

Promoting access to flexible training – bonus scheme for trusts

Flexible training will be included as one of the Improving Working Lives (England) standards on the Trust Educational Contract, initially with a minimum of 5% flexible trainees within all educational contracts and aiming to increase this over five years to 20%, subject to legitimate demand. (*Principles underpinning the new arrangements for flexible training; NHS Employers; 2005*)

One of the obstacles to access to flexible training is the cost associated with flexible trainees who are paid at a significantly higher point on the pay scale than the mid-point at which all posts are funded. As all trainees receive an annual increment, flexible trainees are more likely to be at the higher end of the pay scale, as they are taking longer to train. Therefore trusts that employ significant numbers of flexible trainees probably incur significant excess basic pay costs.

In order to encourage trusts to employ increasing numbers of flexible trainees the London Deanery has introduced a simple bonus scheme for trusts. The more flexible trainees that a trust employs as a percentage of its approved medical and dental training posts, the greater the bonus rate to be applied. The bonus takes effect once the threshold proportion of 6% has been reached, and the bonus rate is capped at 20%.

Example

Fictitious Trust has 100 educationally approved training posts. It employs 15 flexible trainees in the first quarter of 2006/07, which equates to 15% as a proportion of the approved posts.

The funding contribution payable to Fictitious Trust for that quarter, say £90,000, will be increased by 15%, or £13,500.

If it employs one more flexible trainee in quarter two, then the funding contribution for that quarter will be increased by 16%.

It should be noted that all flexible training placements count towards the total even if they do not attract an individual funding contribution from the flexible training budget: supernumerary placements; reduced sessions in a full time post; both partners in a slot share placement; and the first three months of a flexible trainee's maternity leave.