency.
- Working with HIS to build an application to support health and care staff in having the difficult conversations around care planning during COVID-19.

We will keep you updated as we continue develop our support to the health and social care system at this challenging time.

I hope you find this update useful, and If you wish to discuss any information outlined please get in touch.

Yours sincerely



**Professor D Stewart Irvine**  
Acting Chief Executive