Dear Colleague,

Following a pilot including KSS and Southwest Deaneries the General Medical Council has established the use of senior Postgraduate Doctors in Training (PGDiTs) as Clinical Supervisors for FY2 Doctors to be a business-as-usual programme in the UK. This programme involves senior PGDiTs (ST6+) acting at the Clinical Supervisors for selected FY2 Doctors. The ‘displaced Clinical Supervisor’ (dCS) (Consultant or SAS doctor who would ordinarily provide the supervision) remains available for support in a hands off role and the CS role, including Horus requirements, becomes the responsibility of the Senior PGDiT CS.

In brief, PGDiTs at level of ST6 or above were eligible to supervise an FY2 doctor if they had completed the standard deanery Clinical Supervisor training (Modules 1-3), passed their own most recent ARCP with an outcome 1 and had no concerns regarding their participation from their own Educational Supervisors. Registrars who would rotate trusts during the FY2’s placement were not able to take part. FY2 Doctors who had progressed though FY1 with no concerns or adverse outcomes at ARCP were eligible to take part.

The evaluation and analysis of the most recent pilot in the southwest demonstrated support and advantages to the pilot at all levels.

The FY2 Doctors overwhelmingly found it a rewarding and enjoyable experience and recommend it to colleagues. Themes identified were that the registrars provided a readily available and mentoring presence with beneficial learning and development opportunities. This method of supervision, with a senior Registrar performing the day to day clinical supervision role and dCS support available, was not only acceptable to the FY2 but many reported that they preferred it to the traditional method.

The PGDiT CS (Registrars) were extremely enthusiastic regarding the advantages of their participation in this pilot. 100% said they enjoyed it, found it rewarding, learned something and felt better prepared for supervision in the future. All of them said they would recommend it to other colleagues to take part. They enjoyed the opportunity to supervise and mentor FY2s and felt they could bring different and valuable perspective as they were still in training. They felt they developed not only generic professional skills but also supervision specific ones as well as an understanding of the FY curriculum and requirements. It was personally rewarding and satisfying with positive career implications including being a useful experience to discuss at consultant interviews. Ultimately, they felt better prepared to take on clinical supervision in the future.

The displaced Clinical Supervisors (dCS) gave a positive response to the pilot including 55% reporting that it reduced the demands on their time with the remaining 45% reporting that it neither increased nor decreased demands on their time. All of the dCS responded that they would be happy if their FY2s in the future took part in a similar pilot with a senior Registrar being the CS with them being displaced again to provide support to the CS or FY2 if required.

The Foundation Programme TPDs and Medical Education Managers all gave a positive response to participation in the pilot and to future iterations. They recognised that this has the benefit of widening the available pool of capable CS in the future. Also parallels were noted between freeing up the displaced CS to potentially oversee more trainees at arms length, just as they do clinically with patients. They felt that by allowing FY2s to work with highly motivated PGDiT supervisors that are perhaps more present on the 'shop floor' it recreates some of the supportive components of the firm which have been lost. There was very little increase in administrative burden when conducting this pilot and all 3 MEMs felt this could be streamlined in the future/with experience.

Ultimately, if matched correctly, FY2s are not disadvantaged by having a PGDiT as a Clinical Supervisor, in fact there are numerous benefits to them of it. The Registrars experienced personal development of both generic skills and supervision specific skills and will be better prepared supervisors as they move into consultant practice in the future.

If you have any questions regarding how this programme is being run locally please contact your local foundation school postgraduate team.

Thank you for your time and we hope that you will be able to support the wider roll out of this programme and that your results are a positive as that of our pilot.

Yours Sincerely,