**Dental Foundation Trainees - Occupational Health Clearance from UK Universities (Dental Schools)**

In 2015 NHS England had hoped to establish a smoother process of transition for UK graduates wishing to join the Dental Performers List (DPL) for England.  The process involved developing a clear Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that could be adopted between Dental Schools and NHS England local teams to reduce duplication, particularly around the issue of occupational health clearance.

Unfortunately the (MOU) was never formally ratified for use. Nonetheless, a number of local offices adopted the principal of the MOU and it became clear that there were potential gaps in information available to the Dean or their nominated deputy to allow confirmation on exit.  A number of the gaps related to incidents (clinical or non-clinical) not always being reported, needle stick injuries being the most common as the student may have sought advice through another health service provider.

The concerns were raised at the Professional Standards Delivery Group (PSDG) who agreed that in order for NHS England to be satisfied that applicants held the necessary clearance confirmation of the occupational health clearance should come from an occupational health team, not the Dean.

Consultation on this subject has taken place with the following interested parties:

* A Clinical Director of an Occupational Health Department who oversees the clearance for dental students at a UK Dental School. The same Department also provide occupational health services for performers on the performers list within one of the NHS England regions.
* The current Chair of the UK Dental Schools Council and another Dean of a UK Dental School.

The consensus view is that it would be more appropriate that confirmation of occupational health clearance should be provided by the relevant occupational health departments at the UK Dental School rather than the Dean of the School.  This would then allow students the opportunity to disclose any sensitive or confidential concerns including any clinical or non-clinical concerns that may impact on their health status directly with the occupational health service.  It would then be the occupational health teams that would confirm the occupational health clearance status for the student at the point of exit.

Currently NHS England accepts occupational health clearance from either a NHS occupational health provider or a Safe Effective Quality Occupational Health Service (SEQOHS) accredited occupational health provider.

NHS England has previously accepted health clearance from an occupational health provider working towards Safe Effective Quality Occupational Health Service (SEQOHS) accreditation. However, it is proposed that in future NHS England will not accept health clearance from those organisations.

Therefore your occupational health departments would need to meet this criteria for NHS England to accept their occupational health clearance for the graduating student at exit from dental school.

Should you have any queries regarding this, please let me know.

Regards

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