

GP Trainees Subcommittee E-Bulletin, February 2010

Welcome to the February 2010 E-Bulletin from the GP Trainees subcommittee. 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.

GP Trainees Conference

The BMA's 2010 GP Trainees Conference will take place on Friday 16th April at BMA House, Tavistock Square, London. The purpose of the day is to help you make the most of your training and prepare for life as a GP. It will feature advice from qualified GPs, as well as tips on presenting yourself to potential employers and guidance on how to manage your finances.

You can find out more details and register online on the BMA Website at: www.bma.org.uk/whats_on/gpreg2010.jsp.

Extending Training

The RCGP has submitted a paper on extending training for GP trainees to the Medical Programme Board for England (MPB), which advises Ministers on progress on Modernising Medical Careers (MMC). The College's business case considered six options for the future:

1. No change to the current system.
2. No change to the length of training but an amended curriculum based on feedback from trainees and trainers.
3. Three years of training plus two years' Higher Professional Education.
4. Four years' training.
5. Five years of postgraduate training after just one year of foundation training (the option recommended by the Tooke Report on Modernising Medical Careers).
6. A minimum of five years of training.

The RCGP ultimately recommended extending GP training to five years, arguing that this will produce GPs better equipped to meet the demands of the modern NHS.

The MPB discussed this paper at a meeting on January 20th 2010, where BMA representatives voiced their continued support for the general principle of extending GP training. However, they did note that GPC was not formally consulted on the final draft of the paper, and also highlighted concerns about funding issues.

The MPB decided not to recommend a full cost-benefit analysis of the RCGP's proposals at this stage and have asked the RCGP to further develop their business case.

DDRB

The Doctors and Dentists Review Body is an independent organization that makes an annual recommendation to the Government on the remuneration of NHS doctors and dentists. To do this, the DDRB considers evidence submitted by the Departments of Health, NHS Employers (NHSE) and the BMA, amongst others.

The BMA has now finished giving its evidence for 2010/11, in which it advocated raising the GP trainee supplement to 50%. This was the rate in place in 2008/09, before it was reduced to 45% last year. Meanwhile, NHSE recommended cutting the supplement to 40% and the DH supported retaining the 45% level.

Last year, the BMA sent out a survey to GP trainees, asking them about their working patterns. The results revealed the high intensity of trainee workloads, which we emphasised in our DDRB evidence. We also highlighted the reduced competition for GP VTS posts that was seen in 2009, arguing that the reduction in the supplement over the past few years has made it more difficult to recruit to general practice.

You can see the full BMA evidence at:

www.bma.org.uk/employmentandcontracts/pay/pay_review_bodies/ddrbevidencetoreviewbody2009.jsp?page=1

Meeting with NHS Employers

Representatives from the GP Trainees subcommittee met NHSE and COGPED on October 29th 2009 to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the current contractual arrangements for GP trainees working in General Practice, as well as any principles that we would wish to see in a new contract (were one to be negotiated - NHSE currently have no remit to discuss any changes to the contracts of doctors in training). The discussion was held without prejudice, and the meeting was a productive one.

askBMA

askBMA is the BMA's telephone advice line. Members can call to speak to an advisor about any work-related issue and GP trainees use the service to ask about a variety of issues, with pay and annual leave being the most popular.

If you are a BMA member and have a problem or query you can contact askBMA on 0300 123 123 3. The line is open from 08:30 to 18:30 Monday to Friday, excluding UK Bank Holidays. Alternatively, you can use the contact form on the BMA website at: www.bma.org.uk/employmentandcontracts/index.jsp

BMA GP Trainees Website

The new GP Trainees section of the BMA website is now up and running. Please visit www.bma.org.uk/careers/training_trainers/gp_trainees/index.jsp to find information on issues including pay, contracts, and leave, as well as updates from the GP Trainees Subcommittee.

Endnote

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