Orientation FAQs

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# **What do I do if activities are cancelled at the last minute, or the trainee turns up and no one appears to be expecting them?**

Ensure the trainee phones or emails to confirm the appointment a day or so in advance. It helps if they send a pen portrait and a short explanation about the scheme and why they are coming. Sometimes things are cancelled due to emergencies. Where possible, these activities should be rescheduled but it may be worth having a few activities ‘in reserve’ or something for the trainee to do back at their base. It is good to give the trainee a small project related to the orientation and if things are cancelled, they can spend some time on this.

# **I am getting unfavorable feedback on my trainee; they are not making a good impression with those they meet during orientation. What should I do?**

This is unusual but not unheard of. Trainees may be nervous and unsure of themselves or unclear on the purpose of the orientation. Collect as much information as you can about the kinds of impression the trainee is making and offer constructive feedback on how to improve; this could form part of the trainee’s first Probation Review and can be built into their Personal Development Plan.

# **I have a finance trainee and am surprised at that the orientation period is interrupted by so much time away for study and examinations.**

Unfortunately, it is the nature of the finance scheme that the education programme is demanding and starts early. Managers and trainees will be informed about all study days that fall within the orientation period as soon as we receive them from our education providers**.** Occasionally providers needed to make some alterations and we will do our best to keep you informed.

# **Can trainees book annual leave during their orientation period?**

We ask trainees to avoid booking leave during orientation, however some will have booked holidays before being offered a place on the scheme. The trainee should inform you of any holidays as soon as possible and if these fall during orientation, we need to be flexible and extend the orientation period around the leave.

# **Can I let my trainee organise their own orientation?**

No, the orientation plan should be organised **before** the trainee starts on the Scheme and it is the programme managers responsibility to ensure it is completed. It often takes trainees considerable time to settle into a new organisation and they are unlikely to have the appropriate connections and networks to organise an effective orientation. If they wish, trainee’s can make some of their own arrangements if activities are cancelled or re-arranged and should be given ownership to flex the plan if they wish.

# **My trainee is a current NHS staff member and neither of us sees the need for an orientation. Can we skip the orientation period and go straight into their placement role?**

No. The orientation is a crucial element of the Scheme and is designed to give trainees the broadest overview of the health and social care system. It is a unique experience and vital to support trainees learning and development such as the Elizabeth Garret Anderson (EGA) assignment which is the demonstration of an understanding of the patient journey. It is possible to tailor orientation to the trainees needs and you can discuss this when your first meet your trainee.

# **My trainee feels they have learned enough about the NHS. Can we cut the orientation short?**

No. A well organised and planned orientation should keep the trainee energised and engaged for the full duration of orientation. It is a crucial element of the Scheme and the foundation for a lifetime career. Orientation will also be of immediate benefit for their first academic assignment. It may be worth reminding your trainee of the short and long-term benefits of orientation and that is designed for them to see health and social care through the eyes of care givers, patients and a range of partner organisations and to see the patterns of health service delivery.

# **Trainees are encouraged to feedback on their orientation experience. What is the purpose of this, who should this feedback be made to and how?**

The purpose of the feedback is many and varied; it encourages trainees to reflect and learn from their experiences and provides valuable learning for managers when designing future orientation plans. When presented more widely, it can raise the profile of the Scheme and trainees within the organisation as well as showcasing the services they spent time with. Here are some suggestions on who and how this feedback can be delivered locally:

* A one-to-one meeting between the trainee and their programme manager.
* As part of the trainee’s first Probation Review meeting.

Other possible ways a trainee could provide feedback more widely are:

* A presentation to placement team, other trainees or at a board or directors meeting
* Writing an article for your organisation or systems newsletter.