



RCP chief registrars improve patient care

Chief registrars are senior doctors in training working to build stronger leadership skills through the Royal College of Physicians' (RCP's) bespoke development programme. Following a successful pilot, the scheme continues to grow from strength to strength with 36 chief registrars from 32 NHS organisations in post as of August 2017, a 100% increase from the pilot.

Chief registrars improve patient care by engaging with both clinical and managerial colleagues: as key members of the medical workforce, they have protected time (minimum 40%) dedicated to leadership and management.

The chief registrar scheme has been independently evaluated by the Health Services Management Centre, University of Birmingham. Download the executive summary and full report at www.rcplondon.ac.uk/projects/outputs/independent-evaluation-chief-registrar-scheme

Improved patient flow

Chief registrars bring multidisciplinary teams together to redesign pathways and improve patient flow through the hospital.

'Patients no longer need to stay in hospital overnight'

– Dr Amar Puttanna, Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust

Amar worked with colleagues across multiple specialties to create a new pathway for papilloedema that cut patient waiting times, reduced unnecessary and repeat scanning and clarified management plans.

Enhanced patient experience

Chief registrars lead change initiatives that improve patient experience, for example by breaking down silos between teams.

'New relationships between the departments have improved patient care and experience'

– Dr Mridula Rajwani, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Mridula supported the development of a new ambulatory assessment unit at her trust. She noticed that silo working in acute medicine and acute oncology was impacting on patient experience, so she worked with colleagues to develop an interface that now sees regular inreaching of the oncology team into ambulatory care and a weekly virtual ward round of new cancer diagnoses.

Increased patient safety

Chief registrars work directly to improve patient safety, but also indirectly address some of the factors that have a negative impact on patient safety, such as low staff morale and rota gaps.

'94% of junior doctors would now recommend their job to others'

– Dr Tahir Akbar, Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Tahir led a number of projects that improved junior doctor morale, from refurbishing the doctors' mess to improving the medical handover process. As a result, 94% of junior doctors would now recommend their job to others (compared with 10% previously) and there has also been an 80% year-on-year reduction in the junior doctor sickness rate.

The role at a glance

- > Minimum 12-month post
- > 40–50% protected time for chief registrar initiatives
- > 50–60% in clinical practice
- > ST4 and above
- > In or out-of-programme (training or experience)
- > Ideally dual training in a medical speciality and general internal medicine
- > Enrolment in RCP leadership and management development programme

RCP chief registrars improve the NHS

Chief registrar posts are for a minimum of 12 months. The costs of the post are covered by NHS organisations. The RCP coordinates and funds a bespoke leadership programme that enables chief registrars to develop valuable skills which form a solid foundation for future clinical leadership careers, and help them to flourish into effective leaders in a wide variety of clinical environments.

Improved organisational performance

Chief registrars lead and manage a wide range of improvement initiatives that benefit service efficiency and patient experience, and may also have a significant long-term financial impact.

£200,000

Estimated potential cost savings of one chief registrar initiative

– Dr Orod Osanlou, Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Orod led a project that focused on discharging medical patients at weekends and on bank holidays. The initiative achieved 99% satisfaction among patients, improved patient flow and has significant potential cost savings estimated at up to £200,000 per year.

Effective clinical leadership

Chief registrars develop new skills in leadership and management and gain practical experience as senior leaders, enabling them to build better relationships across clinical and managerial teams.

‘I feel more prepared to take on the role of a hospital consultant’

– Dr Alexandra Ewence, Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust

Alexandra’s projects included emergency department referrals, single clerking, patient flow and medical handover. This led to a greater understanding of hospital administration and closer working relationships with hospital management.

Better engagement and morale

Chief registrars enhance engagement between junior doctors and senior staff, giving voice to junior doctor concerns at board level and ensuring that trainees feel listened to and valued.

‘Surveys have shown demonstrable improvement in morale and perception of training quality’

– Dr Debashish Das, Barts Health NHS Trust

Debashish worked on a number of initiatives that led to better engagement with junior doctors. He pressed for junior doctor representation on management boards, set up a registrar-led subcommittee to showcase quality improvement projects, and supported the development of junior doctor forums that focus on improving training and working environments.

Please get in touch for more information, or if you think the chief registrar scheme can deliver benefits to your organisation.

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