

Addendum to message sent below

HEE have agreed to pause the recruitment to **ALL** IST posts in England for 2022. The number of surgical training places will be maintained as posts **will be added back into core surgical recruitment**.

Wales and Scotland will continue to recruit to run through IST.

Dear doctor in the IST programme

This letter provides you with an update on IST progress.

The Improving Surgical Training initiative for general surgery commenced in August 2018 and expanded to include urology and vascular surgery from 2019, trauma and orthopaedic surgery and uncoupled core surgery was added from 2020. The programme aims to improve surgical training through several objectives:

- to provide trainees with a better balance between training and service delivery
- to build cross-specialty and cross-professional competencies
- to improve the quality of training posts by enhancing the role of trainers to enable them to dedicate more time to deliver training
- to adapt different rota designs to allow surgeons to train more during daytime hours
- to develop surgical skills earlier through focused training opportunities, simulation etc. particularly in the early years of surgical training
- to train and develop a workforce from other professions (the wider surgical team) to support trainees to help deliver better patient care and free up time for more training.

SQW Ltd have been externally commissioned to evaluate the IST training programme for the first three years. HEE has received and reviewed interim reports during the programme roll out and the full evaluation report is due at the end of this year. This final report will help HEE and its key partners to consider the impact of the IST pilot and agree on the plans for the future. The interim reviews have highlighted where the greatest benefits in the programme are likely to be and also where there are issues.

In the light of this HEE is reviewing how it uses its HEE Quality framework processes and JCST guidance to push the elements which have been shown to make a significant difference in the quality of training that a trainee experiences. The JCST plans to review its Quality Indicators (QIs) as part of its quality cycle and HEE will work on developing principles to guide its quality processes. This will not only drive up the quality of surgical training across England, but also support training recovery in surgical posts.

Key areas of importance being highlighted currently are:

- consistently acknowledged educator time and development support
- use of simulation training and boot camps
- rota protection which safeguards access to teaching and study leave

- limiting un-necessary movement between trusts
- ensuring those with a surgical training backlog are not redeployed

One of the key areas that needs to be explored further is the effect of a run through option in training. Some areas are finding that aligning both IST run through and higher specialty training recruitment numbers is really challenging. No one currently in training should be disadvantaged and so HEE have agreed to pause the recruitment to run through IST posts in England for 2022 so that only uncoupled core IST posts are available in the next round of recruitment. This will allow HEE to plan the next steps in options for run through and higher specialty recruitment and prevent trainees being disadvantaged.

Those currently in IST run through posts will progress on their run through training programme.

We welcome your comments on surgical training and the pilot, please feed these back through your Training Programme Director or Head of School.

Best wishes

Professor Sheona MacLeod

Deputy Medical Director, Education Reform

Honorary Professor University of Nottingham and University of Leicester

Health Education England