



NHS Management Executive
St. Andrew's House
Edinburgh EH1 3DG
18 July 1996

Dear Colleague

SPECIALIST REGISTRAR NUMBERS 1996-97

Summary

1. This circular advises NHS Trusts, the Scottish Council for Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education (SCPMDE) and Health Boards of the number of posts for doctors in higher specialist training in 1996-97.
2. Appendix A sets out the background to the number of posts in the Specialist Registrar (SpR) grade, and provides further guidance on the introduction of the new grade.
3. Appendix B sets out the distribution for Specialist Registrars in 1996-97 by specialty and by region.

Action

4. NHS Trusts, the SCPMDE and Health Boards should maintain staffing levels and move towards the numbers set out as soon as practicable. These numbers will take effect after each specialty commissioning date.
5. NHS Trusts, Health Boards and Postgraduate Deans must ensure that posts have been approved as training posts by the appropriate Joint Committee on Higher Training before proceeding to fill them.

Yours sincerely

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APPENDIX A TO NHS MEL(1996)

SPECIALIST REGISTRAR NUMBERS 1996

Introduction

1. The Specialist Registrar grade, which was launched formally on 1 April 1996, is gradually replacing the registrar and senior registrar grades. Appointments now are to SpR training programmes, normally involving rotations between a number of different Trusts rather than to a post within a specific Trust. Postgraduate Deans will issue each doctor entering the SpR grade with an individual Scottish National Training Number (SNTN) which he or she will hold until he or she leaves the grade.

Numbers

2. Numbers in the various specialties have been mainly based on NHS Trusts' forecasts of the numbers of new consultant posts, estimates of retirements, and returns of vacant consultant posts at September 1995. Account has been taken of the views of the Advisory Committee on Medical Establishments (ACME) which, in early 1996, as part of its annual review of medical manpower numbers in Scotland, made recommendations about changes to the initial numbers. The initial numbers of Specialist Registrars for Scotland, which were given in MEL(1995)56, are now superseded by those in Appendix B.

3. Overall, the number of posts set out in Appendix B is higher than the present number of doctors in the training grades. The proposed numbers are broadly in line with Trusts' estimates of their future needs of consultants. In some specialties there will be a number of research registrars entitled to enter the new grade (see paragraph 5 below). Proposed increases will need to be phased in by Postgraduate Deans as the Specialist Registrar grade comes 'on stream' to provide a smooth transition to the new Specialist Registrar training schemes, and it may not be practicable for the proposed numbers in the specialties to be attained in 1996-97. In a few specialties the numbers currently in post may exceed the proposed numbers set out in Appendix B. In these specialties no further increases should be planned at present.

4. For the purpose of workforce planning the numbers set out in Appendix B represent the numbers of doctors in higher specialist training who have a right to make their careers in the UK. This means career registrars, senior registrars and specialist registrars. Visiting registrars and specialist registrars whose training number has a V-prefix may be employed in addition (as they are assumed not to be making their careers in the UK). Doctors in flexible (part-time) training or in supernumerary posts may also be employed in addition.

Transition

5. The roll-out programme with the transition dates for each specialty was set out in MEL(1996)26. Present registrar and senior registrar recruitment procedures should be applied until individual specialties begin their transition. Detailed guidance on the transition to the new grade was given in *A Guide to Specialist Registrar Training*, published in March 1996.

Part-Time Posts

6. Part-time posts (flexible training) are additional to the numbers given in Appendix B, but postholders who meet the educational criteria will be eligible to transfer to the Specialist Registrar grade. Individuals who transfer will be issued with an SNTN by their Postgraduate Dean. Part-time training opportunities should continue to be made available for candidates unable for well-founded reasons to work full-time, following the principles set out in MEL(1993)43.

Supernumerary Posts

7. Supernumerary posts are also additional to the number given in Appendix B. The Department will consider proposals to create supernumerary posts on a personal basis for full-time or part-time specialist registrars mainly or exclusively engaged on research work, as has been done for senior registrars, provided that educational approval has previously been obtained from the appropriate Joint Committee on Higher Training. Employers should create such posts only with Management Executive approval.

Distribution between NHS and Universities

8. Allocations between NHS senior registrar posts and university posts (honorary) have always been flexible. Adjustments between the 2 types of SpR post within individual specialties can be made by mutual agreement during the year without reference to the Management Executive so long as the relevant regional specialty number is not exceeded.

Distribution between Trusts within a Region

9. This circular has not given any breakdown of the figures between different Trust within a Region. The distribution of the posts will be determined locally in discussion between Postgraduate Deans and individual employers.

Overall Total

10. The overall total Specialist Registrar establishment for the medical specialties has been increased by 70 from the initial numbers set out in MEL(1995)56 and is now 1,100.

APPENDIX B TO NHS MEL(1996)

REVISED SPECIALIST REGISTRAR NUMBERS BY SPECIALTY

SPECIALTY	WEST	SOUTH EAST	EAST	NORTH/ NORTH EAST	TOTAL
MEDICAL SPECIALTIES	484	309	131	166	1,100¹
HOSPITAL SPECIALTIES	468	302	128	161	1,067¹
ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY MEDICINE	13	8	3²	4	28
ANAESTHETICS	64	36	17	19	136
CLINICAL LABORATORY SPECIALTIES	44	25	11	15	101³
Blood transfusion	-	-	-	-	6 ³
Clinical chemistry	6	2	2	2	12
Clinical genetics	6	2	-	2	10
Haematology	9	6	3	3	21
Histopathology	12	8	4	6	30
Immunology	2	-	-	-	2
Microbiology and virology	9	7	2	2	20
MEDICAL SPECIALTIES	127	90	35	39	293⁵
Dermatology	6	4	2	2	14
General medicine (group) ⁴	53	38	16	21	130 ⁵
Genito-urinary medicine	5	4	-	-	9
Geriatric medicine	13	6	4	3	26
Homoeopathy	1	-	-	-	1
Medical oncology	4	5	-	1	10
Medical paediatrics	26	15	9	11	61
Neurology	5	3	1	1	10
Palliative medicine	3	3	2	-	8
Radiotherapy	8	8	-	-	16
Rehabilitation medicine	3	4	1	-	8
OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY	29	20	9	11	69
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH	2	2	1	-	5

¹ The Scotland total includes posts not appearing in the regional totals: Medical Specialties, notes 3, 5 and 7 refer; Hospital Specialties, notes 3 and 5 refer. However, these totals do not include the one training slot in Paediatric Intensive Care.

² Includes one post which will rotate between North and East.

³ Includes 6 posts in blood transfusion deployed by the Common Services Agency

⁴ General medicine group covers general medicine, communicable diseases, cardiology, clinical pharmacology and therapeutics, endocrinology and diabetes, gastroenterology, nephrology, rheumatology and respiratory medicine.

⁵ Total includes 2 new posts in Clinical Pharmacology not yet allocated by region.

SPECIALTY	WEST	SOUTH EAST	EAST	NORTH/ NORTH EAST	TOTAL
PSYCHIATRIC SPECIALTIES	52	36	20	22	130
Child and adolescent psychiatry	9	5	3	3	20
Forensic psychiatry	3	3	3	-	9
General psychiatry	27	20	12	15	74
Mental handicap	3	3	1	-	7
Old age psychiatry	9	4	1	4	18
Psychotherapy	1	1	-	-	2
RADIOLOGY	35	20	2	12	69
Diagnostic radiology	34	20	2	12	68
Nuclear medicine	1	-	-	-	1
SURGICAL SPECIALTIES	99	64	30	38	231
Cardiothoracic surgery	4	2	-	2	8
ENT surgery	10	8	2	4	24
General surgery	26	17	9	11	63
Neurosurgery	6	2	1	1	10
Ophthalmology	13	8	6	6	33
Orthopaedic surgery	22	12	9	11	54
Plastic surgery	6	4	1	1	12
Surgical paediatrics	2	2	-	-	4
Urology	10	9	2	2	23
OTHER SPECIALTIES⁶	3	1	-	1	5
Neurophysiology	1	-	-	-	1
Intensive therapy	2	1	-	1	4
PUBLIC HEALTH MEDICINE	16	7	3	5	33⁷

⁶ These specialties are not included in the totals.

⁷ Includes 2 posts deployed by the Commons Services Agency.