

Return To Work Policy

The Royal College of Anaesthetists and AAGBI have recommended that any Anaesthetist who has taken time away from clinical anaesthesia should undertake a period of reintroduction. The aim of a RTW programme is to improve confidence levels and patient safety. The idea is allow a trainee time to regain confidence and demonstrate that they are safe to practise without the stress of on call or a solo list just after they return.

Keep in Touch days (KIT) can also be arranged through the lead employer and host Trust. Trainees are allowed to take up to 10 KIT days with the Host Trust's agreement. There are also courses designed specifically for this purpose and in the North West there will be a RTW simulation course introduced in June 2013 that will be held twice yearly that trainees are strongly encouraged to attend.

All trainees who have been off work for a period of six months or longer should have an individualised formal RTW programme drawn up. As this requires planning they should contact their College Tutor as soon as a return to work date is confirmed. If a trainee has less than twelve months experience in Anaesthesia prior to leave of absence it is recommended that they repeat the Initial Assessment of Competency.

Reintroduction to work should involve ten days of supervised clinical activity with no on call commitment. The on call will need to be 'made up' at another time in order to be fair to other trainees. This will equate to 2 weeks for trainees returning to work full time but 3-4 weeks for those returning as LTFT. This is a guide only and if trainees have used KIT days or attended a RTW simulation course less time may be necessary.

The type of lists undertaken during this period will depend upon the trainees' specific needs and their level of training along with what can be offered at the Trust. It is recommended that a WBA is completed each day and that an ALMAT is performed towards the end of the RTW period.

When the RTW period is complete the trainee should meet with their College Tutor or Educational Supervisor to discuss and feedback on the programme. After taking into account the WBAs and other feedback a judgement is made by both trainee and Educational Supervisor as to whether the trainee is ready to resume on call duties and work without direct supervision. It is envisaged that most trainees will be able to resume normal duties after this period of time. However it does give the opportunity to identify any problems requiring an extension to the RTW period and specific targeted training.

There is a form to be completed to plan and sign off the RTW period. It can be found at www.nwanaesthesia.org.uk. A copy should be uploaded into the trainees' e-portfolio with a further copy sent to the TPD.

All trainees undertaking a RTW programme should notify Karen Kidner at karen.kidner@yahoo.co.uk.