Welcome to the quarterly update from the Wessex PSU team

This quarter we have held a successful Development Day, completed all Case Manager appraisals, and had 37 new referrals so far. We are also updating our website pages and hope to add much more information and updates and improve the look. We are looking at adding a new Clinical Decision Making module which we hope will be useful for many of our trainees.

Changes to the PSU team

The Team itself has gone through changes again this quarter with Claire Elwick starting a permanent post as GP Programme Recruitment Co-Ordinator. We wish her the best of luck in her new role and she passes on her thanks for the many kind wishes she received. This means that, yet again, we have a new member of the team: A warm welcome to Louise Cruickshank, our new Acting Programme Manager. Please continue with your patience at yet another change and many thanks for your understanding and hopefully there will not be too much of a disruption.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2015/16

Peer Supervision Meetings — Tuesday 18 August | Wednesday 14 October | Tuesday 08 December

Peer Supervision for 2016 — 23 February 27 April 23 June 23 August 26 October 15 December

PSU Quality and Governance Meeting — 21 October 2015

PSU Development Days — Tuesday 06 October 2015

PSU Feature July 2015

THE PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT UNIT AND ASPERGER’S SYNDROME

Asperger’s Syndrome

Asperger’s syndrome is a subtype of an autistic spectrum disorder in which people have difficulties in the social-communication sphere but simultaneously excel at fine detail, systems and classifications. They can spend many hours immersing themselves, often conscientiously, in a job; however, this can be at the cost of communicating effectively with their work colleagues. They may have been overlooked in childhood due to managing to negotiate the school years and academia. Besides, how many slightly "offbeat" people do we come across in life, without requiring a medical diagnosis, indeed who may not struggle, in spite of having Asperger’s?

The prevalence of autistic spectrum disorders is estimated to be in the range of as much as 1% of the population. That of Asperger’s syndrome, in which language development is relatively normal in childhood, is thought to be more common among the academic, engineering, IT and medical professions, although no one has so far established reliable figures, nor for medical trainees.

The Professional Support Unit (PSU) Asperger referral pathway is an opportunity for Educational Supervisors, Programme Directors and other educators to refer trainees with suspected Asperger’s syndrome who are experiencing difficulties in managing their day to day work.

The PSU can offer the following:

Diagnosis

Case managers and supervisors will need to explore the subject of social-communication difficulties where these are significantly affecting the quality of work. Trainees can self-administer a useful screening questionnaire consisting of 10 questions. If the score is suggestive of Asperger’s Syndrome the trainee can be referred to a Consultant Psychiatrist with expertise in Asperger’s Syndrome for a diagnostic assessment.

Support

If the diagnosis of Asperger’s Syndrome is confirmed, the trainee may be referred for post-diagnostic support to a Clinical Psychologist or Educationist with expertise in Asperger’s Syndrome.

Trainees with Asperger’s Syndrome are often excellent at learning a new set of ‘rules’ which have hitherto been a mystery to them and tend to be motivated to apply them in order to address misunderstandings in their workplace, making post-diagnostic support a mutually rewarding process.

Throughout this work, the Case Manager is kept regularly updated, both in terms of the trainee’s goals and progress toward these.

We are currently reviewing the service we are providing to trainees with a diagnosis of Asperger’s and are keen to carry out some research into the best way of helping trainees to manage their condition.
PSU Feedback: Every trainee who has been supported by the PSU is asked to complete an anonymous survey on the quality of the service that the PSU provides; Overall we receive very positive responses, but we also take note of any suggestions or comments on what can be improved.

You can contact the Professional Support Unit whenever you have a query relating to our work, or if you’re looking for advice on a referral or active case.

Email: wessex.support@wessex.hee.nhs.uk

If you have a general query you may find the answer on our web pages: http://www.wessexdeanery.nhs.uk/support/support/professional_support_unit.aspx

Alternatively you can contact us individually on:

Mrs Julie Worthington, PSU Administrator: Julie.worthington@wessex.hee.nhs.uk, telephone: 01962 718428

Miss Louise Cruickshank, Acting Assistant Programme Manager for PSU: louise.cruickshank@wessex.hee.nhs.uk

Dr Richard Mann, Consultant for Professional Support: richard.mann@nhs.net

Dr Rosie Lusznat, Associate Dean for Professional Support and Medical Education Fellows: rosie.lusznat@wessex.hee.nhs.uk, or 01962 718417

PSU Resource Directory for Local Support Initiatives
Project Summary

Through the course of medical training almost all doctors will experience more challenging times at different points in their careers. Many trainees find there are times when they need extra support to overcome particular hurdles. The PSU team is aware that there are some fantastic services and initiatives already available in the different Trusts and within a number of specialties in the region. However, trainees in need of help may not be aware of these or how to access the assistance available.

The PSU is keen to collate data on existing services in order to create a Resource Directory for sign-posting trainees in need of extra support and, wherever possible, extend good practice to other Trusts or specialties. We believe that this could strengthen support at Levels 1 (Educational Supervision) and 2 (Expertise in Trusts and Specialties) of the PSU Framework and thereby identify and address problems as early as possible.

We will shortly be contacting all Wessex Lead Educators and HR Colleagues in Trusts and Specialties to identify services provided or particular resources that trainees could be directed towards. It is hoped that this will help trainees to access the appropriate support early on, preventing problems from escalating with more serious consequences for training.

What was the most helpful aspect of support received?

“Being able to discuss problems in an impartial and confidential manner.”
“Impartial and non-judgmental input.”
“Practical advice and someone to talk to.”
“Recognition that support was needed.”

Comments about our Case Managers

“Trustworthy and puts you at ease.”
“Great support, encouraging and empathetic.”
“Excellent, non-judgemental, supportive and a good listener.”
“Kind, non-judgemental, supportive and encouraging.”
“Genuinely concerned.”
“Consistently available for advice.”

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