

GP Trainees Subcommittee E-Bulletin, December 2008

Welcome to the December 2008 edition of the GP Trainees subcommittee e-bulletin. The aim of this e-bulletin is to keep you up to date with the major issues being faced by GP trainees and the current work of the subcommittee.

New Chairman and Deputy Chairman

The new subcommittee Chairman for the 2008-2009 session is Katie MacLaren. She has been involved in the BMA since 2004, was Deputy Chairman of the Scottish Junior Doctors Committee from 2006-2008, and has been a member of the GP Trainees subcommittee since 2007.

The new Deputy Chairman for the 2008-2009 session is Masood Ahmed. He is the former Chairman of the Negotiating Subcommittee of JDC, and the former Deputy Chairman of JDC. He has also been a member of the GP Trainees Subcommittee since 2007.

GP Specialty Registrar Pay and Supplement

This Year's DDRB Evidence

The DDRB is an independent body whose role is to make recommendations to the Government on the remuneration of doctors and dentists taking part in the NHS. Each year, the DDRB considers many aspects in reaching its recommendations, including evidence submitted by the Departments of Health, NHS Employers (NHSE) and the BMA.

The BMA recently submitted its evidence to the DDRB regarding GP Specialty Registrar (GPStR) pay for GP trainees in general practice placements in 2009-2010. Our evidence raised concerns about the erosion of the GPStR supplement, and called on the DDRB to maintain the supplement at its current level and at least maintain the relative value of total GPStR pay. We also highlighted the fact that costs to trainees have increased dramatically in recent years and pointed to potential future problems in recruiting GP trainees.

The BMA's main evidence to the DDRB is available in full at www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/content/ddrb2009.

Survey on Intensity

The GPStR supplement for time spent in General Practice ensures that the total pay for GPStRs remains similar to that received by their hospital doctor counterparts. It encourages people to become GP trainees and rewards GPStRs for the intensity and complexity of their work. We are concerned that the supplement has been eroded by successive DDRB recommendations. The subcommittee is attempting to prevent this from occurring.

We are already planning next year's DDRB evidence and one of the ways in which the subcommittee plans to demonstrate that the supplement should be retained is to show the high intensity and complexity of the work that GPStRs carry out. In order to do this, we will be sending out a survey to a sample of GPStRs, asking about the work that they carry out. We currently plan to send the survey out in April 2009, so please look out for this and return it as advised.

BMA Success in Maintaining the Supplement

In recent months the BMA became aware that in Scotland, Northern Ireland and the South West, the relevant bodies had not intended to pay the full supplement to GP trainees in their ST1 or ST2 GP practice placements. As a result of BMA pressure, we are pleased to inform you that it was subsequently agreed that the supplement would be paid in full to these trainees. Please contact the BMA if you are a GP trainee in your general practice placement, and are not receiving the supplement for any reason.

Review of GP Specialty Training

The RCGP have been commissioned by the Department of Health to report on the Tooke report's recommendation to extend GP training to five years, and have set up a steering group to aid them in their work on this. The BMA's General Practitioners Committee (GPC) has representatives on this group, including Katie MacLaren, the Chairman of the GP Trainees subcommittee.

The BMA welcomes the proposal to extend training in principle as, if done properly, it could deliver significant benefits to GPs and patients in terms of the quality of GPs who emerge from general practice training. However, it is essential that the purpose of extending training remains skills focused rather than service focused and that implementation is well planned. We also want to ensure that adequate resources are made available to trainers for this proposed change.

New Framework Contract for GPStRs in Scotland

The Scottish GPC has issued a Framework for a written contract of employment, which includes terms and conditions, leave, educational assessment, review of progress, health and safety at work, educational agreement, personnel policies and working procedures. You can find further details about this at www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/SGPCSTContracts0608.

Expenses / Motor Vehicle Allowance

Don't forget to check that you are claiming all of the expenses allowed under your contract – particularly those related to motor and travel expenses. These expenses can mount up to a significant sum. You can find guidance about this at www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/GPregsMVA0408.

North West Single Employer Pilot

The North West Deanery is piloting a scheme whereby GP trainees have a single employer throughout their training, rather than changing their employer each time they enter a new placement. The subcommittee are monitoring the pilot's progress, and will provide updates in future e-bulletins.

Extensions to GP Training

If your training has to be extended due to your exams not being passed, this extension should be able to last for a period of up to 6 months, as stated in the Gold Guide. Please contact the BMA if this has not been the case in your experience.

We Need Your Details!

Although the BMA has records for trainee doctors in general, we have until recently not been able to identify those doctors who are in training specifically for general practice. We are now able to do this, but so that we can improve communications with GP trainees, we need your help in populating the GP trainee database. If you are a GP trainee, please therefore contact our membership department with your details.

Endnote

We hope that you have found this edition of the GP Trainees subcommittee e-bulletin interesting and helpful. Please do pass this e-bulletin on to anyone interested in GP trainee issues, and if you would like to be added to our mailing list please email jread@bma.org.uk.