

# WESSEX SUPPORTT MENTORSHIP SCHEME

## FAQs for Potential Mentors

### WHAT IS MENTORSHIP?

Mentorship may be defined as:

*“Off-line help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking”* (Megginson and Clutterbuck 1995)

and

*“Someone who helps another person to become what that person aspires to be”* (Applebaum, Ritchie and Shapiro, 1994)

### WHY DO WE NEED MENTORSHIP FOR TRAINEES RETURNING TO WORK?

In 2017 Health Education England conducted ‘a call for ideas’ to identify the key issues facing trainees returning to practice following time out of programme. Confidence and self-perception of capability were the upmost concerns for returners by a considerable margin, followed by provision of pastoral support – such as mentorship and KIT days.

Evidence suggests that mentoring may improve confidence and well-being and can help doctors feel more valued. It may be particularly beneficial at career or personal transition points. Employee well-being is associated with better staff engagement, motivation and retention, which may all impact on patient safety.

The SuppoRTT Mentorship scheme aims to offer trainee-focused mentorship to all trainees returning to work following time out of programme. SuppoRTT Mentorship should:

- Allow time and a safe (non-judgemental) space for trainees to clarify goals and learning priorities.
- Encourage mentees to take charge of their own development.
- Provide a learning relationship, which goes beyond sharing of knowledge and experience to facilitate personal development.

To achieve this, the mentor-mentee relationship needs to have a foundation in trust, with agreed confidentiality boundaries and a clear trainee-oriented focus.

### WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS TO BECOME A MENTOR?

In order to become a SuppoRTT mentor, individuals need to have personal experience of returning to work, have an interest in trainee development and have undertaken SuppoRTT mentor training. Training consists of a two-day mentor development course; the 2 days are 6 weeks apart. Mentors must agree to our terms of conduct and commit to mentoring at least one trainee per annum. Mentors are also encouraged to participate in the 6-monthly mentor development and update days.

### AM I A SUITABLE CANDIDATE AS I AM STILL A TRAINEE MYSELF?

Trainees above core training are eligible to become mentors. Trainees will need to discuss participation in the scheme with both their educational supervisor and training programme director (TPD). Written approval from the TPD is required to confirm that the trainee is currently meeting training targets, is able to take on an extra commitment and that the trainee has the required personal attributes to become a mentor.

### WHAT IS THE TIME COMMITMENT?

As part of the initial meeting, the mentor and mentee will aim to develop a

clear understanding and agreement regarding how they will work together. This includes agreeing where they will meet, how often, the length of each session and an initial number of sessions. This will vary depending on the commitments of both mentor and mentee and the timescale of what they hope to achieve. We would suggest a good starting point would be to arrange 3 meetings, meeting every 6-8 weeks with a view to reassessing at the third meeting.

### HOW IS THE PAIRING UP OF MENTORS/MENTEES PLANNED TO WORK?

Each mentor will be asked to write a brief 'biography' which will be added to a mentor database. This will include information such as current clinical role, experiences of return to work and what the mentor is able to offer alongside contact details. We would also encourage mentors to include a preferred location such that the mentee may consider the practicalities of organising mentoring sessions.

Returning trainees who have requested mentorship will be given access to the database and will be able to choose to contact their preferred mentor. There will be a variety of mentors available on the database, such that the mentee may choose from peer trainee to senior trainee and consultant mentors.

### ARE THE MAJORITY OF TRAINEES RETURNING FROM PARENTAL LEAVE?

Parental leave is the most common reason for trainees to take time out of programme and currently accounts for around ½ of trainees out of programme at any one time. However, trainees take time out of programme for many different other reasons. This includes time out to conduct clinical research, for personal reasons, such as sickness or bereavement; to gain additional experience out of programme training or take a career break.

### IS THE ROLE PAID?

The supportTT mentor role is voluntary and not paid.

## IS IT POSSIBLE TO TAKE STUDY LEAVE TO DO THIS?

Mentors will be able to use study leave in order to attend the mentor training and development and update courses, but will not be able to use study leave in order to conduct mentorship meetings. This is in line with other medical mentorship schemes.

## HOW MANY TRAINEES WOULD ONE EXPECT TO MENTOR AT THE SAME TIME?

This will be based on personal capacity! We would advise that trainee mentors take on no more than 2 mentees at a time. We would expect each mentor to mentor at least 1 returning trainee each year.

When each mentor is at full capacity then they will be expected to contact deanery SuppoRTT e-mail ([support.wx@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:support.wx@hee.nhs.uk)) in order to highlight this to the mentorship team. This will then be updated on the 'bio database' such that trainees looking for a mentor will know that that mentor is currently unavailable. Similarly when a mentor becomes available again then they will be expected to update the mentorship team of this.

## I AM DUE TO GO OUT OF PROGRAMME, IS IT WORTH ME APPLYING NOW, OR SHOULD I WAIT UNTIL I RETURN?

The mentor development course aims to clarify the role and aims of mentorship in addition to providing skills and tools to begin to be a mentor. This is certainly a learning process for individuals who have not been mentors before and we would recommend that the development course is completed a short time before becoming a mentor in order to maximise learning from the course. For this reason if you are unable to commit to being a mentor straight away please register your interest on [support.wx@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:support.wx@hee.nhs.uk) to be kept updated regarding future courses.

**I HAVE ALREADY UNDERTAKEN MENTOR TRAINING PREVIOUSLY, DO I STILL NEED TO DO THE SUPPORTT MENTOR TRAINING?**

If you have already undergone mentor training elsewhere then you do not need to 're-train' if you do not wish to. We will ask you to provide evidence of the previous training and arrange a time to meet with us to discuss mentoring for the SupportTT Mentorship Scheme, such that you are made aware of what 'Supported Return to Training' resources are available in Wessex.

If you have any further questions regarding this scheme, or if you would like to register to become a mentor please contact:

[supportt.wx@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:supportt.wx@hee.nhs.uk)

