

HEE statement on training recovery

Friday 14th May 2021

Following the major disruption to postgraduate medical education during the last year of the COVID-19 pandemic, Health Education England (HEE) is working with the Department of Health and Social Care, Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, the General Medical Council and NHS England and Improvement to support training recovery as an urgent priority. Many trainees were redeployed to COVID-facing settings or had elective learning opportunities cancelled, resulting in substantial impact on experiential learning and curriculum attainment.

Our focus is now on implementing a carefully developed collaborative training recovery plan. This will minimise the number of trainees with learning gaps significant enough to require training extensions, and will maintain the quality of training opportunities to ensure as many trainees as possible are able to safely progress and get their training back on track.

We accept that some trainees will still require an increase in training time; however, with successful recovery processes to support training outcomes, this will not be a universal requirement. Furthermore, without a robust recovery plan, extensions to training time alone are unlikely to lead to comprehensive acquisition of the required skills and knowledge.

This is a complex programme, and together we are working closely with partner organisations, employers, and educators to ensure training reset, recovery and reform remains at the heart of service recovery across the NHS in England.

Solutions for training recovery will vary between regions, providers and specialities and there will be a range of training recovery solutions, tailored to individual trainees' needs, to support their wellbeing and ensure that quality remains at the heart of training and service delivery.

To help devise these individualised recovery plans, we are asking trainees to speak with their educational supervisor or training programme director in a one-to-one conversation. These conversations are an initial opportunity for trainees and educators to reflect on the past year, think about learning and wellbeing needs, and plan for their training recovery.

We recognise that these plans require significant investment both in time and resource at local level. To support this HEE has secured specific funding through the Department of Health and Social Care for the successful implementation of the recovery plan. This dedicated fund will support employers to deliver these training recovery conversations, collate trainees' learning needs, support trainees with their individual training recovery plans and develop trust-level recovery solutions.

It is our shared aim that the combination of a robust plan and the resource to deliver it will effectively support trainees and allow postgraduate medical education to get back on track.