

South West COVID-19 Workforce and Training Cell Bulletin – 25 April 2020

This weekly bulletin aims to provide a summary of key information and updates on COVID-19 guidance that has been shared to date. It should be read in conjunction with the national COVID-19 advice and guidance hosted by [Health Education England](#) and [NHS England and NHS Improvement](#).

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Healthcare scientists

Over 50% of the final year Scientist Training Programme (STP) cohort are being supported on to the HCPC temporary register to allow them to use their skills differently to their normal working day. Trainees on the Higher Specialist Scientist Training Programme (HSST) have also been offered a pause in training while they focus on COVID-19 work.

Physician associates

As part of the work to ensure a consistent, safe approach to the rapid deployment of student clinicians into the front line, the Faculty of Physician Associates at the Royal College of Physicians and regional teams are preparing model role descriptors for the PA workforce. The Faculty of Physician Associates have set up a COVID-19 special temporary register for graduate student PAs who have completed their University programmes but have yet to pass the PA national exam. [More information here](#).

Medical students and trainees

Supported return to training: If you missed the knowledge refresher and wellbeing webinars for doctors returning to training - [you can now watch them online](#).

Guidance on supervision and support for GP trainees in GP placements: Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on service pressures in primary care, the normal split of the GPST working week into seven clinical and three educational sessions has been suspended. Currently all 10 sessions can be allocated to clinical work, subject to the [guidance here](#).

ARCPs: Several changes have been introduced for ARCPs scheduled to take place before August 2020, to enable as many trainees to progress to the next stage in their training as possible. [Find out more about these changes here under the Training drop down list](#).

Nursing and midwifery student

If you missed the webinar last Friday with England's Deputy Chief Nurse, Mark Radford and Jess Sainsbury, Chair of the Royal College of Nursing Students Committee, [you can view a recording here](#).

Continuation of academic study and supervision in practice was a prime consideration in developing plans for students with the Nursing and Midwifery Council and other partners.

Allied health professionals

Universities are asked to contact their eligible Allied Health Professional (AHP) students to discuss their options for using their education programme to help with the response to the COVID-19 pandemic – [you can find the Student Support Guidance and joint AHP leads letter on under the Student Support Guidance during COVID-19 drop down here](#).

Also attached separately to this bulletin is the updated AHP COVID-19 resource document that curates the key guidance and developments for the AHPs workforce in relation to COVID-19 from the past week.

Enhanced 'Accelerated Preceptorship': The following information is to assist you with the enhanced preceptorship for final year students, new graduates and staff joining your organisations at this time. This does not replace your normal preceptorship programme but will ensure focus on core elements to support early career practitioners entering the workforce during this pandemic.

The core elements supported by newly developed free online training through [the e-Learning for Health](#) (eLfH) platform. In addition, resources developed alongside nursing and medical colleagues are available through this [link](#). This includes example documentation and case studies from both the preceptor and preceptee point of view.

Pharmacy

Guidance on facilitating the deployment of pharmacy undergraduate students to support the pharmacy workforce [is available here](#).

HEE e-Learning for Healthcare (e-LfH)

The COVID-19 programme is still being used extensively by the health and care workforce responding to the pandemic. To date it has been launched over 800,000 since it went live last month. The content is also being accessed in 98 countries across the world via [eIntegrity](#).

In response to feedback from users you can now access content on the COVID-19 programme by selecting your role from a drop-down box on the e-LfH website. Short “how to” videos to help users with the registration process and accessing content are also now available.

There are now resources for most members of the health and care workforce working in a range of settings including [resources for Nurses, Midwives and AHPs Returning to work, being Redeployed or Up-Skilled](#) including pathways for those who are internationally trained, from the independent sector and students who have opted into a revised programme structure.

[Click here for more information and to access the programme](#).

NHS staff wellbeing

A wellness induction is being implemented for all Interim Foundation Year 1 doctors. The induction aims to help maintain wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic. It provides personal guidance and signposting to services and resources. Investigation as to how to adapt it for other parts of the workforce is ongoing.

FOR ANY QUERIES OR ISSUES, PLEASE EMAIL:
COVID19WORKFORCE.SW@HEE.NHS.UK

SOUTH WEST COVID-19 WORKFORCE CELL

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Contents:

- Working from home costs
- Staff stranded abroad
- Student nursing contract
- Agency nursing
- ICU support from veterinary colleagues
- Midwife returners
- NHS staff accommodation booking
- Visas for overseas clinical staff

Q: Some organisations are paying staff an additional amount per month to cover working at home costs, based on information from [HMRC](#).

Organisations can provide the following information to staff to enable them to claim tax relief against increased costs. Please see form of words and a link below:

When your employer requires you to work from home (as we currently do) you can claim tax relief against the increased costs of electricity, heating etc. From Monday 6 April 2020 (the new tax year) you are able to claim £6 a week. This is above the normal rate of £4 per week for home workers.

You can claim it via your self-assessment form if you normally complete one, or if not, you can fill in a P87 form. This can be accessed online through your [Government Gateway account](#) or by filling out a [postal P87 form](#).

Q: An employee is stuck abroad to a travel ban or quarantine and unable to return to work, what should they be paid?

Employers should explore the individual circumstances with the employee. Where staff are in quarantine, they should be treated as self-isolating and paid accordingly. Where employers are satisfied an employee is stuck abroad due to COVID-19 and there is no reasonable prospect of them being able to return to work, the national temporary COVID-19 special leave should be used.

Q: How do we get a copy of the national contract for student nurses starting work? We have some 3rd year students starting locally.

Guidance from NHS Employers on the job descriptions and bandings for the potential paid placements that students could be deployed into during the pandemic period can be found [here](#).

Q: Trusts have reported cases agencies charging enhanced rates for non-ICU staff who are currently coming from other areas to assist in critical care.

National guidance has been issued on agency use during COVID-19 pandemic and can be found [here](#).

This includes a section specially on pay rate escalation. The guidance also requires that candidates are required to be asked specifically about their willingness to work on wards impacted by Covid-19.

If these issues continue to cause problems they should be escalated to the workforce cell at: COVID19workforce.sw@hee.nhs.uk.

Q: Is it possible to get support from veterinary colleagues? They are a group well versed in anaesthetic and cannulation skills, triage, prescribing, independent practice, and EOL care.

Yes, they can be a clinical support worker and London response teams are developing a job description. More information to follow.

Q: What is required from midwifery colleagues in helping to bring NHS staff back?

Local arrangements are now well established to process the expressions of interest from retired staff who are prepared to return to work in the NHS. The pre-employment checks for returners are being undertaken at a regional level and then staff are deployed to the organisations that they have specified an interest in working for. In addition, some individuals are contacting their local Trust directly and joining the Trust bank.

Q: We are having difficulty getting through to the hotel booking line for NHS accommodation

We know there have been a high volume of queries from HRD colleagues and NHS organisations about the hotel booking line for NHS staff. The CTM call line and booking remains in use, however they now have online booking available at: https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/NHS_Hotel

Q: We have a qualified, overseas doctor who is unable to return to their home country but wishes to help in the NHS. How can we get them working in our Trust?

The status of the doctor will need to be checked with the GMC, more advice can be found [here](#). If the doctor is not eligible to practice in the UK, it might be possible to offer them work in other non-qualified roles.

UKVI has set up a dedicated email account for customers with immigration queries related to coronavirus, including questions about urgent, compelling, compassionate cases. Customers can contact: CIH@homeoffice.gov.uk

[Changes to the VISA process have been introduced as a result of COVID-19 and information on the current position is available here.](#)