

Health Education England

Directorate of Education and
Quality

Floor 2, Stewart House
Russell Square
London WC1B 5DN

Business Manager: Luke Bailey

Tel: 020 7125 0979

Email: luke.bailey@hee.nhs.uk



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Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to provide reassurance around how HEE and NHS England and NHS Improvement are supporting doctors in training through the COVID-19 pandemic. These are exceptional times with unprecedented demands for frontline healthcare service delivery and we are grateful to all of you for your important and valued contribution during these challenging circumstances.

Building on the letter from the Chief Medical Officers and GMC, I would like to emphasise HEE's commitment to supporting doctors in training to be equipped to deliver high quality care where it is most needed in the safest and most effective way during these unprecedented times. Maintaining patient safety remains at the forefront of all our strategic healthcare delivery decisions.

We are aware that some of you are being asked to work in different environments and healthcare settings whilst learning new skills and delivering care in areas where you may not have had much previous experience. More experienced doctors in training may also find themselves supervising senior colleagues, for example, consultants from other disciplines [or areas of clinical practice] who have been re-deployed to help meet frontline demands. We wish to confirm that this is acceptable for doctors in training but that this may be outside the comfort zone for some.

Integral to a lifelong career in medicine is the ability to adapt to the ever changing and complex healthcare system which necessitates continuous learning and developing. We are confident that the excellent and robust foundation of medical education and training you have received at medical school and beyond will enable all doctors in training to be agile in these exceptional times.

HEE is clear that, despite the current changes in medical training processes, the fundamentals of high quality training including induction and supervision must continue. Doctors in training must receive adequate supervision if they are working in an unfamiliar environment and learning and using new skills. It is more important than ever that you raise any concerns about supervision or patient safety with the Director of Medical Education in your organisation.

We will work closely with the General Medical Council, NHS hospital trusts and other healthcare providers to ensure that you are able to deliver care and contribute safely and effectively to the COVID-19 response.

Thank you again for your valued hard work and dedication to the COVID-19 healthcare response.

Yours Sincerely,



Professor Wendy Reid
Executive Director of Education & Quality, National Medical Director,
Health Education England