

17 July 2012

Expert Advisory Group



SHAPE OF TRAINING

5

To consider

Research to support the Review

Issue

1. To discuss research options to help inform the Shape of Training Review.

Recommendations

2.
 - a. To commission a systematic review of the information available in each theme in order to identify gaps in our current understanding (paragraphs 7 to 12).
 - b. As a result of a systematic review and gap analysis, we would then commission research to build up evidence in areas where gaps have been identified (paragraph 13).

Background

3. Item 2 on this agenda has looked at the issues and challenges with postgraduate medical education and training. This paper considers whether there is any specific research we need to undertake or commission. The Expert Advisory Group may identify other useful research subjects arising from its discussion of Item 2.

Discussion

4. The research could aim to fill gaps in our current understanding or explore the impact of potential reforms. It could also help us consider how proposals might be implemented, particularly within the changing landscape of postgraduate medical education and training.

5. The research will have to be completed before the end of the Review in order to inform the final report and recommendation. This timescale will inevitably determine the scale of any work that we commission.

A gap analysis of research against the themes

6. Item 2 sets out the main themes for the review:

- c. Workforce needs – specialists or generalists (or both)
- d. Breadth and scope of training
- e. Training and service needs
- f. Patient needs
- g. Flexibility of training
- h. In addition, we also need to consider the undergraduate – postgraduate transition and clinical academic pathways.

7. Each theme raises questions and issues that could be explored in more depth. Some relevant topics have already been evaluated in detail. For example, the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AoMRC) published a literature review evaluating the quality of care provided by trained doctors in contrast to doctors in training.¹ But within these themes, there are also areas where only limited information exists.

¹ Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, *The benefits of consultant delivered care*, January 2012.

8. Given the breadth of information across the themes, the Review might benefit from a systematic analysis of the information and research already available and where there are gaps in our knowledge.
9. Examples of possible gaps in our understanding might include:
 - a. How other countries set and evaluate the outcomes of postgraduate medical education and training
 - b. How different stakeholders perceive or understand the role and responsibilities of trainees and doctors
 - c. How the current postgraduate arrangements impact on doctors who follow unconventional career pathways
 - d. Whether there are particular pressure points within the postgraduate training structure that might make doctors more likely to leave the profession
 - e. How potential reforms to postgraduate training will impact on the cost and value for money of training.
10. These suggestions are not, by any means, exhaustive. Nor are they mutually exclusive.
11. We would welcome any other ideas or feedback from the Expert Advisory Group on what research should be commissioned for the Review.

Recommendation: To commission a systematic review of the information available in each theme in order to identify gaps in our current understanding.

12. We could then commission work to help us fill in these gaps and consider any cross cutting implications between the themes. For example, is there evidence that patients want or would benefit from access to generalists? Similarly, is there evidence that a consultant present service would result in better training opportunities?

Recommendation: As a result of a systematic review and gap analysis, we would then commission research to build up evidence in areas where gaps have been identified.

13. Following this discussion and if the Expert Advisory Group recommends further research, the Review executive in discussion with the Chair will commission the relevant work. We will provide regular updates to the Expert Advisory Group.

Resource implications

14. Funds for research have been included within the overall review budget for 2012. Additional funding will be explored if necessary once we have identified our research needs.

Equality

15. As the Review develops, we are likely to identify equality issues and opportunities either within the current structure or as a result of the recommendations. We will begin an equality analysis to track these groups and make sure we engage with them throughout the life of the review.

Communications

16. We will publish this paper on the Shape of Training website.