HEE response to recommendations outlined in ‘The Future of Healthcare Work Experience: Discovery Report’ March 2022

**This paper details and sets out HEE’s, Widening Access and Participation (WAP) teams’ response to the Discovery Report and is intended to communicate HEE plans more broadly and support regional leads, to take forward recommendations and actions through their regional and local forums and partnerships.**

Recommendations

There are eleven recommendations within the ‘future of healthcare work experience: discovery report’ and multiple sub options embedded within each. HEE has reviewed and carefully considered the discovery report which represents a major contribution to the development of work experience (WEx) and work-related learning (WRL). HEE’s response to the Discovery Report is set out below.

The implementation of the recommendations is complex and requires a coordinated response. Not all recommendations are intended for HEE implementation in isolation, to be successful, a system wide approach is advised. We therefore encourage and welcome a partnership approach to further consultation, implementation, and future reviews.

To assist in taking this forward, we encourage HEE regional leads to raise awareness of the recommendations and response below, through their regional and local forums and partnerships. The WAP team will continue to lead, engage, and consult on this area of work through WAP regional steering groups, and into the proposed future partnership forum. An identified regional WAP lead will be a resource for systems to co-ordinate activities at the regional level as required, to achieve economies of scale.

**Option A - National Work Experience Platform** – Pursue the development of an end-to-end digital service to coordinate work experience.

**Accept in principle** – HEE recognises its role in facilitating and planning the learning process, helping the individual or community to make informed decisions, which ultimately lead to the education and training of the future workforce, thus securing the future workforce pipeline.

Work experience and work-related learning, play a pivotal role in widening access and encouraging participation in health careers. It is therefore vital, that we support this agenda to enable access to education, training, and employment for marginalised and disadvantaged groups.

HEE believe that a national solution to the management of work experience will encourage and foster inclusive systems, that will reduce inequalities of access to work experience / work-related learning, and champion fully accessible, fair, equitable and transparent provision and, as such, is committed to further exploring the feasibility of such a platform.

However, this is a long-term and complex option that will require considerable consultation and further options analysis with ALBs, to establish which organisation is ‘best fit’ in taking this concept forward and as such, is likely to refine overtime.

**Option B - develop a strong messaging campaign about work experience**

**Further exploration required** – HEE acknowledges the wider value that a national campaign would have. However, at this time, we do not feel that work experience or work-related learning opportunities, and or, wider support is sufficient, robust or mature enough to bolster a national campaign.

Nonetheless we do welcome careful consideration of safety for the return of work experience, as well as careful consideration of reintroducing work experience in relation to NHS staff, who have faced sustained periods of intense pressure over the last year. We would therefore suggest were possible, a phased approach with an initial focus on in-person work-related learning provision in the first instance.

**Option C - online work-related learning**

C1 - adopt new definitions

**Accept** – HEE welcomes the findings of the discovery; language and terminology does matter, and while online opportunities can enhance learning, it is felt that it is not a like-for-like equivalent of work experience. The recommended terminology was developed in consultation with the Gatsby Foundation, Health Careers, the Medical Schools Council and aligns with government definitions.

HEE believes using a shared language across the NHS and with our wider stakeholders, will assist those looking to enter a career in healthcare to demonstrate their experiences, widen access to health careers and enhance our engagement with educational partners. We, therefore, encourage a wide adoption of the proposed terms and ask our partners to action ‘option G1’.

It is anticipated that adopting the new terms, will also enable us to establish robust, common baselines, benchmarks, measures of success, as well as better understand where resources are best served.

C2 - [1] short speciality focused e-learning modules, [2] larger online work-related content for specialities where work experience is rarely or never possible

**Actioned** – HEE understands and recognises the potential online and e-learning has, in widening access to, and attracting a diverse range of people into health careers. The pausing of work experience has resulted in a rapid increase in online developments and provision at a time when health services are already stretched. To ease the pressure, fill a gap, celebrate and build on the success of online work-related learning, allows for previously unfeasible insights to reach more individuals interested in a career in health, HEE have committed C200K to take forward this recommendation in partnership with NHS organisations.

Whilst we understand that local context matters, we also recognise that there is a place for national material, consistency, and standardisation.

C3 - Coordinate training opportunities and/or webinars

**Further exploration required** – HEE recognises its duty in being responsible for planning, education and training of the future workforce and existing staff, we will therefore be exploring this recommendation in more depth.

C4 - Determine where and how the digital literacy domains should be included within online work-related learning. Pursue gaining access to the digital literacy diagnostic tool to share with work experience applicants.

**Further exploration required** – Talent for Care are keen to support the HEE digital Readiness programme and will work closely with the Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) team to explore the potential to broaden the offer to work experience applicants.

C5 – toolkit

**Actioned** – HEE (Talent for Care) supports employers with their workforce supply programmes. One such strand of support is the development of toolkits, a collection of authoritative and adaptable resources for front-line staff that enables them to learn about an area of work such as work experience, understand the requirements, and identify approaches for addressing them, turning theory into practice. For many, online delivery is new territory, to minimise the impact and ease the transition to online modes of activities HEE is developing an ‘online delivery’ toolkit covering, safeguarding, diversity & inclusion, best practices, strategies, models, and course design principles.

**Option D – national work experience network** – continue to develop the network into an open, supportive, transparent digital community

**Actioned** – HEE recognises the value of working collaboratively and the power of open and fair practice, whilst utilising the benefit of digital technology. We are committed to harnessing our position to support engagement and build capacity across systems. We are currently developing a ‘value proposition’ exercise and communication plan and will be expanding the network membership. We encourage members of the network to action ‘option F’ of the report and support HEE in making the network a valued safe space, to share | discuss | collaborate

D1 – share online and in-person work-related learning evaluation and resources

**Actioned** – HEE is committed to sharing best practices as well as lessons learnt. We support the development of [case studies](https://healtheducationengland.sharepoint.com/Comms/Digital/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2FComms%2FDigital%2FShared%20Documents%2Fhee%2Enhs%2Euk%20documents%2FWebsite%20files%2FWork%20experience%20and%20pre%20employment%20activity&p=true&originalPath=aHR0cHM6Ly9oZWFsdGhlZHVjYXRpb25lbmdsYW5kLnNoYXJlcG9pbnQuY29tLzpmOi9nL0NvbW1zL0RpZ2l0YWwvRW44OGw4aURleVpQbDVQQ1dPVjVXQWtCd0VlcFJRNzdLOWdmYnQ5TDd2dERWQT9ydGltZT10UDIyTVhzZjJVZw). We have implemented a suite of lessons learnt webinars such as, [Observe GP](https://www.rcgp.org.uk/observegp) interactive video development. We are now moving onto the next phase of webinars focused on best practice and lessons learnt from across the NHS and have launched a ‘national work experience resource catalogue’, housed on the HEE Learning Hub to pool and share work experience and work-related learning content.

D2 - invite Allied Health Profession (AHP) faculty members to be a part of the Network and consider other stakeholders that require knowledge of the work taking place

**Actioned** – AHP’s are invited to become members of the network. HEE has aspirations to open the network to wider stakeholders.

**Option E – seek high-level buy-in**

**Actioned** – It is anticipated that this report will be the catalyst and launch pad to raise awareness of the value in and need for, work experience and work-related learning in healthcare. HEE is committed to championing inclusive systems to reduce inequalities of access to work experience / work- related learning and champion fully accessible, fair, equitable and transparent provision.

E – develop a national work experience strategy

**Further exploration required** – whilst HEE fully supports the development of a national work experience strategy, and strongly advocates for work experience and work-related learning to be recognised as an integral part of the workforce pipeline evident within national policy, we acknowledge that this cannot, and should not, be done in isolation. We will therefore commit to exploring this in more depth with our NHS colleagues and wider partners.

**Option H – social care** - A further ‘sprint’ of discovery is required to understand how work experience in healthcare is similar to, overlaps with, and integrates with work experience in social care.

**Further exploration required** – HEE understands the need and value of having better links with social care. Pursuing this recommendation is reliant on the outcome of ‘option A’, we will continue to monitor this closely.

Longer-term, we intend to expand the ‘national work experience network’ to our social care colleagues and would like to determine through consultation with our system partners, how to best share and connect with our social care colleagues

**Option I – coordinate efforts between volunteering and work experience**

**Actioned** – HEE has strong relationships with volunteering colleagues through our partnership with NHSE/I as well as our own volunteering workstream. We will continue to grow and evolve these relationships in line with the recommendations of this report.

**Option J – Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC)**

**Actioned** – HEE already has an established and effective relationship with the CEC and pledge to continue to raise awareness of the CEC resource hub and promote its use.

**Option K – research the impact of one-day work experience placements**

**Further exploration required** – the opportunities that online and in-person work-related learning, and a future blended approach present is vast. There is evidence to suggest a blended learning approach can become a powerful force for institutional transformation. At present our intention is to explore and share what currently exists, encourage others to evaluate and share their findings, and make further enquiries as to how we can take this recommendation forward.

Access the full discovery report at hee.nhs.uk/workexperience

For further information, please contact workexperiencetfc@hee.nhs.uk