



Deployment of staff during the COVID-19 pandemic

A statement from the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges

27 March / 2020

The Academy and UK Medical Royal Colleges and Faculties recognise that doctors are working incredibly hard and are already under extraordinary pressures in many locations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In order to be able to provide the best care for patients and ensure effective working for staff, it is recognised that clinicians are going to need to be flexible in how they work and that this requires some planning.

As the Academy, four CMOs and NHS England and GMC medical directors set out in their recent [letter to doctors](#) this may entail working in unfamiliar circumstances or surroundings, or working in clinical areas outside of their usual practice for the benefit of patients and the population as a whole. Staff may also have to work outside their usual hierarchies with working practices and structures being skills and experience based, as opposed to seniority based.

This can be extremely stressful and doctors may have concerns about both the professional practicalities and implications of working in such circumstances.

It is the responsibility of GP practices, hospitals, trusts and health boards to ensure that clinicians working in their organisations are supported to do this. They must bear in mind that clinicians may need to depart, possibly significantly, from established procedures in order to care for patients in this highly challenging, but time-bound, circumstance at the peak of the epidemic. Employers, educational supervisors, professional bodies and national NHS and HSC organisations will do all they can to plan ahead, to support their staff and to be flexible in terms of their approach and the expectations of routine requirements.

There is various guidance on the arrangements and processes for redeployment of staff. These include

- [NHSE/I Redeploying your secondary care medical safely](#)
- [Academy Trainee Doctors Group Plans regarding trainee redeployment during the COVID-19 pandemic.](#)

It is likely that there will be additional guidance nationally.

This practical guidance has been supported by Colleges, Faculties and the Academy. Colleges and Faculties would hope and expect that doctors will feel enabled and supported to offer to work flexibly to provide the best possible service to patients throughout this incredibly difficult period for staff and patients