The Improving Surgical Training Pilot Project launched in August 2018. 48 trainees were recruited and have been starting to see the benefits of the Pilot Project in training sites across Scotland.

**Simulation training**

Kenneth Walker was appointed to the post of Simulation Lead for the IST Pilot Project last summer and has been working hard with the two Core TPDs, Mark Vella and Satheesh Yalamarthi, to improve the content of the monthly IST training days. In particular they have started to work with the specialty leads for each training day to increase the amount of simulation training contained in the various programmes.

All IST trainees were issued with their own EoSIM Laparoscopic Simulator for home and personal use. Trainees will be assessed on the skills they have obtained in May or June, 2019.

Three very successful four-day IST Bootcamps were run in the last quarter of 2018 in Raigmore Hospital, Inverness by Prof Walker and his team. The feedback from the trainees has been astonishingly positive.

Dates for the 2019 Bootcamps have been provisionally set for:

* 7th – 10th September, 2019
* 5th – 8th October, 2019
* 2nd – 5th November, 2019

**Anatomy teaching**

Anatomy teaching has been funded by the Pilot, delivered in Edinburgh and is available to all IST trainees. The sessions which have run so far have been very well received by the trainees and more are scheduled for this January and February, where anatomical region-specific teaching sessions will be held.

**AES SPA funding uplift**

Funding for an uplift in SPA time for IST AES from 0.25 to 0.5 SPAs was agreed by the Scottish Government Health Department. This funding has now been released to NES for distribution to Territorial Health Boards. NES is currently working to issue the funding to each Health Board in proportion to the number of IST AES that they have involved in the Pilot Project.

It is essential that this funding is used to increase the amount of formal face-to-face training time between AES and their trainees from one to two hours per week. As such, Job Plan reviews will be necessary to ensure that the funding is allocated appropriately and that trainer time is freed up to deliver on the requirements of the

Pilot. The Scottish Government Health Department and NES will require evidence that such Job Plan reviews have taken place and that the funds have been allocated appropriately.

**Year 2 Funding bid to SGHD**

The funding bid to SGHD for year 2 of the pilot is in the final stages of preparation. It amounts to over £0.5M and includes ongoing funding for enhanced simulation training, the AES SPA uplift for year 2 and some money to establish a robust evaluation project process for the Pilot.

Included in the funding bid for year 2 of the Pilot Project are:

* Attendance at a BaSICS course – a cadaveric surgical skills course
* Attendance at a Core Minimal Access Skills Course – it is hoped that two different courses will be on offer – one for laparoscopic skills and one for arthroscopic skills.

**Monitoring Survey**

The IST Pilot Project Office in London sent out a monitoring survey to all IST trainees in the UK in October 2019. The response rate in Scotland was poor – only one third of trainees responded. A second survey will be sent out towards the end of January 2019. Please encourage your trainees to respond. A letter has been written impressing on them how important their feedback is to the success (or otherwise) of the project.

**Recruitment of 2019 cohort**

The process of recruiting the second cohort to the Pilot Project is well advanced. Trainees will start in August 2019. This year there will be posts in:

* Run-through General Surgery (21 posts)
* Run-through Urology (4 posts)
* Run-through Vascular Surgery (1 post)
* Uncoupled core surgical training (18 posts)

**Meeting of ISTAES**

A meeting of all AES involved in the IST Pilot project has been arranged at the RCS Edinburgh on Wednesday 20th March, 2019 between 1500-1700hrs. IST AES should book using the following link: <https://www.rcsed.ac.uk/events-courses/event-entry?diaryId=2421>

Earlier that day, a course is being run on Simulation-Based Education for Surgeons. This course will be especially useful for surgeons involved in the IST Pilot and in delivering some of the simulation based education more generally. This course can be booked using the following link: <https://www.rcsed.ac.uk/events-courses/event-entry?diaryId=2420>

After 31st January, unfilled places will be opened up to non-IST trainers and trainees. Until then, IST Trainers will get priority.

These two meetings precede a two day meeting of ICOSET (The International Conference on Surgical Education and Training). Further details are available using the following link: <https://icoset2019.rcsed.ac.uk/>

**Evaluation**

Professor Jen Cleland, from the University of Aberdeen has been appointed to lead on the independent evaluation of the IST Pilot Project in Scotland. This evaluation will involve both trainees and trainers. More details will be made available in the future.

Graham Haddock

Chair, Scottish Surgical Training Board

14th January, 2019