



Professional Support and Wellbeing

Workforce, Training and Education

NHS England Southwest

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Document history	

## Document status

This is a controlled document. Although it may be printed, it will not be controlled. For up-to-date guidance, please refer to the copy on the internet.

## Executive summary

This document is to provide guidance on the Professional Support and Wellbeing service (PSW), which is a workstream of Faculty Development Learner Support (FDLS) and part of the Workforce, Training and Education division of NHS England Southwest (NHSE SW); for its stakeholders.

The support provided by PSW is for an individual, as identified below, for a short, specific time during their training, to help them progress and flourish in their career. If an individual is needing longer term help, they will be guided towards other resources via occupational health, Practitioner Support or local providers.

## Mission statement

*“PSW is here to provide personal and professional support and development to postgraduate learners across the southwest to reach their full potential and provide safe patient care”*

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## Introduction

It is not uncommon for a postgraduate doctor, dentist, pharmacist or advanced care practitioner (ACP) in training to have some personal or professional difficulties during their training. The PSW (formerly Doctors in Difficulty) was developed to help support these professionals overcome short term difficulties and progress with their training. We are separate to the training programme and trust/primary care provider.

## Scope

This guidance applies to all doctors, dentists, pharmacists and ACPs in training within NHSE SW, and their supervisors. However, the appropriate policy of the relevant employer (for example, occupational health, disciplinary or grievance policy) would need to be followed as applicable. Those individuals covered by this document, may be employed by a number of different organisations and have placements within a number of different host training organisations. Therefore, this guidance document provides a common approach for all.

Trust employed doctors not on a training programme should follow their own Trust policies and procedures.

We are able to support and continue to support individuals, who have already accessed our service, for up to 6 months after leaving their training programme, following completion of training, or to another job outside the training programme.

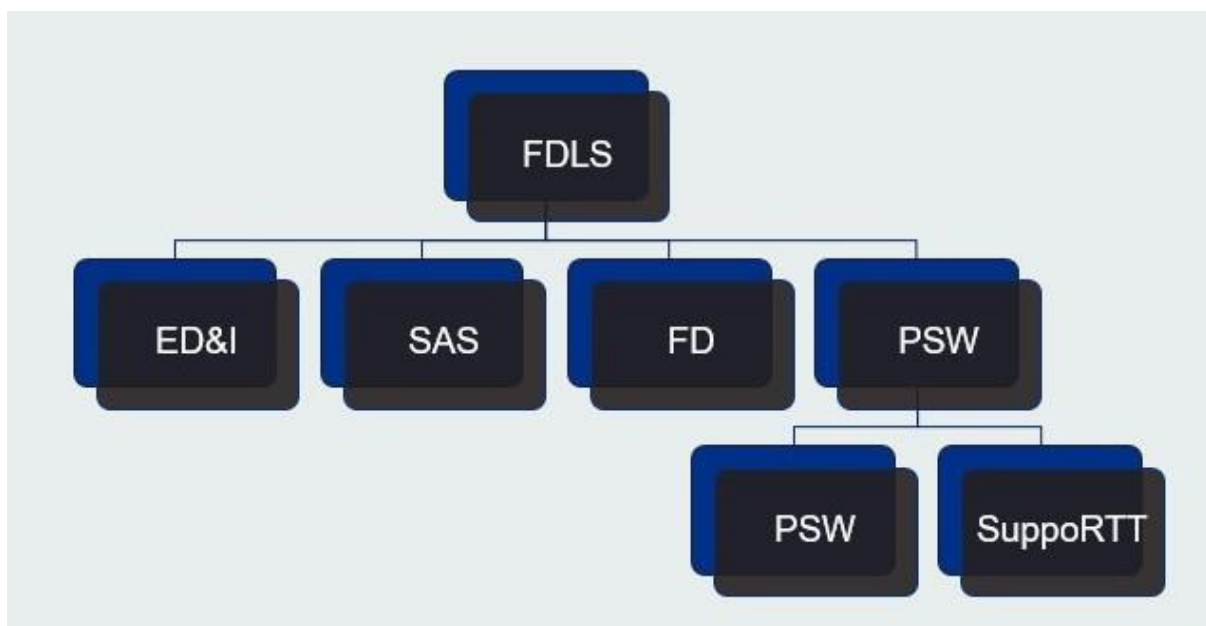
## Aim

Our aim is to support those postgraduate learners, training within NHSE's programmes to get 'back on track', if they find themselves struggling at any point. We aim to provide the right support, by the right people at the right time.

We provide support and wellbeing advice to the educators and supervisors in the southwest, via a PSW network and are continually updating our online resources for all.

Our future plans are to prevent as many of the support concerns as possible, by promoting an open dialogue with those in training and their trainers, their own support networks and colleagues about wellbeing issues.

## The structure



FDLS- Faculty development learner support

FD- faculty development

SuppoRTT- Supported return to training

PSW- Professional Support and Wellbeing

SAS- Specialty, Associate Specialist, and Specialist doctors

ED&I- equality, diversity and inclusion

## 1. The Team

Dr Kay Spooner- Associate Dean for PSW

Dr Sarah Huline-Dickens- Associate Dean PSW/FDLS

Mrs Amber Shipley- case manager

Mrs Rebecca Calvert- case manager

Mrs Sam Robinson- case manager

Mrs Evette May- Clinical Education Manager FDLS

Mr Christopher Stewart- Team leader FDLS

## Principles

- Confidentiality
- Processes transparent and understood by all
- Evidence based (as much as possible)
- Consistent application of guidelines and process
- A culture built around support and wellbeing
- Patient safety is paramount
- Responsible use of funding and resources
- Focussed on prevention of wellbeing issues

## Confidentiality

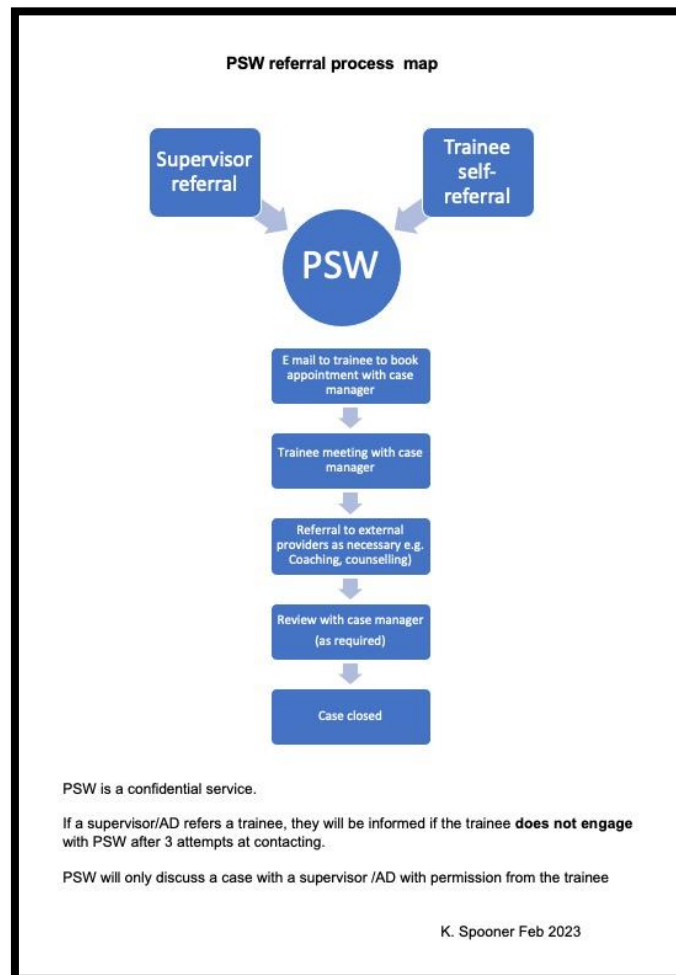
The meetings with a case manager or external provider will be confidential and separate to your training supervision. Confidentiality will only be breached if:

- There is a significant concern about patient safety or professional standards - in which case the doctor's Responsible Officer (RO) will be informed. The doctor will be informed in writing of this, including the rationale for breaking confidentiality
- There is a significant concern about the doctor's health and wellbeing. In this situation, the doctor will be contacted and consent sought to provide information to their RO.

Where consent is not obtained, the case manager will discuss the anonymised situation with the RO. Should the RO and case manager agree that there is an over-riding risk to patient safety or the doctor, the doctor's details will be provided to the RO, who may need to share these concerns with the doctor's employing organisation.

Complex cases may be discussed confidentially with other members of the PSW team for advice and support.

## Process Map



## Referral process

Referral information is on our website. We accept self-referral and supervisor referral.

For pharmacists and ACPs in training, your supervisor and training programme director will refer you if appropriate.

## Self-referral

A form is completed via website. The individual will be contacted by the team within 2 working days to provide access to the online booking system, for an initial meeting with a case manager.

## Supervisor referral

If a supervisor refers an individual, the individual will be contacted by PSW within 2 working days of the referral coming in.

If after 2 further e mails the individual does not engage with the service, the supervisor referring will be informed of the non- engagement. This is to enable the supervisor to discuss other options with the individual.

If the individual does engage- no more information will be shared with the supervisor and future dialogue and support is confidential (unless agreed by the individual it can be shared).

If an individual is already being supported, their permission will be sought as to whether they would like their supervisor informed that they are already being supported.

## PSW and the ARCP

It is hoped that those doctors likely to get an unfavourable outcome at ARCP will have already been referred to our service. We continue to inform supervisors of our service through talks and updates.

The process of the ARCP is stressful for many doctors and we would encourage individuals to come and have a chat about support available.

## Arranging a case manager meeting

We aim to respond to the referral within 2 working days of receiving the referral and provide a link to the meeting booking list. The individual can choose and book a suitable time and date to provide an initial meeting with a case manager within 3 weeks

## Conduct of the initial case manager meeting

The individual will have a virtual meeting with a case manager for up to 90 minutes.

The individual should be enabled to attend in work time.

This is currently via MS Teams, but may return to face-to-face in the future

The case manager (CM) will use active listening and coaching style questioning to understand the current concerns and enquire about some background history. This is to help decide on the most appropriate resources for the individual. The CM is non- judgemental and non-discriminatory.

The individual will be referred, as appropriate, to one or more of the following externally provided services:

- Coaching
- Counselling
- Exam support

- Communications support
- Dyslexia screening, (where appropriate) and associated support

A summary letter will be sent to the individual within 7 working days of the meeting. This is for the individual, and they can share the contents with their supervisor if necessary. The individual is given 10 working days to respond to any inaccuracies, before it becomes a true record of the meeting.

## Responsibilities of the case manager

To maintain confidentiality

To listen and be non- judgemental

To open the virtual meeting on time

To have suitable qualifications for the role

If unable to make the meeting, to inform the individual in advance and arrange for another appointment

To discuss and assist the individual to find the most appropriate means of support for them

To be up to date with equality and diversity training.

To have their own supervision and to keep up to date with their professional development in accordance with their annual appraisal

To attend regular PSW meetings.

To close their cases in an appropriate timeframe

## Responsibility of the individual using our services

To log on promptly for the meeting

To have a good internet connection and be undisturbed

To explain about their concerns and background

Be respectful with the people they interact with, whether it is an administrator in the team, their case manager or service provider - they are all there to support you.

To attend any meetings that are booked promptly (this includes booking with a service provider e.g. counsellor).

Give at least 24 hours' notice if they are unable to attend a meeting with a case manager.

Respond promptly to any e mails from PSW and inform us of any change of e mail, phone number, address etc

Complete the evaluation survey sent with the letter, as this helps the PSW team to understand if the services provided are effective and meet the needs of those accessing PSW.

## Use of our external providers

NHSE southwest is able to provide support for the following services:

- Up to 6 sessions of counselling
- Up to 6 sessions of coaching
- A dyslexia assessment
- Up to 6 sessions of exam support
- Communication and study skills coaching
- It is expected that sessions will be completed within 6-9 months
- These sessions are expected to be taken consecutively once started and not put on hold or considered to be banked. If stopped for any reason (e.g. exam revision), it is expected that you will have a review with your case manager to discuss ongoing support.

Please be courteous and professional and give our external providers 48 hours' notice if you are unable to attend or wish to change your meeting. We are invoiced for non-attendance at short notice and funding is limited; failure for an individual to attend may mean the service is compromised and others who require assistance have less opportunities available to them.

Please note:

If an individual is **20** mins late to an appointment with a provider, it will be cancelled and counted as one of your sessions.

The case will be closed after 3 DNA's (did not attend) and further support suggestions will be emailed to you from your case manager.

## Follow up of cases

The case manager will send a routine follow up e mail as agreed by both parties.

## Closure of cases

PSW is only intended to provide short term support during training and generally work towards closing a case between 9 to 12 months.

If there has been no contact with an individual after 2 e mail communications, the 3<sup>rd</sup> communication will close the case.

## Data storage

E mail correspondence, referral forms, letters and any other information relevant to the case will be stored within the NHSE SharePoint system in accordance with GDPR and destroyed 6 years after your case is closed.

This information is only accessible to the PSW team to allow for cross cover if necessary.

## Urgent support

Individuals needing urgent support will be signed posted to their local emergency department, GP or crisis team. All out of office e mails contain urgent support contacts, as well as information on the website.

## Lines of accountability

PSW is accountable to the Regional Postgraduate Dean and provides reports to the Directly Managed Programmes Oversight Group (DMPOG) every 3 months. We have also started producing an annual report.

## Other functions of PSW

For those in postgraduate medical education we currently also provide peer mentor training and assist with linking an individual with a mentor

We provide workshops and short courses / webinars on a number of topics

## Quality assurance

This is provided by:

Weekly case review meetings

Quarterly operational meeting with the FDLS lead associate dean

Annual report with evaluation and Trainee Information System (TIS) data

3 yearly evaluation project

Annual report- starting April 2025

## Supporting supervisors/educators

We support our supervisors, educators, team members and other stakeholders via the following groups:

National PSW group- meets every 2-3 months

PSW weekly referral meeting

PSW Case manager complex case review/support meeting 1x month

GMC meeting 3x year

PSW/SuppoRTT Network meetings

Attendance at Head of Schools (HoS) meetings

Attendance at Junior Doctor Forum

Attendance at Director of Medical Education (DME) meetings

Attendance at ED&I meetings

Links with the Quality team

## Unhappy with our service

If you are unhappy with any part of our service or wish to give us feedback; please contact us at the e mail below.

If you have any other questions, please contact us at:

**[england.psw.sw@nhs.net](mailto:england.psw.sw@nhs.net)**

Dr Kay Spooner

Associate Dean PSW

July 2025