

1 April 2020

Open letter to all medical students in Scotland from Catherine Calderwood, Chief Medical Officer

Today I am writing to all medical students across Scotland to thank you for the contribution that you have been making to the national health emergency caused by Covid-19 over the past few weeks, whether that is on placement, in university, or at home modelling the right actions and supporting your families, friends and neighbours. This is a very difficult time for us all.

I know that you all have a level of skill and expertise, and many of you have expressed a wish to contribute that knowledge and experience to support the healthcare services in Scotland and bolster the workforce.

Your university has already asked many of you if you would be interested in taking up temporary paid employment within Boards – either as interim FiY1 Foundation posts or Healthcare Support Workers depending on your level of medical education and training or the needs and demands of the Boards and the availability of these posts as they respond to this crisis. However, there is no compulsion for medical students to take up these roles, and it is the individual decision of each student or those who have graduated or nearly graduated to volunteer for these or not. Students who do not take up these roles will not be adversely affected and temporary employment in any role is not part of your formal medical training. You may, however, learn new skills and improve on existing skills but as we wish to ensure that you are all able to complete your medical education and training, if you are not a final year student then you will require a letter of assurance from your University that taking up any temporary role such as a Healthcare Support Worker will not adversely impact on that. If you are employed temporarily, you will not be asked to undertake any activity beyond your level of competence.

NES is responsible for recruiting all FiY1 posts for final year students and will also be the Employer. Medical schools have confirmed their timescales for graduating students and once this has been confirmed by them with the GMC, the GMC will write to you about gaining provisional registration. Whilst awaiting the confirmation of your provisional registration from the GMC, you should commence your application for a FiY1 post via the portal managed by the UK Foundation Programme Office (UKFPO), available at <https://poll.hee.uk/s/Covid19FRS>. Any queries on how to complete your application should be addressed to helpdesk@foundationprogramme.nhs.uk.

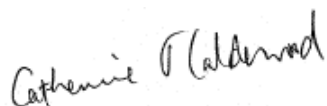
Where it is not possible to match you to an available FiY1 post, the Scottish Foundation School will be in touch to ask if you would wish to be considered for a Healthcare Support Worker role. Alternatively, all medical students whether final year or not, may provide an expression of interest for such a role via NES's Health and Social Care COVID-19 Accelerated Recruitment Portal here: <https://careers.nhs.scot/coronavirus-covid-19-recruitment/>

Measures are being put in place to ensure that anyone who offers their services has the support they need to be able to practise safely and effectively. We also wish to ensure that Health Boards have the required flexibility to deploy individuals where needed according to local needs and pressures. Training and induction appropriate to the particular role you will be undertaking will be provided by NES and/or the Health Board that you will be working for. The NES Foundation School will be responsible for the training and induction for FiY1 posts, however, role specific induction and training will be undertaken at a Board or Unit level and will be the responsibility of the Health Board you will be working for. For other posts, such as Healthcare Support Worker, induction and training including the use of PPE (personal protective equipment) where applicable, will be provided by the Health Board you will be working for.

I know that this is not for everyone, and we will be working to minimise any disruption for those who cannot participate and also to ensure that those who do wish to participate are able to continue with their existing commitments to ensure that they complete their training and education.

Initial Scottish Government guidance for nursing and midwifery and medical students is available - but please do continue to liaise with your University and keep abreast with other official sources of information such as the GMC and NES website, and also the Scottish Government website.

Yours sincerely



Dr Catherine Calderwood
Chief Medical Officer for Scotland