INTRODUCTION TO THE SOFT LANDING PROJECT, THE LAUNCHING EVENT AND PROPOSED FUTURE EVENTS

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Paediatric Clinical Leaders: Service Planning, Provision and Best Practice

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Background Many International Medical Graduate (IMG) Paediatricians move to the UK to work and thrive in the NHS. We know from our own experience as IMG paediatricians adjusting to the NHS, that this transition is not always smooth. We face many challenges that can contribute to differential attainment (DA) between IMG and UK trained paediatricians. While there is some support available this can be highly variable. The ‘Soft Landing’ project arose out of a recognition of this gap, and a desire to share our lived experience to provide the easily accessible support to newly arrived IMGs, that we wish we had had.

Objectives The Soft Landing project is a voluntary UK wide support network, founded by IMG paediatricians. Its objective is to lead to a smoother transition to work and train in the NHS for IMG paediatricians. We aim to achieve this by providing customised training, mentoring, signposting and peer support, by IMGs who are further established in their UK careers. We expect this to lead to better career satisfaction and retention of IMG trainees.

Methods We launched our project via social media platforms, using our faculties established IMG networks, as well as presenting to RCPCH, London School of Paediatrics (LSP) Trainee Committees, and to the GMC.

Our first day-long course, entitled ‘Supporting paediatricians new to the NHS’ took place in February 2021. The talks presented during this workshop were designed and tailored to the needs of IMG paediatricians new to the system, highlighting cultural differences and common pitfalls. Our regular courses and webinars include ST1/ST4 interview practice, GRID applications, communication skills, safeguarding, applying to training, wellbeing, smashing ARCPs, revalidation and untangling Kaizen/E-portfolio.

Results Following the launch of Soft Landings there was a lot of interest in engaging with the project from individuals and organisations, as a result of outreach mentioned above.

Our first day long course ‘Supporting paediatricians new to the NHS’ had a waiting list of >30 candidates. 30 candidates secured slots and attended the course. 33% started working in the NHS recently (<6 months), 30% between 6 months to 1 year, 9% for over 1 year and a further 9% for more than 3 years. 27% were working overseas and planning to move to the UK shortly. The feedback from participants was very positive. Following the course, 100% will signpost their new IMG paediatric colleagues to this resource. 82% rated it as excellent while 17% rated it very good. 100% agreed that they now had a better understanding of the NHS dynamics and expectations from the paediatric doctors in the NHS. 100% thought that they would implement positive changes in their practice. Many said they would benefit from a mentor.

Conclusions IMG paediatric doctors are a valuable part of the NHS workforce. By providing the right support, challenges will be turned into productivity and fulfilled potential, and levels of anxiety and stress in everyday work lives would be reduced. The Soft Landing support can contribute to recruitment and improved retention, better patient care, and reduction of differential attainment.

References

Paediatric Educators’ Special Interest Group