

Supporting the COVID-19 response in Wales

Guidance on facilitating the return of trainees on flexible training pathways

During this national emergency, we are grateful to all doctors in training who have courageously provided frontline healthcare. We highly value their important contribution as the NHS faces unprecedented and rising demand for healthcare services.

HEIW remains fully committed to supporting and developing doctors in training to improve care for patients. Many have chosen flexible training opportunities to expand their portfolio but now want to return to frontline healthcare to support the NHS response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This guidance provides clarity for doctors currently in the following categories many want to return or have returned to the frontline:

- Out of Programme
- Working less Than Full Time
- Taking Parental Leave

Management of Requests to return early from Out of Programme (OOP)

Requests from those individuals who wish to pause their OOP to work across NHS Wales to support the COVID-19 response should be managed as follows:

- Trainees should contact HEIW: HEIW@Wales.nhs.uk to explore this option in the first instance.
- All such requests will be considered and trainees will either:
 - return to their last hospital
 - move to their next planned placement or
 - slot into a vacant placement on the programmeunless exceptionally agreed by the PG Dean.
- We will work with employers to identify and accommodate trainees where they have made contact.
- We will contact other trainees to ensure they are aware that this option is available whilst respecting each individuals' choice.
- We will honour existing approvals for OOP and extend the OOP timeframe accordingly if trainees wish to continue with their OOP once the situation becomes more stable.

Management of Requests for Out of Programme (OOP)

It is currently not possible to accommodate OOP requests commencing between now and August 2020 unless the request is for an OOPC for extenuating circumstances and has the agreement of the Postgraduate Dean.

The following advice regarding OOP applications remains subject to change as the pandemic situation develops. The situation will be monitored within HEIW and further guidance, where required, will be issued.

New requests for OOPs

- Trainees who have yet to submit a new request for:
 - Out of Programme Research (OOPR)
 - Out of Programme Training (OOPT)
 - Out of Programme Experience (OOPE)
 - Out of Programme Career Break (OOPC)
- You may continue to submit your applications and we will continue to process them. The start of your OOP will be reviewed nearer the time and dependent upon the workforce and pandemic situation you may be required to delay the start of your OOP.

Current OOP requests submitted but not agreed

- All current requests for OOPT, OOPR, OOPC and OOPE already submitted will continue to be processed.
- The start of your OOP will be reviewed nearer the time and dependent upon the workforce and pandemic situation you may be required to delay the start of your OOP.

Recently agreed OOPs where the trainee is yet to take up the placement

- The start of your OOP will be reviewed nearer the time and dependent upon the workforce and pandemic situation you may be required to delay the start of your OOP.

Extensions of OOPs for trainees already out of programme

- You can continue to submit your OOP extension request, and this will be processed.
- Your extension will be reviewed nearer the time and dependent upon the workforce and pandemic situation your extension may no longer be approved, and you will be asked to return to the programme as soon as possible.

Management of Less than Full Time Training applications

Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) has received an overwhelming number of responses from trainees currently working and training on a Less Than Full Time (LTFT) basis asking how they can provide additional support.

HEIW will support all less-than-full-time (LTFT) doctors in training who wish to increase their working hours and those on parental leave who wish to return early to contribute to the NHS COVID-19 response.

HEIW supports the following principles to facilitate LTFT trainees into frontline service:

- **LTFT trainees who would like to return on a full-time basis:** This should only be considered where appropriate in accordance with health and personal circumstances
- **LTFT trainees who wish to increase their current working percentage:** This should only be considered where appropriate in accordance with health and personal circumstances
- **On return to business as usual:** Trainees will automatically have the right to reduce their current working percentage and resume their original LTFT working arrangements.

Trainees considering these options may want to speak to their Educational Supervisor or Training Programme Director in the first instance before contacting HEIW (HEIW@Wales.nhs.uk) and their employing organisation.

Currently, HEIW will continue to both honour existing arrangements and accept new LTFT applications. However, this is something that will be subject to further review in accordance with workforce pressures and need.

Management of trainees returning from parental leave

Requests from those returning from parental leave who want to work across NHS Wales to support the COVID-19 response should be managed as follows:

- All such requests will be considered and trainees will return to their last hospital placement unless exceptionally agreed by the PG Dean.
- We will work with employers to identify and accommodate trainees where they have made contact.

26th March 2020