

# Greater flexibility for doctors in training

## Contents

- [Our work](#) [1]
- [Online learning](#) [2]
- [Health careers](#) [3]
- [News, blogs and events](#) [4]
- [About](#) [5]

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Expanded opportunities for training less than full time, flexible portfolio training and the development of an Out of Programme Pause (OOPP) initiative which allows doctors the chance to take time out from their training, are just some of the achievements highlighted by Health Education England (HEE) as it sets out progress made with its Enhancing Junior Doctors' (JDs) Working Lives programme in the annual update report published today.

This key area of work is very much in line with the recently published Interim People Plan which highlighted the importance of junior doctor well-being and improving their working lives as an integral part of making the NHS 'the best place to work'.

The latest report highlights the work that HEE has completed with partners including the British Medical Association (BMA), Medical Royal Colleges and General Medical Council over the past year in response to the concerns doctors in training have raised and to help boost morale.

Achievements over the last year include:

- Working with the Royal College of Physicians to launch a flexible portfolio training for approximately 60-65 doctors in training, who will take up their new posts across England in August 2019;
- Improving cross system working to support doctors in training, including an inaugural national meeting of Champions of Flexible Working to be held during Summer 2019; and
- The development of an Out of Programme Pause (OOPP) proposal as the first step towards establishing an evolved training system enabling greater flexibility to 'step out, step into' training;

**Professor Wendy Reid, Director of Quality and Education and Medical Director, Health Education England said:**

I am delighted with the continued progress of this important programme outlined in this new report. It is vital that we continue to empower doctors in training to voice their concerns regarding their training environment and act on them.

The interim People Plan makes clear the commitment to provide better support for junior doctors at the start of their career, by improving their working experiences and paying greater attention to their health and wellbeing. This report details the significant progress we have

made over the last year. However, we are not complacent and recognise that there is still much to be done. I am grateful to everyone who has contributed to this work over the past year and will continue to focus our efforts on improving the working lives of doctors in training.?

The 'Enhancing Junior Doctors' Working Lives' initiatives are being progressed within HEE's broader Medical Education Reform Programme (MERP) which aims to modernise our approach to medical education to support safe, high quality patient care. Through MERP, we will continue to push for cultural change within the healthcare education system so that 'Enhancing Junior Doctors' Working Lives' initiatives are implemented across England and all doctors in training can benefit from the improvements made.

**Professor Carrie MacEwen, Chair of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges said:**

The Academy has long argued the need for junior doctors' to be better supported and valued while training and working. Not only does it help trainees stay in the profession, but importantly, it also improves the quality of patient care. This insightful report demonstrates how much work has been done, by so many, to deliver this. The Academy is particularly pleased to have been involved with moves to ensure increased flexibility within programmes - a change which will be very welcome to trainees. The test, of course, is whether they are being implemented locally and junior doctors on the front line are seeing the benefits.

**Charlie Massey, Chief Executive of the GMC, said:**

Retaining the excellent doctors we already have must be at the heart of building and growing a sustainable workforce. That means a renewed focus on improving the wellbeing of the trainee doctors who are the bedrock of our health services by providing more flexible training, and empowering doctors to speak up to improve their working environments.

We will continue to work together with HEE and others to agree priority areas for collaborative action, to tackle the causes of poor wellbeing and improve support for doctors.

**Danny Mortimer, chief executive of NHS Employers, said:**

'The annual update report on Enhancing Junior Doctors' working lives provides a helpful overview of the significant work which HEE and partners including doctor representatives have undertaken together to improve the learning environment for trainees.

'However, we should never be complacent in our aim to make the NHS the best place to work. We look forward to continuing to work with the BMA JDC and all those involved in the Enhancing Junior Doctors working lives group over the coming year to take further action.'

Commenting on the flexibility of the EJDWL programme a trainee said:

?In my experience to date it has had a positive influence on my practice and overall well-being. I feel this has had a knock on effect leading to improved patient care. Ultimately, it has afforded a more sustainable lifestyle and I could not envisage working in the current climate in another fashion.?

?The pilot has made doing the job (which I love and am good at), caring for an older relative and commuting possible. Going to 80% has been personally, educationally and professionally fantastic and I hope to CCT in the next 24 months.?

The full report can be found at <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/doctors-training/enhancing-working-lives>  
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### **Links**

[1] <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work>

[2] <https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/>

[3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/>

[4] <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/news-blogs-events>

[5] <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/about>

[6] <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/doctors-training/enhancing-working-lives>