

How Trainees Can Support Training

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NES Trainees and Supervisors Event 2023

Scottish Medical Physics and Engineering Trainee Network (SMPETN)

- Formed in December 2015
- Membership currently consists of 51 people:
 - 28 NES-funded trainees
 - 6 Route 2 trainees
 - 17 former trainees - now Clinical Scientists!
- Trainees meet 3-4 times a year to connect, with CPD opportunities at each meeting

Image from smpetn.scot.nhs.uk



Scottish Medical Physics and Engineering Trainee Network (SMPETN)

- The network is run by a group of trainees who volunteer for positions: Chair, Vice-Chair (Medical Physics), Vice-Chair (Clinical Engineering) and Communications Officer
- The Chair of the network sits on the steering committee of the Scottish Medical Physics and Clinical Engineering Training Scheme, providing insight into the issues faced by trainees and providing a feedback link between the scheme and trainees

Covid-19 Disruption to Training

- The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and first UK lockdown resulted in much of the training being put on hold, meaning we had to come up with more creative ways of supporting each other...

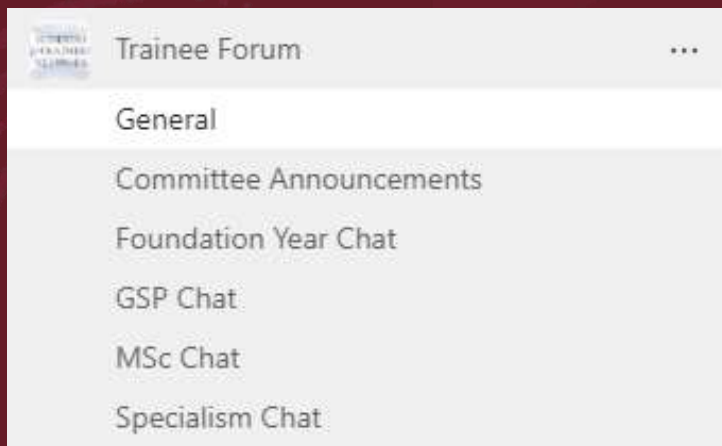


Image from Microsoft Teams



Image from IPEM Scope - Winter 2020 edition

Trainee Mental Health Survey

- Training can sometimes feel like an isolating process, so the committee wanted to see how trainees were doing, and whether they felt like they had enough support
- The first survey was carried out in early 2020, completely anonymous
- This has now been carried out twice more on an annual basis, with the results fed back at the next network meeting, as well as to the training scheme steering group if there are actionable points

Trainee Mental Health Survey

- Key outcomes:
 - Across the 2020 and 2021 surveys, less than half of the respondents indicated that their mental health was “good” or “very good”
 - Very few trainees had taken time off work while experiencing poor mental health
 - At least half of the respondents indicated that they would not feel comfortable talking to colleagues or a line manager if they were struggling with their mental health at work, with comments such as “don’t want to be flagged as a troublemaker” or “don’t want to cause an issue when applying for jobs”
 - Trainees struggled with having only virtual meetings – for those who started the scheme in “Covid years”, they hadn’t met many of their peers in-person

Trainee Mentorship

- One of the primary outcomes of the initial mental health survey was that trainees felt they could do with some more support... enter the mentorship scheme!
- This started running in September 2021 with the intake of new trainees, and is now midway through its second year, with several mentored trainees electing to stay with the same mentor for the second year
- The [NES Mentoring Handbook](#) has been a valuable resource!

What We've Learned...

- Setting up a Teams channel has really helped trainees to feel less isolated
- While virtual meetings were great when we couldn't meet, but the recent re-introduction of in-person meetings has been extremely popular amongst trainees and great for morale!
- Trainees feel supported by the mentorship scheme on the whole, but work can be done to improve it, such as training for mentors on supporting others experiencing poor mental health
- The ability to raise issues with the training scheme steering group is really invaluable!