

Doctors’ Retainer Scheme

F.A.Q.s

Date: Updated 2020

**NHS EDUCATION FOR SCOTLAND**

**GP DOCTORS’ RETAINER SCHEME**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Q How many sessions can a Retainer work in the Practice per week?**

A Minimum of 2 sessions, maximum of 4 sessions per week.

**Q Length of a session?**

A The length of a session is usually 3.5 hours. However, there can be some flexibility with agreement of the Retainer and the Practice, to work longer and shorter sessions totaling to no more than a maximum of 14 hours a week. This can be useful if the Retainer wishes to take part in the Duty Doctor Rota.

**Q Who employs the Retainer?**

A The contract of employment is with the Practice. The BMA Salaried Doctors Contract can be used as a template for negotiation between the Retainer and the Practice. Modifications would be required, for example, regarding the length of a session to be in keeping with the current scheme. The BMA Retainer contract template is not recommended as it is based on the English scheme.

**Q What is the Educational Agreement?**

A The NES Educational Agreement describes the educational commitment agreed between a Mentor and a Retainer. This is a negotiable document and one that the Retainer and Mentor should agree at the start of the post. It is not a contract of employment and does not supersede any other contracts signed.

**Q What is the holiday entitlement for a Retainer?**

A The scheme allows for six weeks annual leave and public holidays pro rata. The Practice will receive sessional reimbursement for this leave. The Retainer can negotiate a longer holiday entitlement with the Practice which can be paid or unpaid. The Practice will not be reimbursed for this additional annual leave.

**Q What is the study leave entitlement for a Retainer?**

A A Retainer is required to provide evidence of educational activities each year in line with all other GPs to achieve the requirements for annual appraisal and revalidation. Retainers are entitled to a maximum of four sessions of study leave per year depending on the number of sessions worked per week (i.e. if works 2 sessions per week entitled to 2 sessions paid study leave per year, 3 worked sessions per week then 3 study leave sessions per year). In addition, retainers should also receive a further 2 study leave sessions annually to prepare for and undertake appraisal. There is an expectation that the Retainer will participate in Practice based education and attend practice meetings and study leave can be used for this. Although there is no longer any NES provision of retainer specific education, retainers are eligible for a 1/3 reduction in fees for CPD Connect activities.

**Q What is the maternity leave entitlement?**

A This is agreed by negotiation with the Practice.

 The BMA recommended advice is:

Those with 12 months continuous service at 11 weeks before the estimated week of delivery are entitled to:

 8 weeks full pay (which is inclusive of SMP, maternity allowance and/or any dependent’s allowances receivable

 18 weeks at half of full pay plus SMP or maternity allowance receivable, providing the total receivable does not exceed full pay

 A further 13 weeks at lower rate SMP also payable

A further 13 weeks unpaid leave can also be taken.

The Retainer is considered to be on the Retainer Scheme for the first six months of paid maternity leave but for the second six-month period is “paused” from the Retainer Scheme and should not access any Retainer scheme activities during this time. The first six months of maternity leave will count towards the total five years on the scheme.

If the Retainer is eligible for full maternity benefits, then the Practice is reimbursed sessional payments by the relevant Health Board for the first six months of the Retainer’s maternity leave. If the retainer is only eligible for Statutory Maternity Pay for the first six months e.g. a gap in employment for some time before joining the scheme, the practice will not receive sessional reimbursement. If this is the case, then that period of maternity leave is considered to be a “pause” from the scheme and will not count towards the 5 years.

**Q What is the sick leave entitlement?**

A This is negotiable with the Practice.

 The Retainer may be eligible for greater sick pay entitlement if they have accrued years of service with the NHS.

 BMA recommended advice is:

The Retainer will be entitled, subject to length of service, and to proper notification by the Retainer, to the following periods of paid sick leave during any 12 month period:

During the first year of service: 1 month full pay, and (after completing 4 months service) 2 months half pay

During the second year of service: 2 months full pay and 2 months half pay

During the third year of service: 4 months full pay and 4 months half pay

During the fourth and fifth years of 5 months full pay and 5 months half pay

service:

After completing 5 years of service: 6 months full pay and 6 months half pay

These payments incorporate entitlement under SSP.

**Q Special Leave?**

A If an individual wishes to take extended leave, e.g. to look after a sick child, this would normally be unpaid, and at the discretion of the Practice. The alternative would be to make up the lost time at another date.

**Q What is my Superannuation entitlement?**

A The Retainer post is superannuated.

**Q What other work can I undertake while on the scheme?**

A All additional work must be approved by the DRS Associate Adviser prior to taking up a post. The Associate Adviser may approve up to an additional two sessions a week, which will be for non-GMS type experience. The work must be beneficial to future work as a GP. Examples include family planning, hospital clinical assistant posts, Out of Hours sessions and undergraduate teaching which is relevant to General Practice. An application form for non-GMS sessions must be completed.

 If a Retainer remains on the scheme for the full 5 years then they can, if they wish, apply for their non-GMS sessions to be used to undertake GP locums for their final 6 months on the Scheme. If applied for, each session would be instead of a non-GMS session. These sessions would enable a Retainer to work as a locum but in a different GP practice than the Retainer is usually employed to network and increase the opportunities for long term posts. The practice employing the Retainer for additional sessions would not receive any Health Board reimbursement or have any mentoring commitment.

 A Retainer wishing to work as a locum at the end of the scheme must contact their local Health Board to change their Performers List status and contact their Defence Society to ensure appropriate indemnity cover.

**Q Can I increase/decrease my number of sessions as a Retainer?**

A Yes – the maximum is four sessions per week and the minimum recommended educationally is 2 per week except in exceptional circumstances. Changes in the number of sessions worked must have the prior approval of the DRS Adviser and is dependent on funding from practitioner services. Changes in sessions CANNOT be approved retrospectively.

**Q Can a Practice have more than one Retainer – or can a Retainer work in more than one Practice?**

A There will usually be only one Retainer in any approved Practice. An exception to this could be a remote or very rural Practice where there are two eligible doctors wishing to work and where travel to another Practice would be difficult.

Retainers may in exceptional circumstances work in two Practices. This would require the support of the Director of General Practice Education and the approval of the Specialty Quality Management Group.

**Q Mentoring Time – how often should this take place and when?**

A Retainers should meet for 1 hour per month with their designated Mentor to discuss their personal development. This time can be included in the 50 credits of medical education required to be undertaken annually by the Retainer. Mentoring time should be part of the Retainer’s contracted hours. Mentoring time should normally be on a one to one basis. The one-hour mentoring should occur IRRESPECTIVE of the number of sessions worked per week.

**Q Can I do out of hours work?**

A You may do if you so wish to gain experience and it has been approved by the DRS Associate Adviser as part of the non-GMS session additional sessions up to a maximum of 2 sessions a week.

**Q What do I need to do with regard to revalidation and appraisal?**

A The evidence you gather for the GP Appraisal system in Scotland will inform your revalidation folder. Keep your PDP and evidence of courses attended/evidence of learning/audit/SEA /complaints and commendations etc together in a folder/file/portfolio to discuss with your Mentor who will advise you if appropriate. We would strongly advise all Retainers to utilise the Scottish Online Appraisal Resource at <http://www.appraisal.nes.scot.nhs.uk/>

Preparatory time for your annual appraisal and undertaking appraisal will require 2 sessions per year over and above your study leave.

Retainers are required to provide the same level of evidence as all other GPs.

**Q. What is the role of the Retainer Scheme Adviser?**

A. The Retainer Scheme Adviser is available for both advice and support for both retainers and mentors. If a retainer has any difficulties within their practice they should feel free to contact their local Adviser. Any telephone discussions or interviews will be confidential.

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