

Guide to self-isolation for doctors in training

The guidance below is designed to try and help direct you in how best to approach a period of extended self-isolation or shielding during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Training

You understandably may have concerns regarding the implication on your training progression.

Guidance has been issued from a variety of sources. NHS Education Scotland has links to many of these as well as contact details for the deanery and a section of FAQs:

NES links to various Royal Colleges information:

<https://www.scotlanddeanery.nhs.scot/covid-19/royal-colleges-information/>

NES deanery enquiry form:

<https://www.scotlanddeanery.nhs.scot/covid-19/deanery-covid-19-enquiry-form/>

NES FAQ:

<https://www.scotlanddeanery.nhs.scot/covid-19/covid-19-faq/>

Whilst these resources may provide the answers you are looking for there remains a gap as to specific guidance on measures trainees, especially those on extended self-isolation, can take to minimise the impact on their training. We would therefore you consider the following steps (NB these are intended as a practical, but unofficial guide and are not a guarantee of smooth progression in training):

1. Notify clinical team/department you are working in that you are self isolating/shielding
2. Confirm your educational supervisor is aware.
3. Read your relevant specialty or training body guidance and any specific requirements you may need to meet (See links to guidance above)
4. Arrange meeting with educational supervisor (virtual if needed) to discuss plan for work and training during this period (Use SMART goals where possible)
5. Document discussion in e-portfolio and where appropriate create a COVID PDP detailing plan for:
 - a. Clinical work
 - b. Training
 - c. Other generic competencies including:
 - i. Research
 - ii. Audit/QI
 - iii. Teaching
 - iv. Leadership and management
 - d. Feedback (eg MSF/TAB, MCR etc)
6. Create a reflective practice log to document (broadly) your activities each week, aligned to your PDP

7. Review progress at appropriate intervals (every 1-2 weeks) and if concerns discuss with Education Supervisor

Most training bodies (eg NES, UKFPO, JRCPTB) have published their own guidance but there are a few general themes that are important to emphasise:

1. Demonstration of engagement – prior to COVID were you making progress with curriculum requirements and WBPAs? During COVID have you shown engagement with clinical and non-clinical work? (the updated PDP and reflective practice log is suggested specifically to address this)
2. Reports from supervisors etc: Increased emphasis on educational supervisor report (which is why we emphasise engagement with them above) which will also be guided by any MCR (multiple consultant report) or MSF/TAB. Where possible, try and get these completed.

If you are required to complete an absence declaration prior to an ARCP the deanery has advised you document this as 'special leave COVID-19 related' and let HR know that that is why you are off. Please also ensure to document that you have been working amended duties where applicable.

Clinical Work

You may not currently be able to take up your usual clinical duties. There are however a variety of opportunities for you to continue to do clinical work. These will vary depending on your grade, specialty and prior experience. We will endeavour to support you in finding meaningful and engaging work.

This may also include working on other generic competency domains such as teaching or research.

Remote IT access can be very helpful. Please speak to your clinical team/department to try and arrange this.

Welfare

This is an uncertain and unsettling time for a whole host of reasons including: concern for your own welfare, concern for implication on training, guilt at not being able to be on 'the front line' and that because of self-isolation you are also less likely to have the same support networks that those in work have.

The not in work network allows those in similar positions to help support each other and hopefully helps to mitigate some of these issues.

The Lothian Medical Education Directorate website has a range of links to regional wellbeing initiatives including zoom drop in sessions and yoga but also has links to local and national resources:

<https://www.med.scot.nhs.uk/resources/covid-19#wellbeing-and-support>

Most importantly: If you are struggling for ANY REASON please find someone to talk to. Either get in touch with us or use one of the other range of support services signposted on the MED website above.