

GP Trainees and LMCs working together effectively

Introduction

LMCs (local medical committees) are the bodies that represent the interests of all GPs at a local level, and as membership organisations their strength lies in their ability to represent the entirety of the profession. Given that there have now been several major reorganisations within the NHS over recent years, LMCs are now the only locality-based organisation that maintains a corporate memory within general practice.

"[Engaging trainees] is particularly useful for workforce planning and upskilling a new generation of GPs. This also allows for LMCs to successfully plan for the future"

Sarah Kay, Dorset LMC

GP trainees represent the future of the workforce, yet are often under-represented on LMCs. If left unaddressed, the under-representation of GP trainees risks impacting the strength, effectiveness and credibility of many LMCs, as well as disenfranchising the future of the GP workforce and leaving them without effective local representation.

The current picture

The GP trainee and sessional GP subcommittee jointly conducted a survey into LMC engagement with GP trainees and sessional GPs.

Here are some of the key findings:

- 67% of the LMCs surveyed do not allow GP trainees to stand in LMC elections.
- 38% of LMCs do not have dedicated seats for GP trainees.
- 66% of GP trainees are not represented in their LMCs choice of conference representatives.

Why is it beneficial for LMCs and GP Trainees to engage?

GP trainees can offer a valuable perspective on the future of general practice and the key issues that they face as a group.

"We have good engagement with GP trainees and feel we represent their views well. Having a trainee on the committee is very helpful."

LMC Survey, 2018

"LMCs gaining a better understanding of any educational issues affecting trainer/trainee dynamics and understand the outlook of GP trainees/newly qualified GPs."

Sarah Kay, Dorset LMC



GP Trainees can also help LMCs to understand education and training issues that affect trainers and trainees alike, for instance, by supporting the LMC in understanding the implementation of new work schedules and exception reporting in England and other local and national training developments.

“Trainees can be a valuable resource in addressing queries related to implementation of the new junior doctors’ contract and in providing updates they have received through the GP Trainee Subcommittee and the regional and national Junior Doctors’ Committees”

Tom Micklewright, Chair of the BMA’s GP Trainee Subcommittee

In turn, engagement with LMCs has much to offer to GP trainees including:

- **Provision of up to date information and support on any contract changes that impact on the way GP trainees work, including advice on PMS contracts and the regulations of GMS contracts;**

“We produced and published a trainee draft timetable for practices, working with different parties to ensure fairness on all sides”

LMC Survey, 2018

- **Education, career development and networking opportunities**

“Cheshire LMC have co-opted a GP Trainee representative who has a voting seat on the LMC. For the trainee, this has provided excellent experience in leadership, business and medical politics, whilst allowing opportunities for meeting senior figures within the local acute trust, CCG and the regional GP Federation”

Tom Micklewright, Chair of the BMA’s GP Trainee Subcommittee

- **Support and advice on Performers List issues;**
- **Giving voice to the concerns of GP trainees arising from their clinical practice and taking up issues directly with local hospitals or other organisations;**

“LMCs gaining a better understanding of any educational issues affecting trainer/trainee dynamics and understand the outlook of GP trainees/newly qualified GPs. This is particularly useful for workforce planning and upskilling a new generation of GPs. This also allows for LMCs to succession plan for the future.”

Sarah Kay, Dorset LMC

“[We] try to help with the resolution of difficulties locally where possible, while signposting on to the BMA for specific contractual issues.”

Rachel McMahon, Cleveland LMC

- **Providing a supportive/pastoral role if a GP trainee has difficulties with their CCG, area team or local service agency, or equivalent body in the devolved administrations.**
- **Support, advice and mentoring on employment issues after completion of training**

“Good links with newly qualified GPs can lead to good locum support. Good educational materials for locum GPs presumably can lead to improved retention of locum members of the LMC.”

Sarah Kay, Dorset LMC

How to engage GP Trainees

One of the concerns identified by LMCs is that it is difficult to target communications to GP trainees and to therefore encourage attendance. Below are some strategies LMCs can use to engage with GP Trainees in their area:

1. LMC-led events at regional GP Trainee teaching

"[We] speak for a session at their half day release on the role of the LMC, finding jobs after VTS and the important contractual implications of partnership/salaried roles/locuming"

Rachel McMahon, Cleveland LMC

"We have a large education trust within the LMC and 3 of the 6 full study days a year are specifically for the GP trainee programme and all ST3s available attend"

LMC Survey, 2018

2. Develop links with regional training co-ordinators

"[We have] excellent links with the regional GPSTP (General Practice Specialty Training Programme) Co-ordinator so all trainees are represented at no cost to them throughout their training (not just during general practice rotation)"

LMC Survey, 2018

"through working with the Trainee rep, the LMC have secured Deanery approval for use of study leave to attend LMC meetings"

Tom Micklewright, Chair of the BMA's GP Trainee Subcommittee

3. Advertise through multiple channels (including email groups and social media)

"We have expanded into Facebook and Twitter to try to engage."

LMC Survey, 2018

4. Offer additional development and networking opportunities with trainees in mind

"We have been supporters of the Next generation GP programme; financially; through attending meetings and; supporting the organisers. We arranged a speed dating event last year with three scheduled for this year for GP trainees, sessional GPs and practices to showcase vacancies. We hold a number of conferences to which sessional GP and GP trainees are invited and for some we provide free places for GP trainees."

LMC Survey, 2018

5. Consider allowing GP Trainee representation on the LMC itself

"[We] give a fully funded place on our committee to our trainees (we pay them travel expenses, plus we pay them for their time)... [and] Encourage other trainees to attend meetings as observers if they are interested."

Rachel McMahon, Cleveland LMC

6. Offer career support for trainees as they approach the end of their training

"[We]:

- Advertise jobs*
- Organised a careers fair event for practices and trainees to meet each other with a view to long-term recruitment*
- Match GP trainees who need Tier 2 sponsorship post-VTS to practices who can provide this*
- Try to match any individual GP (including the trainees) who are looking for work to our vacancies, recognising that getting the right job is better than getting any job."*

Rachel McMahon, Cleveland LMC

Conclusion

Both LMCs and GP trainees can benefit from closer involvement with each other. LMCs offer a wide range of services that can support GP trainees and many have made concerted efforts to encourage GP Trainee involvement in their activities. GP trainees represent an increasing proportion of the workforce and their involvement in LMCs is a logical extension of this. As well as providing an alternative perspective on some of the problems facing the future GP workforce, they can be better placed to attend meetings on behalf of the LMC and should not be overlooked. The profession can only be strengthened by better relationships between all GPs and their LMCs and this should be supported wherever possible.