

# Health Education England Study Leave Report

## 2018-2020

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### Background

Study budgets were considered nationally as part of the group for Enhancing Junior Doctors' Working Lives which initially arose to address issues raised by doctors in training as part of contract negotiations in England, and which sat outside of the contract itself.

Through this forum, variable access to study budgets was highlighted as an issue. The working group proposed the implementation of a consistent process to support doctors in training in accessing the education support required to meet their curriculum objectives.

As a result, with effect from April 2018, Health Education England (HEE) announced a new approach for an agreed amount of funding for study budgets to be removed from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) Education and Training tariff (hereafter 'the tariff') placement fee, to be held and managed by HEE within the relevant local office.

In the new arrangement, there is no specific financial allocation per trainee per year. The pooled funding is intended to provide a resource to be allocated according to curriculum and education requirements.

This top sliced budget was to provide support for trainees irrespective of post type (tariff or Local Education Provider (LEP)/trust funded). There are, however, separate budgetary arrangements outside of tariff for dental trainees, public health, palliative care as well as specialty training level trainees working in primary care settings.

### Workstreams of the HEE Study Leave Group

#### Revised Principles and Guidance

The HEE Study Leave Group continues to meet regularly with wide representation including from NHS Employers and the BMA Junior Doctors Committee. The membership has been broadened to include other training groups such as the AoMRC trainees committee. A full membership list can be found in Appendix A.

In the summer of 2019, the key work of the HEE Study Leave Group saw the finalisation and publication of a new [HEE Study Leave document](#).

The purpose of the document was to provide a clear, high-level overview of the Study Leave process and approach to financial management across HEE. The document was also a refresh of national information released at the start of the 2018/19 financial year

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with the launch of the new approach to study budgets. It condensed previous communications into one overall document and brought the approach up to date for the 2019/20 financial year.

The document presents the high level principles including for international study leave applications. Although funding for Study Leave in HEE comes from a variety of sources, the document highlights that, irrespective of the funding source, the same principles should be followed for granting of study leave for all doctors and dentists in training.

Local Postgraduate Deans are responsible for ensuring the principles are followed.

### COVID 19

COVID 19 has had a huge impact on the ability to fulfil training needs as opposed to service commitments alone, which has been the major focus for the NHS for most of 2020.

[Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) were developed early and are revised as the situation develops with agreement of the Study Leave Group.

This will continue to be considered by the group as needed. It is important to stress that HEE is committed to ensure that the highest standards for training are maintained to ensure we equip our doctors of the future with the skills needed.

### Finance

A key operational issue is the alignment of the financial year which runs from April to March, and the training years which mainly run from August to August. This requires HEE financial and PGMDE teams to work closely in implementation of any policy changes, which we are pleased to report has been very much the case.

Principles of working together have been agreed, and it is understood that policy and process for the study leave work stream require strong joint working between Finance and HEE Deans.

It also remains the case that the NHS Trusts/employers of trainees are key players with regards to the processes of Study Leave approval and re-imbursment. Work continues with these organisations at a local office level to ensure individual SL claims are processed in a timely manner which is so vital to support accurate forecasting of budgets. This links to another national piece of work underway within the NHS which HEE is involved with, which aims to bring a 'Lead Employer Trust' model to all parts of England. Where current LETs are in place, this typically enables simpler systems for trainee re-imbursment given the 'economies of scale' it allows.

### Total Spend Summary – 2018/19 & 2019/20

Since the new study leave arrangements have been in place, an overspend to allocated budget has occurred for both financial years. The final position for the 2020/21 year is hard to predict because of the impact of COVID 19.

Table 1: 2018/19 Financial Year Summary

<b>2018/19 Financial Year: HEE Study Leave Spend Summary</b>			
<b>HEE Region</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Total Spend</b>	<b>Under/Overspend</b> (i.e. figures with a minus indicates an overspend)
North East & Yorkshire	4,119,355	4,295,162	-175,807
North West	3,308,217	3,394,443	-86,226
Midlands	4,898,496	4,939,196	-40,700
East of England	2,725,457	2,909,651	-184,194
London	6,642,843	6,620,805	22,039
South West	2,480,944	2,815,376	-334,432
South East	4,511,318	4,533,980	-22,662
<b>Totals</b>	<b>28,686,630</b>	<b>29,508,613</b>	<b>-821,983</b>

Table 2: 2019/20 Financial Year Summary

<b>2019/20 Financial Year: HEE Study Leave Spend Summary</b>			
<b>HEE Region</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Total Spend</b>	<b>Under/Overspend</b> (i.e. figures with a minus indicates an overspend)
North East and Yorkshire	4,394,208	5,719,109	-1,324,901
North West	3,751,420	3,536,603	214,817
Midlands	4,928,522	4,294,733	633,789
East of England	2,677,610	2,593,273	84,337
London	6,236,267	6,975,727	-739,460
South West	2,133,000	2,928,380	-795,380
South East	4,259,668	5,098,927	-839,259
<b>Totals</b>	<b>28,380,695</b>	<b>31,146,752</b>	<b>-2,766,057</b>

The 2019/20 financial year proved to be especially challenging, with HEE recording a significant overall overspend against the study budgets.

Discussions are ongoing, via the national Study Leave Group, to determine how to ensure HEE's approach to study leave does not put unsustainable financial pressure on the budget however it has been agreed that there will be no change in the HEE study budget

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policy whilst this review is ongoing and particularly taking into account the profound effect Covid 19 has had on the accessibility and provision of study events and education.

A key issue is that the current study budget allocation arises from the total number of medical training posts with tariff attached and does not include the medical training posts directly funded by trusts, which number approximately 20% of the total.

### Methodology for distribution of study budgets across HEE

An agreed change in methodology for the distribution of the national study budget amount between HEE local offices was another piece of work completed in 2019/20, which has been put in place for the 20/21 year.

It was agreed that future distribution needs to be based on the number of both Trust-funded and HEE-tariff-funded posts, as outlined above, given that doctors in training in both types of post have access to funding.

Funding allocated to each HEE local office in the 2020/21 financial year is based on the number of junior doctors in that unit of application as recorded within the Trainee Information System (TIS), rather than the number of tariff-funded posts. This does not affect the availability of study budget to each trainee and there remains an uncapped study budget for all doctors in training in England.

### Future work

The HEE Study Leave Group will continue to meet regularly and very much benefits from the collaborative working between the BMA JDC, NHS Employers as well as teams within HEE.

A key piece of work for 2020/21 and beyond will be the development of HEE's national Trainee Information System (TIS) to capture Study Leave activity. This will be a positive step forward and will make the administration and monitoring of Study Leave activity and spend easier. Until this is available nationally we will continue to analyse what is possible at local office level.

The study leave group will work to see if a process for appeals can be developed nationally to ensure consistency of HEE's offer throughout local offices.

The financial considerations remain a key area of work for us throughout 2020, to prepare for both the financial and training year of 2021.

- The group is committed to reviewing the policy and ensuring that no doctor in training is treated unfairly and receives what is needed.
- Postgraduate Deans will review their local approval processes to ensure these are fair and transparent, whilst keeping within the spirit of the national guidance.

### Summary

The HEE Study Leave Group continues to be a lively and effective group where open and honest discussion occurs.

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The delivery of the principles continues, despite significant challenges.

Appeals and future financial arrangements are key pieces of work.

We hope the development of TIS for Study Leave will dramatically enhance delivery in this area.

**Report Date – October 2020**

# Appendix A

## HEEDs Study Leave Working Group

### Terms of Reference

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#### Purpose of the group

1. To consider the detailed issues of operationalising HEE's new approach to study leave for Postgraduate doctors in training across England.
2. The committee is accountable to HEE Deans.

#### Key Objectives

1. To ensure consistency across England in relation to individual specialty approaches to study leave.
2. To allow flexibility where appropriate
3. To share best practice across specialties and regions
4. To ensure that available budget is used for the required process
5. To ensure that there is adequate financial management of the budget allocated to the Study leave process
6. To determine the strategic direction of the allocation of central funding for study leave
7. To determine future Trainee Information System delivery for Study Leave

#### Key Stakeholders:

- Lead deans
- Heads of Schools
- Royal Colleges
- AoMRC
- Doctors in training
- Directors of Medical Education

#### Membership

- Chair (Postgraduate dean)
- Deputy Chair (confirmed by Chair but from a different local office)
- Lead business manager
- Representation from each of the 7 regions
- National DEQ
- HEEDS Programme manager
- Finance
- BMA Junior Doctors Committee

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- GP
- Foundation
- Dental
- TIS
- MERP
- AoMRC
- NACT UK
- MEM

### Meetings and Procedures

- Meetings or teleconferences to be arranged at least quarterly.
- Actions to be produced as a result
- The committee may invite other members as needed
- Members unable to attend may send a deputy.