

8 September 2021

Dear Trainee / Trainer,

As we move into autumn, we continue to chart our way through the COVID pandemic, and the disruption it has caused across society and our health and social care system. The response, ongoing commitment and contribution of all health and social care staff continues to be outstanding. It is humbling to watch the immense contribution and commitment of all our health and social care colleagues who continue to prioritise patient care while working under immense service pressures.

The Scotland Deanery and Directors of Medical Education in Health Boards continue to work closely with the Scottish Government and with the other Statutory Education Bodies, Royal Colleges, and the GMC. Together we are making every effort to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on all aspects of education and training. The Scotland Deanery, Health Boards and all involved continue to ensure that wellbeing, physical and mental health of all our trainees is a priority, whilst we work to ensure services are safe for patients and staff alike.

We recognise the many complex stresses that doctors in training and their trainers have faced, across all aspects of training. This has included accessing courses, passing professional examinations, navigating recruitment processes and in acquiring key competencies, as well as managing pressures within the clinical environment. It is a testament to the commitment and dedication of both trainees and trainers alike, that despite these challenges, almost 90% of doctors in training continue to progress through training. For those who progression has been impacted, we recognise the many contributing factors including service disruption, staff absence and shielding among others, and we are committed to supporting those individuals to get back on track as soon as possible. Pleasingly, we have been able to facilitate all additional training time required to ensure those starting new training programmes have been fully accommodated.

As many of you will be aware, recent weeks have seen an increase in people testing positive for SARS-COV-2 in Scotland, and that many parts of the service in both primary and secondary care are experiencing significant pressures. While there is regional variation, it is evident that health and social care services are under immense pressure, and the coming weeks and months will be challenging. Differential impact and disruption to acute and elective services may create peaks and troughs of training opportunities, and it is recognised that in extreme circumstances, redeployment of medical staff along with other staff groups may need to be considered.

Last year the Postgraduate Deans and Directors of Medical Education co-produced a framework document setting out the principles for any redeployment. [This framework document](#) has been extremely valuable, and has now been updated with our learning from the last 18 months. It is agreed

that any decisions regarding redeployment will be in line with the principles outlined in the framework, will be based on the clear imperatives of patient and trainee safety, and will strive to avoid further disruption to training, particularly for doctors already facing delays to their progression. Furthermore, there is a commitment to ensure that all options are explored, including redeployment of other staff members where appropriate, renegotiation of development time and prioritising training recovery at the earliest opportunity.

While it is recognised that any requests for redeployment are likely to be limited and related to local and regional service pressures, we wish to highlight the increasing pressures in the system, and reassure that any requests for redeployment will be carefully considered and managed in the context of a commitment to protect training as far as possible. With this in mind, any potential moves will be discussed on a one to one basis and personal, training and educational needs will be taken into account. We will ensure appropriate induction and both clinical and educational supervision for any doctor in training moved. Any redeployment will be for the shortest time possible and will not disadvantage you financially.

If redeployment is proposed, then Training Program Directors (including Foundation Program Directors), educational and clinical supervisors, clinical managers or DME teams will discuss any potential requests with trainees to ensure appropriate consideration and understanding of any impact. All redeployment will be recorded and reported to the Deanery as per the consensus document.

We recognise that the prospect of redeployment may be uncomfortable, and wish to reassure that while such requests are likely to be few, they will be fully considered and communicated with your training needs in mind. Further information can be found on the FAQs section of the [Scotland Deanery Covid-19 Information pages](#), and if you have concerns, please contact your educational supervisor, TPD or DME team to discuss.

Thank you for your continued professionalism and commitment to supporting colleagues and patients at this time of challenge.

Yours sincerely

Professor Stewart Irvine
Medical Director and Deputy CEO
NHS Education for Scotland

Dr Ian Hunter
Chair
NHSS Directors of Medical Education