

Dr Pippa Gardiner, SupportTT Fellow 2021-22

Summary of Achievements

Data Gathering and Analysis

- Clarifying, establishing and developing role for us as GP SupportTT Fellows.
- Met with Primary Care Dean, Head of school, Associate Deans in Wessex, patch offices and AiT to gather opinions, establish current role of SupportTT and promote SupportTT across Wessex.
- Researched what other deaneries were doing through SupportTT for GP trainees.
- Surveyed all trainees across Wessex for current knowledge, efficacy and improvements that could be made within SupportTT for GP trainees across the region. We created an online survey and received 89 responses, gathering both quantitative and qualitative data to guide and support our next steps.
- Designed and conducted 2 focus groups for trainees who had had time out of training to research further opinions and experiences.
- Analysed results of survey and focus groups

In response to data gathered, through the above, we established 3 main areas where improvements could be made: **Administrative Processes, GP Specific Return to Work Course and Improving Awareness of SupportTT.**

1. Administrative Processes

Created documents and infographic to provide clear documentation for time out of training process in Wessex. Will be available on SupportTT Wessex website. Distributed across the patch offices for PDs, trainers and trainees.

Liaised with National GP portfolio lead and fourteen fish to incorporate links nationally for SupportTT forms in each deanery for time out of training within the eportfolio allowing increased accessibility of information and hopefully greater use of forms for planning time in and out of training. Feedback excellent from trainees and trainers. Shared with other specialties who hope to also be able to do this.

2. GP Specific Return to Work Course

Designed and ran two bespoke return to work courses for GP trainees across Wessex. This included a portfolio update, clinical update, clinical scenarios, a coaching session and opportunity for trainees to connect with peers on the day and ongoing. First course was run face to face and the second online. Reviewed feedback from courses to improve for further courses. Provided platform for peer support following the course. We hope to continue to run these every 3-6 months for returning trainees

3. Improving awareness of SupportTT

Submit abstracts to RCGP conference and SAPC conference detailing work from the year to share the learning more widely.

Attended various trainers/PD/trainees events to highlight further role of supportTT, course, changes in portfolio and documents. Booked for further events in next 6 months.

Met with other suppoRTT fellows from different specialties in Wessex to share experiences and knowledge. They have since looked at and piloted specific return to work courses for their specialties.

Other

Complete Edward Jenner Leadership programme

Leadership sessions attended with Maggie Woods.

Presenting powerfully and facilitation workshops completed.

Plan to do PG Cert Medical Education starting in September.

Become facilitator on patient safety course.

Reflections on Fellowship

I have spent the year working as one of four GPs working with the Supported Return to Training team. The Supported return to training (SuppoRTT) programme aims to help trainees, across all specialties to safely and confidently return to work after a period of absence from training for any reason. One of the highlights, but also one of the challenges at the beginning of the project was that there were four of us working as fellows on the project, each with different backgrounds, agendas and ideas and mostly working on different days with various other life commitments ie children, clinical work, house moves etc. None of us had done this type of work before and it was quite an adjustment to a new type of working, finding our feet and working out what we were meant to be doing. The project brief was quite broad and we were keen to get going but didn't really know where to start! On reflection, at the beginning it would have been beneficial to spend more time initially "group forming". We got there eventually but probably a couple of months in and then we were more productive! It highlighted the importance to me of working to establish a team and forming a group, spending really valuable time to find out about each other, understand each other's background, skills and expertise and ideas for the project. Although it may seem like you want to get on with the "work", if you take the time to do this at the beginning, it will make you much more productive with the work afterwards. At the beginning we found it also difficult to find a time when the four of us could meet together due to our different commitments. Once some working days were swapped around this became easier and it made communication better and helped establish our team further. This showed the importance of regularly meeting with others from your team in order to work out where you are at, to touch base and keep clear lines of communication. This helps to be productive and keep things progressing.

Another learning point for me was to take lots of time at the beginning to really understand a project. I had done a large amount of reading about SuppoRTT generally prior to my interview and starting the role, but I found that even a few months in I was learning more things and could have taken more time at the beginning to understand the intricacies of how it worked in Wessex, the roles of different people etc. In particular, if you are wanting to make changes it is so crucial to know what has been done before and what has been tried and this is certainly a learning point for future projects that I may be involved in. On the other side, I have also learnt to not be afraid to recognise your own expertise in certain areas and to recognise the skills and knowledge that you bring. Just

because someone has a role or job title that is perhaps more established than yours, it doesn't mean that you don't know more about a particular area and don't have things to bring to the table.

We have had lots of meetings throughout this year, and most of these have been done online given the change in working schedules in view of the pandemic. It has been great to have the opportunity to meet with lots of people across the deanery regarding SuppoRTT, as well as our mentors and team regularly. There have certainly been some meetings that have run better than others and I have noted a few things that have made them work better. Clear introductions are key, understanding who is there, what their role generally and in the meeting are and helps the whole thing run more smoothly. Establishing a clear agenda is vital too, considering what the meeting is trying to achieve, not just meeting for the sake of meeting and considering clear outcomes, conclusions and action points from it. We have sent agendas to our mentor prior to each meeting which has helped to keep the time focused and productive, although flexible for anything else that has come up too. We have also found that deciding who was going to "lead" or "chair" a meeting beforehand is helpful too, especially where there are four of us doing the same role and so it could be any of us, it makes things run more smoothly if this has been established beforehand.

There have also been a number of practical and educational skills that I have been able to develop through the year. I was able to attend a facilitation course which was very practical and useful and I have had lots of opportunities to use those skills facilitating meetings etc. I also went to some teaching on powerful presenting and we have had lots of invaluable teaching and coaching from our mentor. I learnt how to run a focus group, considering how to engage people early on in the discussion, the role of ice breakers and introductions, the importance of keeping to time and being clear on what the aim for the focus group and what it is you want to achieve. We also considered how to engage people that are difficult to engage and ensure that everyone has an opportunity to speak especially where dominant characters were present. We have sent up a new course as part of our project for the year, having had to think about content, running of the day, practicalities of the day, how to promote peer support etc. This has given opportunity to develop my educational practice, adapt and respond to feedback and continually evaluate how things could be improved.

I have also learnt a lot about doing educational research, how to gather information both quantitatively and qualitatively and how to evaluate this and use it to make plans and move forward. We have made a lot of mistakes along the way and if I was to start it all again I would certainly do things differently! However as we write up the project with the hope of being able to present at different conferences, I realise how much I have learnt through the process. This in itself has been an important learning point considering how you share the work and learning that you have done, so it has the most positive impact that is possible and this has been useful to consider through the year.

I thoroughly enjoyed doing the Edward Jenner Leadership course. I had never considered myself to really be a leader, perhaps because I had an idea of what a leader would look like in any given scenario and I didn't see those attributes in myself. However, the course really highlighted to me that anyone can be a leader and there is certainly not a "one size fits all" approach in leadership. The important thing is that you need to be the kind of leader that reflects you and your values, and that will look different in different people. It made me consider my qualities, skills and values and what is important to me. I have enjoyed building my confidence in leadership and putting those things in to practice both in this fellowship but also in my clinical workplace.

It has been quite an adjustment to a new way of working which is very different to a day in a clinical environment although so many of the skills actually overlap. I have had to be more creative with my brain thinking about new ideas and actually allowing myself to have that creative and thinking time

and for that to still be “work”, something that is so often squeezed out in a clinical day. We have learnt to keep pushing at an idea if you truly believe that it is going to work. It is important not to stop at the first hurdle but also to know when to let an idea go and have faced both these scenarios during the course of the year around some work that we wanted to do with the portfolio, which eventually led to some national changes and also some work that we wanted to do with out of hours that we weren't able to get off the ground (although a separate project will now be taken forward in one patch!). I have discovered the key of finding out who the gatekeeper is in a situation and going to them. The key is involving the right people. Your idea may not end up with what you envisioned but be flexible and you can often achieve.

It has been a great year of learning, being able to contribute to an area that I felt passionate about and a great opportunity to work with a super team. Even simple practical things like setting up a teams meeting which felt alien at the beginning, I can now almost do in my sleep! I know that I will continue to appreciate different aspects of what I have learnt or what has developed in me for a number of years to come and I am very grateful for the opportunities this fellowship has given me.