

Directorate of Education & Quality

Westbridge Place,
Westbridge Close,
Leicester,
LE3 5DR

17th December 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Current service pressures in the NHS continue to rise following the emergence of the Omicron variant and health systems are looking at every possible way of addressing the challenges of the acceleration of the COVID vaccination strategy and the escalation in case numbers in across primary and secondary care.

It is likely that in many areas doctors in training will be asked to contribute to the efforts in meeting these challenges. This will vary across the country but will impact on doctor's working practices and their training.

Postgraduate Deans are discussing contingency plans with local systems, including the possible redeployment of doctors in training to provide short term support for local surges. The Deans will ensure that decisions about moving trainees consider regional and local surges impacting on clinical demand, staff sickness and total workforce availability.

The needs of doctors in training (including safe induction and supervision) will be part of this decision-making with accurate data collection to inform future training needs analysis and trainee progression.

Deans and their senior teams will oversee any redeployment to ensure that all other options will have been considered first, and that the re-deployment will only be for as long as there is no credible alternative approach.

Protecting and maintaining education and training remains important at the present time, as doctors in training are still feeling the impact of Covid on their training, and the risk to their progression and to future service delivery remains.

It is particularly important that trainees who received an outcome 3 or 10.2 at their most recent ARCP are not redeployed unless absolutely necessary as they are already behind with gaining their competencies.

However, all doctors recognise the need to prioritise patient care and to adapt when circumstances require this. We recognise the exceptional efforts of doctors in training to achieve this over the COVID pandemic and wish to thank them, and their trainers for their continuing focus on both delivering clinical care and on education and training.

yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheona MacLeod". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Professor Sheona MacLeod

Deputy Medical Director, Education Reform,
Responsible Officer,
Health Education England