



Royal College of  
**Paediatrics and Child Health**

*Leading the way in Children's Health*

# College Tutors' Day

28 October 2016

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## Trainees in difficulty

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# Aims and objectives of Trainee in difficulty workshop

- To be able to identify a trainee in difficulty
- To be able to provide relevant educational, personal and professional support
- To gain an understanding of available resources at Trust, School, Regional and National level

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# Early signs that something is wrong (NCAS findings)

- **The disappearing act** – not answering bleeps, and disappearing, frequent sick leave
- **Low work rate** – slow in doing procedures, clerking patients, dictating letters
- **Ward rage** – shouting at the nurses or other colleagues
- **Rigidity** – poor tolerance of uncertainty, difficulty making priority decisions

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# Early signs that something is wrong (NCAS findings)

- **Bypass syndrome** – nurses and other colleagues avoid asking the doctor to do anything
- **Career problems** – examination difficulty, disillusionment with medicine
- **Insight failure** – rejection of constructive feedback, defensiveness, counter challenge to everything

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# What is the real problem?

- Is it a trainee in difficulty?...or
- Is it a difficult trainee?
- Is it a difficult trainer?
- Is it the job itself?
- Is it the system or culture within the organisation?

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# What are the sort of difficulties?

- Professional conduct
- Personal conduct
- Performance
- Health

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# Case 1

- Jane in ST2 Paediatrics
- Failed the Theory and Science exams 4 times and had only one written exam of the 3 needed to pass to ST3
- Referred to PSU
- No clinical concerns

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# What is the real problem?

- PSU format followed
- **Family**
  - Her mother had died in a car accident during F2.
  - 6 months later her father died of stomach cancer.
  - There had been a rift with her only brother trying to sort out the parents will.
  - Had some good university friends but only a few working in the same region.



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# Action plan

- Refer to occupational health
- Refer psychology for counselling
- See TPD/ Head of School re exam tips
- Test for dyslexia

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## Case 2

- Pratima Single parent - husband local surgeon left after severe hyperemesis gravidarum in her third pregnancy which was unplanned
- Husband starts affair with Pratima's work colleague
- Had to downsize from 6 bedroom 3 bathroom house to 2 bedroom house with potential for extension
- Found tired and tearful at work by educational supervisor
- Mum recently had MI and was main source of support

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# Action plan

- LTFT training at 80% (couldn't afford 60%)
- Mother in law still close to family and would do some of the school runs
- Royal Medical Benevolent Fund
- Citizens advice bureau re financial muddle
- Psychology for counselling
- Occupational health

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## Case 3

- Susan is a ST7 trainee
- Previous ARCPs have shown outcome 1
- She has been found checking and double checking results
- Her confidence is low
- She has not yet applied to do START

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## Further information

- 6 months ago involved in a SUI of a child with a pneumonia who was sent home from the Assessment unit
- Child has a normal examination apart from a slightly red throat, CRP of 20 and normal full blood count.
- Child returned 6 days later in decompensated respiratory distress and had an extensive right sided empyema requiring intubation, ventilation and drainage at the local tertiary hospital.
- Despite the child's full recovery, parents have filed a complaint naming Susan as she was the doctor who sent the child home on the first occasion.

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## Action plan

- Psychology service for counselling
- Keep in same unit for 12 months to gain confidence
- Debrief
- Support for going to coroner's court
- Ensure has advice from defence unit for statement writing
- Careers referral
- Professional support unit
- Local assertiveness and confidence skills course

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# Resources

## Trust

- Occ Health
- Careers lead
- DME

## Regional

- Professional Support Unit
  - Coaching and mentoring
  - Educational psychology services
  - Careers services
  - Language and communication skills support
- Local counselling/psychological services for health professionals

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# Resources (contd)

- RCPCH esp for exam issues
- BMA
- Royal Benevolent Fund
- Citizen's Advice
- Domestic Violence support