

Items:

How matters can turn on a penny; how the vane of circumstance can swing around in a changing breeze. Our January 2020 Noticeboard gave no hint of the coronavirus storm to come. Now it is here.

This edition focuses on our response (so far) to the pandemic and our intention to keep as much as possible on track in anticipation of the “normal” to come. We review new arrangements for pre-registration clinical scientist interviews; our “i-Link-HCS” service; an initial survey of the impact on training progression for funded clinical scientist trainees; the 2020 postgraduate scientist bursary scheme; new arrangements at NES offices and our plans for class-based training courses; resources on TURAS Learn; and our Annual Report 2019-20.

Clinical Scientist Pre-registration intake 2020: Interviews

We are supporting 2020 pre-registration clinical scientist interviews as this edition goes to press. Using our *Go-to-Meeting* licence, NES Healthcare Science facilitates the interview links and initiates the interview meeting as a silent host. The initiative overcomes issues that external (non-NHS) candidates and panel members have with MS Teams. Following rehearsal with the panels, we anticipate 15 days of online interviews covering around 120 candidates.

i-Link-HCS Support for interviews using Go-to-Meeting

We have styled our virtual meetings support to Healthcare Science Service as *i-Link-HCS*; using our *Go-to-meeting* platform we may be able to assist with networking and other small meetings for healthcare science staff. Please contact HCS@nes.scot.nhs.uk Details are also at <https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/28481/healthcare-science-e-learning/i-link-hcs>

The impact on training progression of Covid-19

Commencing in May, we have conducted an initial survey [Clinical Scientist Training Impact Survey June\(2020\)](#) of 74 clinical scientist trainees directly funded by NES with a view to gauging the impact of the pandemic on their progression. The survey had a 50% response rate with a broadly even spread across the 3 training years, the highest response from year 3 / final stage trainees. Most had not been redeployed, with 60% reporting an enhancement in their training experience and 40% not. Home working either fully or partly was reported by 80%. Original training plans were thought to be affected by 70% with deferred or cancelled rotations, project and conferences being an issue. Social distancing and ready access to colleagues was cited as factors forcing a reappraisal of training. Some expressed concern at delayed training timescales compared with their original funded appointment. We are exploring what is possible regarding any extensions

to training, though this is likely to be on a case-by-case basis. We believe that final stage trainees will be the priority for any specific action.

NES will be issuing a wider HCS trainee survey in June 2020 that is common across professions and includes an enquiry about well-being. In the interim, trainees are welcome to contact the core team at HCS@nes.scot.nhs.uk

2020 Postgraduate bursary awards

Notification of 37 Postgraduate Awards for 2020 have been issued following an evaluation by 8 assessors of the 57 requests we received. Nearly all the requests were from Biomedical Scientists which reflects a good awareness of our bursary support in this professional group. We would like to encourage and promote this a great funding opportunity for all professional groups in Healthcare Science disciplines advancing into more advanced roles. Details of criteria and how to apply next time are available on our knowledge network at <http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/hcstrainees/trainees.aspx>

Status of NES Offices and class-based CPD for trainers

NES offices are largely closed at this time, with no class-based contact. Our specific offer to the Healthcare science community centres on support for trainers and leadership preparation. For now, both programmes are suspended.

The Leadership programmes (Early Career and Refreshing Leadership) were being reframed as a multi-disciplinary offer prior to the pandemic lockdown taking effect. It is unlikely that the programmes cancelled will resume in their original form. We will be in contact with affected delegates as soon as the NES Leadership steering group is able to reconvene.

Our two trainers' courses (Train-the-Trainer and Trainees-in-Difficulty) we hope to recommence as soon as it is safe to do so. We are exploring the possibility of running elements of these courses as a webinar or MS Teams type class and hope to trial this approach later in the year.

TURAS Learn, Healthcare Science e-learning: co-creating ideas.

TURAS Learn: <https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/> is a multi-profession repository for learning material. It is free to use, and a nationally accessible learning management system. There is a sizeable amount of Covid-19 resources that are publicly available: <https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/27993/coronavirus-covid-19>

We have established a service whereby we can organise the publication of your learning material to any TURAS Learn user. A short resource on how to go about this is at [TURAS-HCS](#) We are starting to develop specialty specific content with colleagues that addresses "point-of-need-learning". We are interested in developing the offer for a wider range of

specialties and welcome your suggestions for content. If you have potential learning materials from your specialty – perhaps in the form of a PowerPoint slide show – let us know. Contact us at HCS@nes.scot.nhs.uk

2020 National Events and engagement

Our trainees' national event on 7th February at COSLA in Edinburgh was attended by around 120 delegates and was chaired by Melissa McNaughton - a Biochemistry postgraduate clinical scientist trainee. Speakers included some success stories from our emergent scientists - detailing their careers as they develop their advance practice. Our [Annual Report 2019-20](#) has further detail of this event

The June Healthcare Science national event at the Royal Society of Edinburgh is cancelled owing to the pandemic. A round-table forum in early May was also cancelled; this was to be a prelude to the re-examination of national priorities and the next Scottish Government Delivery Plan. Further information about how this engagement will proceed will be circulated later in 2020.

It is anticipated that Healthcare Science Leads meetings will reconvene online in June 2020.

Our assurance programme – how to obtain a National Training Number for Healthcare Science staff in training.

We would like to invite practitioners and postgraduate healthcare science staff in training to join the community of HCS National Training Number holders and to participate in our assurance programme. There are staff in Healthcare Science undergoing professional qualifications with their representative professional body who are not known to NES. These staff become an important part of the workforce with additional knowledge and skills essential to the scientific service. We wish to include these individuals in the trainee count. Some of their peers may already possess a National Training Number. Examples of training could be specialist, and higher specialist portfolio undertaken with a professional body; an MSc or PhD through an independent route or an unregistered employee who is working towards some sort of equivalence portfolio to become registered.

Why this matters...

In Scotland we have sought to preserve a wide definition of the scientist in NHS Scotland. Building a community of scientists whose training is covered by the same generic assurance standards enhances our group's identity and avoids duplication of "assurance" for different types of Practitioners and Post-graduate Healthcare Scientist - sometimes co-located in the same unit.

Our assurance programme is light-touch and is irrespective of profession or group. It is designed to:

- assure that that public funds are wisely spent;
- assure that training is safe and effective for trainees, trainers and users/patients; and

- assure regulators and NHS Scotland, as our employer, that the training of us as scientists is subject to uniform national oversight.

NES is taking an increased role in workforce data analytics. Knowledge of who is in training and under what specialty will help us refine the picture we have of the workforce for NHS Scotland.

What does this mean for the trainee?

In issuing a National training Number we will ask for a broad estimate of a trainee's training timescale, any key NHS supervisor and – within the training period - an annual confirmation that your training is proceeding to plan. Our Principal Leads will help with this, but the information is minimal. It is held on the [TURAS](#) Training Programme Management (TPM) system.

Our assurance programme is described at the Knowledge Network community:
<http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/hcstrainees/postgraduates.aspx>

There is a [Handbook](#) for all trainees.

Obtaining a National Training Number

Assurance of the training of our NHS scientists benefits everyone. As a trainer or trainee, the process involves our (minimal) annual monitoring and survey. Contact HCS@nes.scot.nhs.uk for further information.

2020 Training Centre monitoring

Four years ago we ran a major exercise to “accredit” or recognise training centres hosting trainees with National Training Numbers. The exercise involved panels and representatives from various specialties and professions to help give us a basic assurance that the centres were aware of our standards and capable of supporting training. We ran this with The National School for Healthcare science, specialty and lay observers on the panels; it was a key component of NHS Scotland's ability to host STP trainees, though in Scotland the process is to support a wider range of healthcare science trainees.

Although paused owing to the pandemic, we intend later in 2020 renewing our recognition-of-centres exercise and we will be in contact with the affected centres soon. We anticipate a less intensive recognition process given that our key assurance tools of ARCP and training plan audit seem to be well supported by colleagues.

Annual Report 2019-20

In June 2020 we published our second [Annual Report](#) reflecting the range of activity NES Healthcare Science does. Many thanks to all the contributors and the NES Design Team for turning around the report so quickly. The report majors on our quality monitoring role of

training and our insight as a national Board.

NES Healthcare Science Core Team

The NES Healthcare Science core team is:

[Dr Robert Farley](#) - Healthcare Science Programme Director

[Claire Cameron](#) - Principal Lead

[Lorna Crawford](#) - Principal Lead

[Owen Mills](#) - Principal Lead (July 2020)

[Dr James Logie](#) - Principal Lead

[Andrew Dunne](#) – Principal Lead (July 2020)

[Bianca Brownlee](#) - Principal Lead (July 2020)

[Simon Petrie](#) - Business support

[Charlie Brownlee](#) - Management Accountant

[Leanne Neil](#) - Finance analyst

Join our mailing list

Following the GDPR implementation, we would encourage recent trainees and NHS recruits in healthcare science to join our *Mail Chimp* mailing list. Please email HCS@nes.scot.nhs.uk to be included or for comments on what you have read here. Our list is used occasionally for NES Healthcare Science alerts like this *HCS Notice Board*; it is not shared with third parties.