



14th of May 2021

Message to anaesthesia trainees and trainers in Wales from Dr T Lawson PG Dean, HEIW

Dear Colleagues,

You will I'm sure be aware of the recent publicity surrounding recruitment to higher training in anaesthesia across the UK. I understand the disappointment of those trainees completing core and ACCS anaesthesia training in Wales, who may not have secured the higher training posts they wanted for August 2021. Many factors have contributed to the high application numbers including the planned change to the anaesthesia curriculum, curriculum derogations, the lack of opportunities to travel because of the pandemic and the impact of medical jobs being placed on the shortage occupation list.

Whilst it is no consolation to those who have been unsuccessful in this round, the School of anaesthesia in Health Education & Improvement Wales (HEIW), led by Dr Sarah Harries, has been working closely with the Royal College of Anaesthesia Regional Advisor for some time to mitigate the impact and to ensure trainees and trainers have been kept fully informed. I believe this has put us in a stronger position to deal with the current issues and forthcoming changes compared with other UK nations.

HEIW has supported a 30% expansion in the number of available higher training posts in Wales for August 2021 and are delighted that the majority of those appointed in the current round have come from the Wales core and ACCS programmes. We are also committed to maximizing available opportunities for those who were unsuccessful in the current round and want to continue their career in Wales. Since 2010 we have offered an optional 'CT3 year' in Anaesthesia as part of the core programme, something not available elsewhere in the UK. This has been highly successful, providing trainees with additional time to develop their skills where needed. We are pleased to see that two thirds of our current CT2 trainees have elected to take this option from August 2021 and are confident this will be invaluable in supporting their future higher training applications. HEIW's School Leads are also communicating with Clinical Directors and College Tutors across Wales to maximise utilisation of the available Anaesthesia/ICM fellowship posts offered by Health Boards. With HEIW support these can provide CT3 equivalence and an excellent and effective route to supporting entry to higher training in the future.

This has been an unprecedented time when doctors in training and their trainers have worked under challenging conditions to support the response to the COVID 19 pandemic, as well as deal with the changing landscape of new curricula and cancelled exams. I would like to thank you all for your dedication and patience and whilst it may not feel as if you are always valued by HEIW, I can assure you that you are. Our training leads in the School of Anaesthesia are dedicated and passionate about innovating and supporting trainees and trainers across Wales and would be delighted to provide further guidance where needed.

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For any anaesthesia trainee (or trainer) affected by the recent recruitment processes and requiring further advice or support please contact; Dr Sarah Harries, Head of School (Sarah.Harries5@wales.nhs.uk), Dr Caroline Evans, Deputy Head of School (Caroline.Evans10@wales.nhs.uk), and/or the HEIW Professional Support Unit (HEIW.ProfessionalSupport@wales.nhs.uk).

With best wishes,

Tom Lawson

Deon Meddygol Ôl-raddedig – Postgraduate Medical Dean

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