

HEE KSS flexible working policy for GP trainees

Rationale for this policy

During the recent challenges faced by the healthcare service, many healthcare workers had to perform to work remotely for a variety of reasons (shielding for health reasons, access to workspace, stranded for travel reasons) (Chattopadhyay, Davies, & Adhiyaman, 2020).

With the end of the 'lockdown' there has been an opportunity to 'take stock' and re-evaluate the benefits and challenges of remote working vs practice-based working.

Many workers value the opportunity to work remotely (Webber, 2021) with reductions in commuter time, ability to support the household whilst still working and variation to the working week. Employers can also benefit from remote working, with increased availability of workspace and flexibility of working, as well as enhanced wellbeing of the staff (Read, 2021; Webber, 2021).

There are, however, challenges to remote working, such as:

- displacement from the functioning of the team - much interaction can be more efficiently attained through physical interaction and presence
- inability to place physical work with that worker
- impact on supervision (problem of building rapport for more difficult feedback, connection problems, not being sure of the exact location of supervisor/trainee)
- safety concerns - these are normally routinely addressed in the physical workspace
- home distractions for the worker/trainee
- lack of boundary between work and home life.

Specific challenges to training include:

- difficulties in acquiring exposure to all areas of the curriculum - e.g., working with young people, people with learning difficulties, care of older people, people with sensory deprivation (these groups may find remote consulting more challenging)
- difficulties in acquiring certain assessments (such as CEPS)
- reduced experience in supervision (physical presence does enhance the communication in some ways with teaching, but does present infection control risks and reduces flexibility by travel time)
- attainment of clinical skills required for GP's.

Therefore, HEE KSS acknowledges that both supervisors and trainees may welcome opportunities for increased flexibility of working going forward.

Remote and flexible working policy for GP trainees

Recommendations for flexibly working on an ongoing basis

We are specifically guiding supervisors and trainees to discuss this aspect of the placement in the initial placement planning meeting (PPM), and for the following to be recorded in the PPM log in their e-Portfolio:

- whether the trainee and/or the placement will be requiring or offering remote working
- the frequency of remote working (e.g., ad hoc, no more than once a month, no more frequently than once a week)
- how remote working will be supported by the placement - IT provision, hardware, software, training, and information governance training
- how remote working will be supervised (e.g., meeting via Teams, how the trainee will access supervision urgently when required)
- how the curriculum requirements of the placement will be met if remote working will be taking place, and
- how the trainee will be supported to demonstrate progress in acquiring capabilities.

We believe this provides necessary guidance for any remote working undertaken by trainees, recognising the benefits and challenges it entails whilst ensuring appropriate support and supervision is in place.

Works Cited

Chattopadhyay, I., Davies, G., & Adhiyaman, V. (2020). The contributions of NHS healthcare workers who are shielding or working from home during COVID-19. *Future Healthcare Journal*, e57-e59. doi:<https://doi.org/10.7861/fhj.2020-0096>

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