

Department of Medical Education

Supporting Doctors – Guidance

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Forward

This guidance has been written to support the work of the Professional Support Group, a support team within the Medical Education Faculty. It outlines advice for recognising doctors who may need additional support and also the steps that may need to be taken to facilitate this. It will provide clarity to the process of how doctors requiring additional educational input and support are expected to be managed at the Countess of Chester Hospital.

Professional Support Group

This group is a subgroup of the Medical Education Committee and its membership includes:

- **Director of Medical Education:** Dr Ian Benton (ibenton@nhs.net)
- **Medical Education Manager:** Mrs Janet Ellis (janetellis@nhs.net)
- **FP Director:** Dr Jamie Fanning (fpdirector.coch@nhs.net)
- **HR representative:** Sue Hughes (sue.hughes14@nhs.net)
- **SASG Tutor** Dr Saurabh Shandilya
- **Specialty College Tutors**

It was established in 2012, to provide a discussion forum and support network for those involved in the management of junior doctors who need professional support. We are keen to avoid the term 'doctors in difficulty' as this sets the wrong impression. It allows the Medical Education Faculty to actively support both the individual and also the Clinical/Educational Supervisor. It will also identify if any additional resources are required. The remit of the group also includes the support and advice for Local Employed Doctors (LED) and Physician Associates.

The group meets on a quarterly basis, however urgent meetings can be arranged if required.

Educational / Clinical Supervisor's Responsibilities

The role of the group is not to relieve the educational supervisor from their responsibility for supervision, but to provide support and guidance. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure all health practitioners work in a safe and supported environment.

Once concerns have been raised regarding a doctor it will be the Educational Supervisor's responsibility to investigate, document, agree and communicate the action that is required.

It is a mandatory requirement that all incidents and complaints involving medical staff are investigated and the outcome recorded. Please use the following guidance to record this. If the incident is clinical in nature, the usual clinical incident reporting system should also be completed.

The revalidation and appraisal requirements for both Trust and Deanery posts require this information to allow satisfactory progression via the ARCP / appraisal process.

General Principles

1. Early identification of problems and intervention is essential

It is the responsibility of the Clinical Supervisor and their team to intervene and highlight any concerns to the doctor's Educational Supervisor

Signs:

Poor time keeping	Failure to answer bleeps
Disappearing / avoiding behaviour	Poor organisation
Unable to prioritise	Poor record-keeping
Change of physical appearance	Anger / volatile behaviour / 'ward rage'
Lack of insight	Defensive reactions to feedback
Attitude problems	Team working issues
Exam failure	Reluctance to engage with portfolio / learning events

2. Establish and clarify the circumstances and facts as quickly as possible

Effective discussions between supervisor and doctor are usually sufficient. If further learning, reflection or monitoring be required the part of the form Educational Action Plan should be completed. This should be monitored and outcomes / progress should be recorded.

3. Explore the underlying cause(s)

- a. Clinical performance
- b. Personal, personality and behavioural
- c. Sickness / ill health
- d. Environmental issues

Causes:	
Clinical performance	Lacking leadership skills
Issues with technical or nontechnical skills	Personal / family issues
Dysfunctional team	Personality clash
Workload	Lack of resources
Stress due to exams	Sickness and ill health
Drug / alcohol abuse	Communication skills
Career / specialty choice	Bullying
Health problems (Mental or physical)	Financial worries

4. Clear documentation

- Misgivings must be communicated
- Records must be kept
- Remedies must be sought
- Feedback must be given

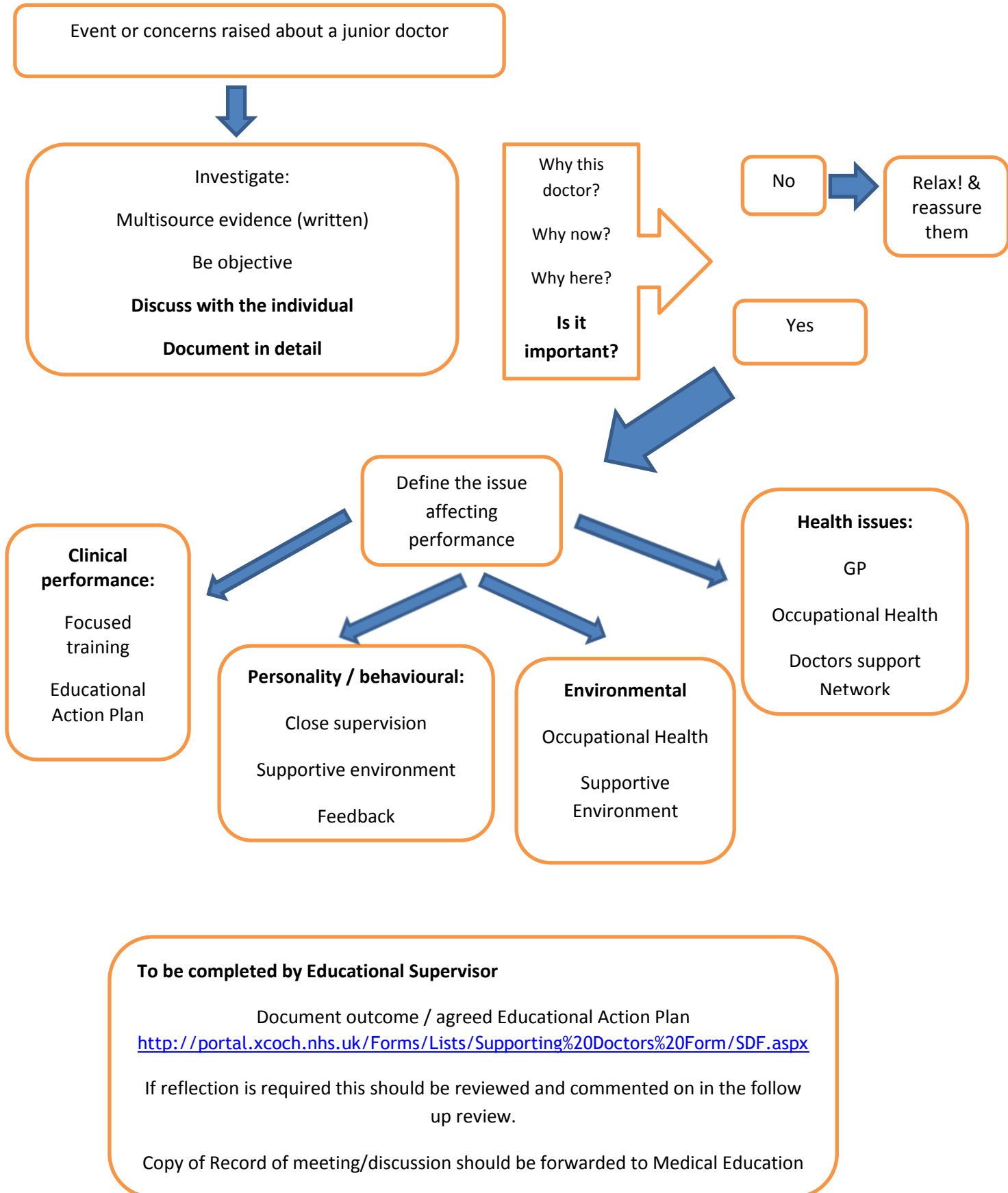
All relevant discussions, recommendations and interventions should be contemporaneously documented **and** communicated with the doctor. As a minimum the Medical Education Manager should be notified. They will notify the accountable individual(s) e.g. Specialty Tutor, Foundation Programme Director, Director of Medical Education and / or Medical Director.

Please use the form:

<http://portal.xcoch.nhs.uk/Forms/Lists/Supporting%20Doctors%20Form/SDF.aspx>

Where there are doubts as to who to report to please consult / inform **both** the Medical Director and Director of Medical Education.

Recognition and Action Framework



Sources of information / support

Lead Employer www.sthk.nhs.uk/pages/LeadEmployer.aspx

HENW Doctors and Dentists in Difficulty www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk

HR and Wellbeing business services. www.hrwbbs.com

The Doctors' Support Network www.dsn.org.uk

British Medical Association www.bma.org.uk

BMA counselling and Doctor Advisor Service: 08459 200 169 24 hours / day

Support4Doctors www.support4doctors.org

The Sick Doctors Trust www.sick-doctors-trust.co.uk

References

General Medical Council (2013) *Good Medical Practice* London: GMC

NACT UK (2008) *Managing trainees in difficulty; practical advice for educational and clinical supervisors* London: NACT

National Clinical Assessment Authority (2004) *Understanding performance difficulties in doctors* NCAA (NCAS)

Record of meeting / discussion

Date:

Doctor's Name:

Grade:

GMC No:

Educational Supervisor:

GMC No:

Persons Present:

Concerns:

Discussions:

Recommendations / Action plan:

If related to a clinical incident, do you consider the incident now closed? Y / N

What are the issues?					(please circle)
Clinical performance	Personality /Behavioural	Physical Illness	Mental illness	Environmental	N/A
Are they safe to practice? :			YES / NO		
Comments:					
Who have you informed?: Clinical Director / Divisional Medical Director / Medical Director / Other					

Educational Action Plan

Learning need	Learning objective	How objective will be addressed?	Date to achieve goal

Date of next review:

Signed:

Educational Supervisor

Signed:

Junior Doctor

Please indicate the involvement of others:

Clinical Director / Medical Director / Occupational Health / GP / Programme Director /
Other

A copy of this meeting record should be given to the junior doctor and also forwarded to the Medical Education Manager.

This form will be retained in the Medical Education Office and will be available for review by the Professional Support Group. Unless notified it will **not** be part of the individuals HR file. Information may be shared with the Lead Employer or Postgraduate Dean where required.