

COVID-19: Public Health registrar training opportunities (Version 1.0, 20th May 2020)

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This document outlines guiding principles and processes for registrar placements and projects in the national PHE COVID-19 response cells. Placements in local COVID-19 response centres are covered by existing arrangements in public health training programmes for Health Protection Team placements and on-call.

2. Summary

2.1 Oversight and governance

- **ALL** registrar training in the PHE national COVID cells needs to meet both:
 - Requirements of the specialty training programmes and curricula
 - PHE's responsibilities as an education provider and (honorary) employer
- Overall responsibility for the registrar's training and supervision remains with the local training programme and their primary (base) training location, educational supervisor (ES) and training programme director (TPD)
- The COVID People Cell is responsible for rostering, co-ordinating and overseeing registrar placements within the national COVID cells, including HR and PHE's responsibilities as an (honorary) employer
- The Specialty Training Group will provide a single point of contact for identifying and publicising projects/placements in the national COVID-cells, and will work with the People Cell and cell lead supervisors to assist recruitment and rostering of registrars

Cell training and supervision

- All national COVID cells where registrars are placed should have named, accredited PHE supervisors who will provide oversight of the training and supervision in the cell, and support and assessment of individual registrars
- As well as supporting the urgent requirements for PHE's COVID response, the placement or project work should be appropriate to the level of experience and curriculum learning outcomes for the registrars
- Cell supervisors will liaise as needed with the registrar's educational supervisor in their primary training location

3. Background

- 3.1 The PHE COVID 19 response is now well established and provides an opportunity for specialty registrars (StRs) to gain unique experience of working on a major international incident in a fast-moving, politically complex environment. However, this needs to be balanced with the level of support and supervision available.

- 3.2 *“Agile working”* covers situations where registrars work at a different location from their main training location ¹Registrars undertaking placements or projects with national COVID cells may be based at Wellington House, remain in their primary location, work from home or a combination of these. East of England’s Agile Working Policy¹ outlines some key considerations for good practice in these circumstances to guide cell supervisors.

What is needed?

- 3.3 **ALL** registrar training in the PHE national COVID cells needs to meet both:

- Requirements of the specialty training programmes and curricula
- PHE’s responsibilities as an education provider and (honorary) employer

This includes:

- Work appropriate to the registrar’s experience and stage of training, and meeting the learning outcomes set out in the specialty curricula (Public Health, Dental Public Health, Microbiology & infectious diseases, or other clinical specialties)
- Educational supervision and assessment
- Human resources, health and safety, and information governance requirements

Training and supervision

- 3.4 **Training programme requirements:** Overall responsibility for the registrar’s training and progress remains with their local training programme, training programme director and educational supervisor. All registrars working on the national COVID response will remain based in their local (accredited) training location and undertake work for the COVID response on a project basis.

- 3.5 These projects are part of the National PHE response and are not considered to be out-of-programme experience or training (OOPE or OOPTs). Funding of the registrar salary and travel remains with the base training location.

- 3.6 **Minimum provision in cells where registrars are undertaking project work:** National cells with registrars must have clear arrangements for appropriate project supervision. Cells should have a designated (named) lead supervisor. As work in the COVID cells is on a sessional basis or on rotation, this supervision role may be shared.

Accredited PHE project supervisors or other senior PHE staff will provide day-to-day supervision of project work and registrars.

- 3.7 **The cell’s lead supervisor(s) will:**

- Oversee and co-ordinate project work, project supervisors and registrars working in the cell
- Ensure PH training and employer requirements are met
- Support project supervisors and/or registrars to resolve additional training needs or difficulties during the placement.
- Act as a single point of contact for training within the cell, for example with:

¹ Health Education England (HEE) East of England, Public Health Training Programme Agile Working Policy (V1.2)

- the individual registrar's ES or TPD in the primary training location (although this would usually be done directly between the project supervisor and the primary ES)
 - the COVID People Cell for rostering issues
 - the Specialty Training Group for potential projects and matching of registrars.
- 3.8 During the COVID-19 response, registrars and supervisors may need to work from home and provide remote supervision. Guidance for remote supervision is in Appendix 1.

Project work

- 3.9 As well as meeting the urgent service needs for the PHE COVID-19 response, project work must be appropriate work set to level of experience of the registrar. As in any other training location, the project work and intended learning outcomes need to be formally agreed in discussion with the ES and documented as part of the registrar's learning agreement.
- 3.10 We recognise that this is a fast-moving, pressured environment with urgent and changing timelines, and processes for placing registrars are not expected to be overly bureaucratic or time-consuming. This process aims to clarify and manage expectations, balance the registrar's workload and ensure high-quality learning.
- 3.11 As with all training placements, the registrar should have regular meetings with their project supervisor and educational supervisors, either face-to-face or via Skype. The frequency of these meetings will vary depending on the nature of the work, the registrar's experience and other factors. Typically, a registrar would meet with their project supervisor at least weekly, and their educational supervisor at least monthly.

Management & governance of placements – Specialty Training Group

- 3.12 Currently, there is a small Specialty Training Group co-ordinating registrar projects and placements, and providing liaison with training programmes and TPDs nationally, the Faculty of Public Health, and other national training bodies. As this group is already established, it can also co-ordinate the registrar projects and placements within COVID cells.
- 3.13 To facilitate communication, the Specialty Training Group will nominate a lead educational supervisor (or supervisors) to act as the main liaison during the COVID response. This role can be shared or be provided on a rotational basis from within the core specialty training group.
- 3.14 The Specialty Training Group's educational lead provides a single point of contact for registrars, ESs and others about overall national COVID training opportunities, including:
 - Liaising with PH training programme and PHE medical director, regional TPDs/Heads of School (HoS)
 - Co-ordination and support of ESs in the national COVID cells
 - Approve and advertise training opportunities within the national COVID cells
 - Manage expressions of interest from registrars, and arrangements for project work and placements

Process for advertising projects and placing registrars

- 3.15 This is a fast-moving situation, and there are many areas where registrars can make a significant contribution to the national response. The process to find projects and placements for registrars in the national cell is more akin to a matching service rather than a more formal recruitment process.
- 3.16 To advertise projects, cell leads and the designated educational or project supervisor should complete a project description, including key learning outcomes, estimated time commitment and supervision arrangements. A template has been developed for this (Appendix 2) and is available as an electronic [Select Survey form](#).
- 3.17 Projects and placements will be publicised via the TPD and registrar's groups nationally by the specialty training group. To apply for projects and placements, registrars should contact the Specialty Training Group's administrator on Hannah.Burn@phe.gov.uk, with the Expression of Interest form (appendix 3). Registrars will need the permission of their TPD or ES to apply. Where there is more than one expression of interest, then can consider a rapid process to identify suitable registrars and match to the work.
- 3.18 A spreadsheet of projects, registrars and supervisors will be maintained by the People Directorate's Specialty Training Group.

4. HR, honorary contracts and Wellington House arrangements

- 4.1 HR arrangements for registrars differ from those of core PHE staff. So, the specialty training team will continue to manage these during COVID, and liaise with the COVID People Cell as needed, ensuring that
- Appropriate PHE honorary contracts are in place
 - The registrar has a PHE laptop
 - Where needed has appropriate security passes for Wellington House (or other PHE site).
 - Mandatory training and induction for information security and health & safety have been completed
 - Appropriate induction for project work in the cell (remote and/or on site)

Appendix 1:

Health Protection Training During the COVID-19 Incident - A Structure for Remote Working (version 2, 08/04/2020)

Background

The COVID-19 incident has necessitated rapid changes in ways of working and the introduction of restrictions on travelling has led to many teams working wholly or partly remotely. This introduces challenges for training and supervision. This brief document sets out some broad principles to consider in structuring an approach to remote training and supervision. The overarching principles for all of us in working, training and supervising remotely must be flexibility and communication.

What is expected of registrars

- To keep in regular communication with their ES PS and their placement team through:
 - Formal supervision meetings / calls - frequency tbc
 - Informal catch-ups to prevent isolation to check on health and wellbeing and to encourage team cohesion (WhatsApp / texts/ instant messaging / calls)
- To update TPD on status and progress etc
- To discuss issues with supervisors and TPD, if appropriate
- To continue to work on agreed areas, prioritising as agreed recognising constraints of remote working and your contributing to the PH response to COVID 19
- To contribute to COVID 19 related work in HPTs, local authorities and other placements as required. Making the most of the unique learning opportunities which are available
- To continue to document and reflect on training and learning
- To keep a record of hours worked and claim appropriately, ensure adequate rest periods etc
- Keep in touch with peer group for support from other registrars

What is expected of ES and the Wider Team

- To keep in regular communication with registrars working remotely etc as above and to provide feedback and guidance as usual
- To ensure registrars have the appropriate resources at home to perform all aspects of their work remotely and effectively
- To take measures to ensure the health and well-being of the registrars working at home. Consider ways of addressing isolation e.g. buddying
- To discuss issues with TPD if required
- To facilitate, and to supervise where appropriate, the registrars' continuing contribution to the COVID 19 response
- To consider buddying with other ES / supervisors / TPD to share experience and tips for remote supervision and training – supervisor skype call

What is expected of TPD

- To be aware of registrars who are working and training remotely
- To enable the registrars to respond to requests for COVID 19 work; helping them to prioritise and being flexible whilst mindful of training needs, discussing with their ES if appropriate
- To consider the individual needs of their registrars and identify those who need additional support through this time
- To signpost registrars to health and wellbeing resources which might be useful during this time

Yvonne Young, Educational Supervisor, South London HPT

April 8th, 2020

Appendix 2:

PHE: COVID-19 Specialty Registrar

Project / Placement Proposals

(Please complete for COVID-19 Project and placement proposals which are to be advertised to registrars)

Project / Placement Title:	
Project Location: <i>(which cell or directorate)</i>	
Base Location <i>(if retaining a base location)</i>	
Remote working: <i>(describe arrangements)</i>	
Likely duration; required availability and start date <i>(eg two days per week for six weeks)</i>	
GMC Approval: <i>(if appropriate)</i>	
Supervisor(s) and if ES or PS	
Brief description of project	
Likely key areas and learning outcomes:	
Person Specification: <i>(eg post part A / B; year; satisfactory progression; agreement of TPD)</i>	
How to apply <i>(if approp)</i>	
Deadline <i>(if approp)</i>	

Contact for further details (<i>Name; email;etc</i>)	
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Appendix 3: Expression of interest form (please copy and paste into a blank document)

Please copy and paste into a new document along with your CV, and return to:
Hannah.Burn@phe.gov.uk

Your information:

Name:	
Contact phone number:	
Training phase and year (e.g. Phase 2, ST4)	
For how long are you available	

Submission checklist

	Yes	No
Summarised CV included with your expression of interest		
Reviewed individual competencies and placement will address training needs?		
Discussed and agreed with current ES that they will continue to provide supervision during involvement in the project/role?		
TPD approval that it is appropriate for you to apply for these projects/roles?		