

West Midlands Postgraduate School of Public Health

Placement Policy and Allocation Process for Public Health Trainees (ST1-ST5) *(version: October 21 2020)*

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Intended Recipients: Public Health Specialty Registrars
Educational Supervisors
Zone Co-ordinators

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Summary: In early 2020 consultation took place on proposals to revise the present practice of placement allocation for trainees in the West Midlands. This paper presents the new Placement Policy and describes the annual process to be adopted to inform the Allocation Process. This policy will become operational from October 2020 with trainees making their first allocation requests by January 2021, and with first placements under this system taking place from August 2021.

1. The Purpose of the Placement Policy

The over-arching objective is to provide a fair, transparent, clear and safe process which meets the training needs of trainees, the service needs of partners and the organisational needs of Health Education England (HEE).

The Policy will ensure:

- Each trainee's educational training needs are met.
- Fair placement decisions are made.
- Exceptional personal requirements of each trainee are considered.
- School of Public Health have up to date data on trainees training locations
- Trainees, Educational Supervisors (ESs) and training partners are clear about how placement decisions are made
- Compliance with HEE internal standards

2. The Principles Guiding Allocation

Educational training needs will be discussed as part of Annual Review of Competency Progression (ARCP) process and with ESs as part of personal development plans, supervision and forward planning. The same criteria will be applied to placement requests from trainees working less than full time (LTFT) as Full-time trainees.

Trainees' placements will be made in the following order of priority:

- Senior trainees to ensure complete coverage of curriculum
- Specific educational need
- Exceptional personal circumstance
- The remaining trainee cohort

3. Placement Rotation

Rotation will take place 4 times a year in line with other specialities on the first Wednesdays in August, November, February and May. Those trainees working less than full time (LTFT) will use these dates where possible. If an exceptional rotation date is needed this must be logged with the Programmes Team, with the reason for the request and agreed by trainee, ES and Training Programme Director (TPD) 3 months before the start of a placement.

4. Organisation of Training

Trainees are initially appointed to a local authority base which are organised in the three zones (North, West and South). It is expected that the majority of training will be delivered in a Trainee's home zone with specialist placements in Public Health England, universities, and other service providers as necessary for a balanced training rotation. The West Midlands is a large geographical area, and trainees should expect to travel to take advantage of educational opportunities.

4.1. Phase 1

During the first 2 years of training (ST1 and ST2), trainees undertake educational activity including study for their Masters in Public Health degree and for the Faculty of Public Health's Diplomate ('Part A') Examination. This educational activity takes up to 50% of their working time with the remaining 50% spent with their base local authority, working towards Phase 1 learning outcomes.

It is expected that trainees will have the opportunity to work with partners in other organisations to achieve learning outcomes, for example, health care public health outcomes, where this is not possible wholly in a local authority environment. Trainees can work in a setting which is not General Medical Council (GMC) registered for one day a week as part of their placement with appropriate supervision. In addition, trainees will have a Health Protection placement at Public Health England (PHE) of a minimum of 4 months.

The third year of training (ST3) is more fluid depending upon a trainee's progress. This may include remedial work for the Diplomate Examination or working to pass the Membership ('Part B') Examination. Trainees are placed according to their need to achieve Examination milestones as well as their learning outcomes in order to achieve entry to Phase 2. In some cases, trainees may already be ready to enter Phase 2 in their 3rd year.

4.2. Phase 2

Trainees will ordinarily continue in the same zone for any local Authority placements. It is expected that they will use this period to complete outstanding learning outcomes and will request placements that assist them to meet outstanding outcomes and which reflect their longer-term career interests.

Trainees are encouraged as far as is possible to use their Phase 2 training as a stepping stone to their post-completion of training career. This may incorporate targeted placements to gain experience of specific public health settings which hitherto they have had little exposure (for example, healthcare public health, academic public health). Trainees may also wish to use some or all of their final 12 months of training to undertake an extended placement in a setting similar to that of their anticipated first consultant post so as to gain hands-on experience of 'acting up' at a senior and independent level in their preferred area of public health practice.

ST4-5 placements are for 6, 9 or 12 months dependent on educational needs and training site.

It is recognised that in this later stage of training, trainees may wish to develop more bespoke and personalized placements to develop further specialist interests. Such placements may require novel supervisory arrangements and facilitate working across multiple sites and sectors (e.g. reaching out to work in an NHS Trust while retaining a local authority base, working in a 'non-PH' setting to establish new collaborations). The intention of this Placement Policy and the associated Allocation Process is NOT to dissuade trainees from doing this but to encourage early discussion with ESs and TPDs to ensure that appropriate planning and governance arrangements can be put in place.

5. Parental leave

Trainees should inform their TPD as early as possible to enable effective planning. The supported return to work process should be followed for maternity leave, which will include provisional planning for placement on return from leave.

6. Extension to training and the 'period of grace'

Trainees requiring extensions to training time will be placed in vacancies with the shared goal to enhance employability for the trainee as well as meeting service needs. Trainee preference will be considered.

Trainees requiring an extension to training will take priority over those in a 'period of grace' who have by definition completed their training. Trainees are reminded to apply for their period of grace 6 months ahead of their CCT date and they may be required to move placement to assist with service pressures during this time.

Whilst we will endeavour to give as much notice as possible the very nature of extensions to training means that at times it may not be clear whether the trainee will be ready to progress at the expected date, or if not what the specific education needs will be until later than the usual 12 weeks' notice period for rotations. Where this is the case the TPD will liaise with the Trainee and possible sites to facilitate a smooth a rotation as possible.

7. Other opportunities

National Treasure placements guidance will be updated as details are released from PHE and the Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education (PGMDE). Requests for OOP for non-National Treasure posts will be considered where placements offer an experience substantially different from that which can be gained in the West Midlands region.

8. Out of Area placements (OOPs)

Applications for OOPs should be submitted 6 months before anticipated start date. In exceptional circumstances it may be possible to approve an OOPC at shorter notice depending on the circumstances.

9. Notification of placements

Deanery policy is to provide a minimum of 12 weeks' notice of placements.

10. Allocation Process Timeline for 2020/21

The following is proposed for 2020/21; Steps (a) and (b) ought to be on-going as part of present training placement and supervision

- a) The ES discusses the trainee's learning needs and interests and consults training site list for options.
- b) The trainee contacts potential training placements to review suitability. If the training site has concerns about a trainee asking for a placement which they consider unsuitable, they should contact lead TPD to discuss as soon as information becomes available.
- c) The Lead TPD writes to all trainees in early Autumn to open the annual application process for placement allocations.
- d) The trainee makes a decision about application for placements and makes a written request for placements (indicating also two reserve placement choices) using the Placement Preference Form, and sends this to the HEE Placement Team no later than midday Friday January 22nd 2021
- e) Applications are received by HEE and receipt acknowledged by return email.
- f) Requests are reviewed by Training Allocation Group (a new subgroup of School Board to be established) applying the priorities detailed elsewhere in this document. This meeting will be held on Wednesday March 10th 2021.
- g) HEE sends out written confirmation of the placement allocation to trainees by Friday April 30th 2021.

11. Further notes

- a) Trainees who do not return their Placement Preference Form by midday Friday January 22nd 2021 will be allocated to vacant posts within their zone. Those who make a late allocation request will be considered after trainees who submitted requests on time.

- b) Trainees requiring additional support, including those with specific learning needs are encouraged to discuss their needs with ES/Zone Co-ordinator/TPD as appropriate as soon as possible and are prioritised in the criteria.
- c) Trainees expecting Examination results are requested to consider how their placement plans may need to be altered following an adverse result and to note this on their Placement Preference Form.
- d) Trainees are reminded that requests for OOP placements require 6 months' notice and requests need to be made separate to this process. Agreed periods of OOP will be recorded on the request form.
- e) In exceptional circumstances Trainees may request a change to training placements. However, any exception to the procedure will be at the discretion of the TPD team and will only be considered for significant unforeseen learning needs or changes in personal circumstances.
- f) If a trainee arranges a placement independently without agreement from the School, this will be an unauthorised placement and these actions will be managed as professional misconduct.