

GP Trainees subcommittee e-bulletin, May 2008

Welcome to the third issue of the 2007-2008 e-bulletin of the GP Trainees subcommittee of the GPC. 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.

Doctors' and Dentists' Review Body and GPStR supplement

In their report for 2008 the DDRB recommended a further reduction in supplement for GP Specialty Registrars to 50%. As with last year, the board recommended that this reduction be applied only to those GPStRs entering placements on or after 1 April 2008.

We have clarified with NHS Employers that the intention is for those trainees who have established a contract of employment prior to 1 April to receive the supplement at the 55% rate, which will mean that only those trainees whose contract is established after this date will receive the supplement at the 50% reduction.

GPStRs should note that the Direction to Strategic Health Authorities concerning GP Registrars has not yet been amended to take account of this change. Further information regarding this change will be posted on the BMA website and disseminated to trainees as soon as published.

All doctors in training were awarded an increase of 2.2% to their basic salary.

The subcommittee will now be considering issues to be addressed in the evidence for submission in 2009.

GP Trainees and extended hours

Trainees within general practice will be aware that at the beginning of the year, the GPC polled the profession in relation to government intention to extend the working hours of GP practices, either through accepting proposed terms which were deemed unsatisfactory by the GPC, or through an imposed option from the government.

At their last meeting, the subcommittee agreed a policy statement, which was supported by the GPC at its meeting of 20 March 2008:

The GP Trainees' subcommittee notes that with regard to the current impositions by HMG over the offering of extended hours for routine general practice appointments, that:

- (i) A GP Trainee's contract provides for seven clinical sessions and three educational sessions per week, with an additional benchmark amount of OOH sessions per annum.
- (ii) The role of the GP Trainee within primary care is supernumerary in terms of service provision, for the purpose of high quality education and training experience.
- (iii) The extension of routine hours excludes ancillary and supportive primary and secondary care structures questioning the equivalent educational value of GP Trainees replacing experience within core service hours with service in extended hours.

And calls for:

- (i) GP Trainees' clinical sessions to take place, wherever possible, within core hours to offer the highest standard of education and training for the trainee.

(ii) A GP Trainee who wishes to undertake a clinical session within extended hours should be supervised and supported at all times on site by their Trainer, or equivalent.

(iii) GP Trainees who wish to replace a core clinical session with a session in extended hours should do so only through individual choice and should face no coercion to do so.

The subcommittee will continue to work closely with the GPC and its Education, Training and Workforce subcommittee to ensure that the terms of the statement above are met in all cases.

The results of the GP poll on extended hours, and further information relating to this can be found on the BMA website: <http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/pollresults0308>

GPStR contracts for ST1 and ST2 trainees

The subcommittee are aware that in some areas, particularly Scotland and South West England, trainees undertaking placements in general practice in either ST1 or ST2 are not being employed on the BMA model framework contract, but on the Hospital Medical and Dental Staff terms and conditions, without access to the full GP Registrar supplement.

The subcommittee are raising this with COGPED. In the meantime, we would like to hear from any affected trainees who have been employed under this model in other areas. Please contact Joseph Read at JRead@bma.org.uk

Motor Vehicle Allowance

New provisions for motor vehicle allowance were introduced in August 2007. Trainees will need to ensure that upon entering their general practice placement, they have been placed on the correct allowance. All trainees are advised to keep accurate records of mileage, and all related motoring receipts. Further guidance on application of the provisions and related issues is now available for BMA members: <http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/GPregsMVA04088>

Preparing for retirement - pensions

Dr Andrew Dearden, GPC member and past Chairman of the BMA Pensions committee, contributed a guest article to our last subcommittee newsletter on preparing for retirement and pensions. The full article from Dr Dearden can be viewed via the website: <http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/gptraineesnewsfeb08>

We would reiterate the importance and need to start planning your retirement now, here are the four starting points suggested by Dr Dearden:

1. Arrange a meeting with one / or several different Independent Medical Advisors (IFA) e.g. through BMA Services (available to BMA members).
2. Write to the NHS Pensions Agency and ask for an annual statement / estimate of your pension. (Your IFA can help you with actions 2-4)
3. In the same letter ask for a Service Record, which is their record of what jobs you've had, and how much you've contributed to you pension.
4. Contact the State Pension Agency and ask for an estimate of your state pension.

Further help and assistance is available to BMA members under BMA Services. For information on joining the BMA: <http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/HubjointheBMA>

GPs to be conference

This year's conference will be held in London in the brand new conferencing facilities available at BMA House. The conference is aimed at all doctors either considering a career in general practice or already undertaking general practice training. Last year's conference was a great success, so please book your place early to avoid disappointment! Further information and the booking form are available on the website: <http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/gpstobe08>

Options for enhancing the career opportunities for GPs

The GPC recognises that there needs to be improved partnership and employment opportunities available for GPs, as well as the need for career pathways for all GPs. Unfortunately at present there appears to be only a small number of partnership vacancies, and even fewer that are openly advertised. There is also concern that many salaried GPs are not being offered appropriate terms and conditions and/or are not being adequately remunerated for the work they do.

A working group was set up last month - which consists of representatives from the GPC's sessional GPs subcommittee, GP trainees subcommittee and the education, training and workforce subcommittee - to consider these important issues and to produce a scoping paper for the GPC to consider. The working group's paper was presented to the May GPC meeting, and the suggestions arising from this will now be discussed in further detail with a view to early action being pursued.

Representation

The subcommittee is aware that there is much variation throughout the UK when it comes to GP training and our regional representatives are there to support trainees in their regional areas and bring 'hot topics' to the subcommittee for discussion and any necessary action.

As a result many regions have set up their own regional Trainees committees to act as discussion forums for local trainees, and are hugely important to our work. If you would like to get involved please contact your regional representative and find out what's going on in your area. Contact details for your local representative are available on the BMA website here:

<http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/GPRegMembers0902> or please email Joseph Read (JRead@bma.org.uk) who will be able to put you in touch.

Subcommittee membership

A number of vacancies will be arising on the subcommittee for the 2008-09 session, in the following regions: Northern; North Western; Mersey; West Midlands; NE London; Kent, Surrey & Sussex (KSS); Wessex; and N, NE & E Scotland; W Scotland and SE Scotland.

Further information on how to stand for election to the subcommittee will be included in our summer newsletter, and also on the BMA website in due course.

Information regarding the work of the subcommittee and it's membership is available at: <http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/becomegprep> and if you would like to be involved in the work of the subcommittee, please contact Joseph Read for further information, JRead@bma.org.uk

Endnote

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