

National training surveys – briefing note 3

Changes to the questionnaire for 2021

The survey for doctors in training has had significant changes this year, most notably with the addition of questions exploring the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on training. We have also developed a new approach for the programme specific questionnaires (PSQs). The survey for clinical and educational supervisors has had a few small additions and amendments.

This briefing note explains what has changed in the surveys for 2021 and why. A copy of the demographic and generic questions for all doctors in training (the 'trainee survey') can be found in **Annex A** with questions specifically for doctors training in the foundation programme outlined in **Annex B**. **Annex C** lists the demographic and generic questions for clinical and educational supervisors (the 'trainer survey'). Clinical and educational supervisors on GP programmes have a modified questionnaire to reflect their different working arrangements; these are covered in **Annex D**.

All new and amended questions for the 2021 NTS can be found at the end of this note.

Summary of 2021 questionnaire developments

- The introduction of ten questions in the opening section in the trainee survey to explore the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on training. Unlike the rest of the questions in the survey, these questions cover the current training year, not just the post trainees were in on 20 April 2021.
- A new question set in the trainee survey exploring the experiences of those returning from a break in their clinical practice (of 3 months or more).
- A new question relating to the impact of rudeness and incivility on doctors has been added to both the trainee and trainer questionnaires.
- Both surveys now have a question to capture the extent of working with wider healthcare professionals, including physician and anesthesia associates.

- Four questions introduced for the 2020 NTS have been retained for both the trainee and trainer surveys. These relate to feeling valued, equality and diversity, personal safety and being listened to by senior colleagues.
- The programme specific questionnaires (PSQs) have been changed to include a mandatory question set that apply to all trainees and optional questions that are specialty/college specific.

A reminder of the key changes made for the (original) 2020 survey

These changes, originally planned for the full NTS in March 2020, will be implemented for the 2021 survey. Please refer to the note on [questionnaire changes for 2020](#) for more information.

- Following a best practice review, the response options for four questions in the trainee survey were amended.
- The questions on facilities for rest and study have been retained (from 2019) for the trainee survey but removed for the trainer survey.
- The bullying and undermining section in the trainee survey was amended to improve the explanatory text and to allow respondents to report a wider range of bullying behaviours.

Trainee survey changes

The 2020 NTS was a much shortened, modified version. We are returning to the usual questionnaire for the 2021 NTS with a number of additions and edits. The additions for this year cover both pandemic-related questions and wider topics viewed as important and pertinent for current training environments. The changes include:

Pandemic-related

- A new question set which doctors will answer in the opening section of the survey. These 10 questions will capture the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on doctors' training over the past year. As well as being reported on at the national level, the results will be pulled into the PSQ reporting to identify common experiences across larger speciality groupings. Questions cover:
 - achievement of curriculum outcomes
 - experiences of workplace-based assessments and access to exams
 - virtual training opportunities
 - trainee views on how training has 'caught-up' since the first wave.
- The retention of four questions introduced for the modified 2020 survey relating to:
 - feelings of value from team

- support in relation to equality and diversity
- whether personal safety concerns are taken seriously by employers
- being listened to by seniors in relation to pandemic discussions / working approaches.

Wider topics

- A question on whether incidents of rudeness and incivility have negatively affected doctors in their post.
- A section for doctors who have recently returned from a break from clinical practice of 3 months or more (as a result of illness, bereavement etc.) Only doctors responding 'yes' to the screening question will be routed to questions on support received.
- A question designed to gather data on the wider healthcare professionals that doctors are working with (e.g. advanced nurse practitioners, physician associates etc).

Programme specific questionnaires (PSQs)

- There will also be a return this year to the programme specific questionnaires which were paused in 2020. These have been changed quite significantly to achieve more consistency and, in some cases, much shorter in length. Questions cover:
 - gaps in training and curriculum competencies
 - wider skills gained whilst working during the pandemic or being redeployed
 - training and support for remote working
 - opportunities to catch-up on practical/surgical procedures, where relevant.
- There are three questions specific to the craft specialities and two questions specific for the remaining specialities. Questionnaires for Foundation, GP, Pharmaceutical and Public Health trainees have slightly tailored versions as these are standalone questionnaires.
- Colleges and faculties were also given the option to add **up to five** questions for their own purposes.

Trainer survey changes

Changes to the trainer questionnaire are not as significant as for the trainee survey. The main changes include:

- The retention of four questions introduced for the modified 2020 survey relating to:
 - feelings of value from team
 - support in relation to equality and diversity
 - whether personal safety concerns are taken seriously by employers
 - being listened to by trust/board in relation to pandemic discussions / working approaches.

- A question on whether incidents of rudeness and incivility have negatively affected trainers in their role.

Contact

If you have any queries, please email NTS@gmc-uk.org

New questions: trainee survey

New questions - pandemic-related		
Topic	Question	Response options
Progression and curriculum outcomes New	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I'm on course to meet my curriculum competencies / outcomes for this stage of my training.	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree I don't know Not applicable
Progression and curriculum outcomes New	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The decision about my 2020 ARCP outcome was the right one for my individual circumstances.	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree I don't know Not applicable
Training opportunities New	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I have been able to compensate for loss of training opportunities through transferable skills gained from other aspects of my training	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree I don't know Not applicable
Training opportunities New	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: In order to replace my missed training opportunities, I've been provided with effective alternatives through simulation facilities and/or simulation exercises.	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree I don't know Not applicable

Training opportunities New	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement Virtual learning environments (VLEs) are being used effectively to support my training (e.g. webinars, web-based teaching, online discussion groups etc)	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree I don't know Not applicable - VLEs are not being provided at all
Assessment (workplace-based assessments) New	Since the start of this training year, have you been able to participate in the expected number of workplace-based / local assessments?	Yes - more than the expected number Yes - the expected number No - not quite the expected number no - significantly below the expected number I've not been able to participate in any workplace-based / local assessments I don't know Not applicable
Assessment (workplace-based assessments) New	Since the start of this training year, have any of your workplace-based / local assessments been adapted to avoid direct patient contact and / or meet your remote working arrangements? (e.g. use of video conference, use of clinical images, text, investigation results etc)	Yes No I don't know I've not participated in any workplace-based assessments
Assessment (workplace-based assessments) New	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement about Workplace-based Assessments (WPBA) The adapted workplace-based assessments offer the same (or improved) learning opportunities as they did prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree I don't know/can't say
Assessment (written exams) New	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I've been able to access a slot(s) to sit my relevant professional exams for my stage of training	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree I don't know Not applicable
Assessment (written exams) New	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement I have (or expect to have) had enough training opportunities to adequately prepare me for my next relevant professional exam(s).	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree I don't know Not applicable
Retained (introduced for modified survey in 2020)		
Equality and diversity	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: My department/unit/practice provides a supportive environment for everyone regardless of background, beliefs or identity.	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree
Value	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I feel I am a valued member of the team I work in.	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree I don't know/can't say

Being listened to	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: There is a culture of listening to doctors in training with regard to working practices (including discussions related to the Covid-19 pandemic)	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree I don't know / can't say
Personal safety	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Concerns relating to my personal safety, or that of colleagues, are taken seriously by my trust/board (or equivalent).	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree Not applicable I don't know/can't say

New questions - wider topics		
Topic	Question	Response options
Rudeness and incivility	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Incident(s) of rudeness and incivility amongst doctors/healthcare staff are negatively affecting my experience in this post	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree I've not experienced any rudeness or incivility in this post
Support for return to clinical practice	The following questions are about the support you may have received following time out of clinical practice of 3 months or more . This may have been due to illness, parental leave, bereavement, caring responsibilities or to undertake research. If you have not had time out for these reasons, please select no and you will be routed to the next section. In the last 12 months, have you returned to your clinical practice following time out of training of 3 months or more? (please select the main reason)	No Yes - parental leave Yes - illness / health condition Yes - bereavement Yes - caring responsibilities Yes - to undertake research Yes - shielding Yes - other
Support for return to clinical practice	Were you able to plan for your individual needs with your educational or clinical supervisor (or similar) before your return to clinical practice? (Please select one option)	Yes - I was able to plan before my absence started Yes - I was able to plan during my absence before I returned Yes - I was able to plan as I returned to clinical practice Yes - a mix of planning before my absence, during and/or as I returned Yes - the option to plan was available but it wasn't necessary No - I was unable to make a plan at any point
Support for return to clinical practice	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The plan was implemented to effectively support my return to clinical practice	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree Not applicable

Support for return to clinical practice	Support for returning to clinical practice could include - local support/training provided/trust/practice/department, - support/training provided by your college / faculty - wider professional or wellbeing support provided by another organisation Have you been able to access the support/resources you need for your return to clinical practice? (select one only)	Yes - fully planned and tailored to my needs Partially - some planning and support activities/training provided by different sources Partially - full plan but employer unable to provide support Partially - full plan but supervisor unable to provide support Partially - full plan but deanery/HEE local office unable to provide support Partially - no plan but I've accessed some generic support myself No - I've not been able to access any support/resources Support was available but I didn't need any
Support for return to clinical practice	Were you given the opportunity to make adjustments to the planned rota before your start date to support your return? (for example, to ensure adequate supervision or to avoid night shifts).	Yes - all adjustments to the rota I needed were made Yes - I was able to make adjustments but did not need to Partially - some adjustments I needed were made but not all No - I wasn't able to make any adjustments to the rota Not applicable
Support for return to clinical practice	Did you return to work on a Less Than Full Time (LTFT) basis following your time out of clinical practice?	Yes - but I was LTFT before my time out Yes - it was the first time I worked LTFT No - I returned full-time
Working with wider healthcare professionals	Please indicate which of the following wider healthcare professionals you work with in this post (select all that apply)	Advanced Nurse Practitioners Midwives Radiographers Physiotherapists Pharmacists Psychologists Dentists Community Health Practitioners Physician Associates Anaesthesia Associates Scientific laboratory professionals Other None

Trainee survey: amendments

Working LTFT GENHQ152	Which of the following best describes why you chose to work on a Less Than Full Time (LTFT) basis? (tick all that apply).	Disability, illness or health condition related reason Childcare Caring for an adult (e.g. a parent, family member or friend) Other work commitments (e.g. professional development opportunities) Other external commitments (e.g. leisure, religious or community commitments) To support my return to work following time out of clinical practice I'm part of a current (or previous) LTFT pilot offered by my speciality
--------------------------	---	--

<p>Future intentions</p> <p>GENHQ144</p>	<p>Thinking about the answer you gave to the previous question, please indicate which of the following are important to you in making your plans for the future?</p> <p>(please select as many as apply)</p>	<p>Desire to take a career break Financial gains Intellectual stimulation Preference to work in a particular part of the UK The fit between my skills/personality and the specialty Wanting to gain further experience before making a decision Work/life balance Recover from working during the Covid-19 pandemic Needing to make up the clinical experience lost due to the Covid-19 pandemic To consider change in speciality after working during Covid-19 pandemic Other</p>
--	--	--

New questions – PSQs

<p>Please select which of the following curriculum competencies / outcomes / activities you had not fully met or undertaken at the start of this training year (tick all that apply)</p>	<p>N/A - I had reached all my required curriculum outcomes and/or experiences Clinical outcomes / competencies Experience in clinical settings Operative or procedural outcomes / competencies Experience in operative / practical procedures Passing of relevant exams Workplace-based assessments Completion of courses relevant for my speciality Research Audit Teaching Quality improvement Management and leadership skills Other non-clinical skills Not applicable</p>	<p>Required</p>
<p>So far in this training year, are you on course to undertake the expected number of operative / practical procedures needed for your stage of training?</p>	<p>Yes - more than the expected number Yes - undertaken the expected number No - not quite the expected number No - significantly below the expected number No - not undertaken any operative/practical procedures at all Not applicable</p>	<p>Required</p> <p>CRAFT specialties only</p>
<p>Have you been given opportunities to make up the required number of operative / practical procedures to back fill what has been lost as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic?</p>	<p>Yes - all or predominantly in the independent sector Yes - a mix of independent sector locations and my NHS location Yes - within my NHS location No - I've not been given any additional opportunities at all in either location Not applicable - I've not needed any</p>	<p>Required</p> <p>CRAFT specialties only</p>
<p>To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:</p> <p>I've been able to easily access training opportunities in the independent sector for operative / practical procedures</p>	<p>1~Strongly agree 2~Agree 3~Neither agree nor disagree 4~Disagree 5~Strongly disagree Not applicable - I've not needed to</p>	<p>Required</p> <p>CRAFT specialties only</p>

So far in this training year, I am on course to gain enough experience in the practical procedures needed for my stage of training	1~Strongly agree 2~Agree 3~Neither agree nor disagree 4~Disagree 5~Strongly disagree I don't know Not applicable - practical procedures are not part of my curriculum	Required All other specialities
I've been given enough training opportunities to back fill what has been lost due to the Covid-19 pandemic.	1~Strongly agree 2~Agree 3~Neither agree nor disagree 4~Disagree 5~Strongly disagree Not applicable - I haven't needed any opportunities to back fill	Required All other specialities
We're interested in how changes in working arrangements (including redeployments) as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic may have affected training - both positively and negatively. Please select the one description that best fits your experience from the following.	I developed clinical skills I would not have otherwise have gained I developed professional / wider skills I would not otherwise have gained There was no change - my training continued as normal I worked in a service provision role that slowed down my training I worked in a service provision role that had no benefit at all for my training Other	Optional
Have you been able to access training on conducting remote consultations	Yes No It's been offered but I've been unable to attend Not applicable	Optional
Have you received appropriate feedback from your clinical supervisor to develop your skills in remote consultations?	1~Yes, and it was useful 2~Yes, but it wasn't useful 3~No, but this will happen 4~No, but it wasn't necessary 5~No, but I would like to 6~Not applicable	Optional
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement Remote consultations are enabling me to develop effective consultation skills	1~Strongly agree 2~Agree 3~Neither agree nor disagree 4~Disagree 5~Strongly disagree 6~Not applicable	Optional

Questions (new and amended): trainer survey

Equality and diversity Retained from 2020	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? My trust/board (or equivalent) provides a supportive environment for everyone regardless of background, beliefs or identity	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree
Value Retained from 2020	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I feel valued by my trust/board (or equivalent).	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree I don't know/can't say

Being listened to Retained from 2020	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? There is a culture of senior leaders in my trust/board (or equivalent) listening to trainers with regard to working practices (including discussions related to the Covid-19 pandemic)	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree Not applicable I don't know/can't say
Personal safety Retained from 2020	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Concerns relating to my personal safety, or that of colleagues, are taken seriously by my trust/board (or equivalent).	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree Not applicable I don't know/can't say
Rudeness and incivility New for 2021	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Incident(s) of rudeness and incivility amongst doctors/healthcare staff are negatively affecting my experience in my role	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree I've not experienced any rudeness or incivility
Amendment to TCLSQ23	Which, if any, of the following roles do you have responsibility for (select all that apply)?	No additional roles Postgraduate deputy or associate dean College or faculty examiner Director of medical education or clinical tutor Education lead Head of postgraduate school Programme lead College or faculty regional advisor Training Programme Director (TPD) or Specialist Training Committee (STC) chair Module lead Supervisor for Physician Associate(s) Supervisor for Anaesthesia Associate(s) Other – please specify