

# LEARNER SUPPORT POLICY

This policy supports learners within the Trust, to give them a pathway to follow if they have any concerns or problems. This policy also outlines the process for dealing with learners in difficulty.

AUTHOR.	AUTHORISED BY	DATE AUTH	POLICY REFERENCE NUMBER
NAME <b>Karen Swindley</b>	NAME <b>Karen Partington</b>	10 March 16	<b>HRP-39</b>
SIGNATURE	SIGNATURE	REVIEW DATE	
<b>WORKFORCE DIRECTOR</b>	<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>	10 March 19	

## TRUST POLICY

This Policy has general application throughout the undertaking of Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. It represents the governing principles outlined within the document which are fully supported in every respect by the Board of Directors.

All members of staff are required to adhere to the principles involved as outlined within this document, together with any related procedures, which are enabled by this Policy.

### This Policy was produced in consultation with:

Pre-Registration Committee	Higher Educational Institutes from North West
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### Other Trust Policies/Procedures associated with this document include:

Performance Management Policy  
 Sickness Absence Policy  
 Staff Development Policy

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**Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Impact Assessment Screening**

**Policy Title: Learner Support Policy**

**Policy Author: Karen Swindley**

1.	Does the policy/strategy affect one group more or less favourably than another on the basis of:	Yes/No	Evidence in support of either positive or negative impacts, including references to research and national documents must be provided for the sections below
	1. Race	No	The Trust Learner Support policy is underpinned by GMC and NMC protocols pertaining to the provision of services to helping and guiding students through welfare, conduct and academic issues and concerns. These services are governed by GMC and NMC equality and diversity strategies which are impact assessed against the equality act 2010 and the disability discrimination act 2005.  See links below for verification of above  <a href="http://www.nmc-uk.org/Students/Good-Health-and-Good-Character-for-students-nurses-and-midwives/">http://www.nmc-uk.org/Students/Good-Health-and-Good-Character-for-students-nurses-and-midwives/</a> <a href="http://www.nmc-uk.org/About-us/Equality-and-diversity/">http://www.nmc-uk.org/About-us/Equality-and-diversity/</a> <a href="http://www.gmc-uk.org/about/equality_and_diversity.asp">http://www.gmc-uk.org/about/equality_and_diversity.asp</a> <a href="http://www.gmc-uk.org/education/undergraduate/professional_behaviour.asp">http://www.gmc-uk.org/education/undergraduate/professional_behaviour.asp</a>
	2. Disability	No	
	3. Gender	No	
	4. Sexual Orientation	No	
	5. Religion or Belief	No	
	6. Age	No	
	7. Marriage and Civil Partnership	No	
	8. Gender reassignment	No	
	9. Pregnancy and Maternity	No	
2.	Is there any evidence some groups will be affected differently?	No	All learners have access to and knowledge of learner support services within the organisation
3.	If potential discrimination has been identified is this justifiable (you must explain why)?	N/A	N/A
4.	What methods of consultation have you used and with whom please describe?		Trust E&D Lead, HE learner support leads, LTHTr learner support services, students
5(a)	Is the impact identified likely to have a negative impact on the Policy/Strategy?	N/A	N/A
5(b)	Can the impact be avoided?	N/A	N/A
5(c)	Are there alternative ways of achieving the aims of the Policy/Strategy to remove the impact?	N/A	N/A
5(d)	Can measure be put in place to reduce the impact?	N/A	N/A
<b>Comments</b>			<b>Action to be taken (or not applicable) N/A</b>

Name and designation of person completing this form. Karen Swindley. (If anyone reading this form identifies any potential discriminatory impact that has not been identified on this form, please contact the Policy Author named above, along with suggestions how the impact can be eliminated or reduced.)

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Every single member of the Trust staff has a role to play in supporting learners. Learners should never feel they have nowhere to go to discuss their concerns and worries and the Trust upholds the philosophy that learners should be effectively supported whilst working or learning within the organisation.

A Learner is defined as ‘an individual who is undertaking a formal learning programme’. A formal learning programme may be accredited or unaccredited but must be a managed and on-going development opportunity leading to a defined outcome.

Learners may need support in relation to a variety of issues and how this support is provided is likely to depend on the differing needs and preferences of the individual learner.

Learner support is not a “counselling” service. A learner who needs or requests counselling will be referred to an appropriate service. It is also important to understand that learner support provided by the Trust should never impinge upon the correct use of the learning provider or educational institution procedures and processes.

The Trust also recognises that its first duty of care is to patients and in upholding this responsibility; it must balance the needs of learners with the need to maintain the highest quality and safe clinical practice.

This policy outlines our commitment to providing support for all learners, no matter which educational programme they are undertaking, through a Learner Charter (Appendix 1) which explains the standards of behaviour and conduct that we, in return, would expect from learners in the organisation.

The policy provides guidance to learners and their supervisors on how they can access help and support in relation to issues that may impact on an individuals’ studies, placements, progression etc.

It also outlines the process for dealing with learners in difficulty.

## 2. REASONS FOR SEEKING SUPPORT

There are a number of reasons why learners may need to seek support whilst on placement. These include issues related to:

- Performance
- Conduct
- Professionalism
- Attendance
- Academic achievement
- Health – physical and mental
- Learning difficulties
- Disability

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- Communication difficulties
- Bullying and harassment
- Financial hardship
- Exit strategies
- Personal circumstances
- Addictions
- Conduct outside work

This list is not intended to be exclusive or exhaustive.

## **Manifestation of problems**

Problems may manifest themselves in a number of ways:

### **Attitude / Behaviour / Performance / Health**

Attitudinal, behavioural, performance or health issues may be the most important factors that affect learner performance yet may be the most difficult to describe or quantify.

Sometimes the objective facts may appear trivial but if they are part of a pattern of low enthusiasm, low drive, negative approaches, lack of attention, low motivation, poor self-management, they can be very important pointers to either major distracters interfering with someone's ability to progress through the learning programme OR a fundamental unsuitability to their chosen vocation.

Examples may include:

- Poor attendance/time keeping
- Vague explanations for absence; "had to be somewhere else"? honesty
- Lack of interest
- Unwillingness to perform tasks
- Poor response/resistance to feedback
- Lack of consideration for others
- Extreme shyness/nervousness/reluctance to communicate/speak
- Rudeness to others
- Failure to comply with the dress code
- Poor personal hygiene
- Lack of interest in helping others learn
- Lack of interest in quality/safety issues
- Lack of cultural awareness

### **Skills**

- Poor communication skills with no evidence of improvement
- Poor clinical examination skills with no evidence of improvement
- Poor procedural skills with no evidence of improvement
- Lack of attention to Aseptic Non Touch Technique (ANTT)/prevention of infection
- Ongoing mistakes
- Inability to develop right level of skill

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## Knowledge

- Inability to apply knowledge
- Inability to identify and meet learning needs
- Poor basic knowledge

Learners can appear to have poor basic knowledge but this may be an artefact of the situation or the way we ask them to demonstrate their knowledge; their ability to learn and apply knowledge is more important than their retention of obscure facts or facts of largely specialist interest.

## 3. RAISING CONCERNS

Learners may raise concerns personally or may have the concerns of others drawn to their attention during their time with the Trust. Additionally all Educational Tutors, Supervisors or a member of staff can also raise concerns.

Any concerns can be reported by contacting the Learner Support Team on 01772 52 (8444), calling into the Learner Support Office, email: [Learner.support@lthtr.nhs.uk](mailto:Learner.support@lthtr.nhs.uk) or by accessing a web based form via the intranet 'Quick Link' titled;



Educational Matters / Learner Support

The Learners Support Team are based in the Health and Wellbeing Centre in F block on Preston site, there is an open door policy, staff and learners are welcome to call in to discuss concerns in person with a member of the team.

**Referral Definition** – *'An issue which is raised concerning a student's academic performance, professional conduct pastoral welfare, which can be communicated formally or informally via, verbal, written, or email correspondence'*

## 4. RECORDING THE FACTS

Whether it is a learner or member of Trust staff who is raising concerns, it is very important that any significant concerns and the objective basis for them should be recorded. Where issues of a behavioural nature are the cause for concern, it is important that a description of the behaviour and how it made you/others feel is included - eg, it is not sufficient to say someone was "unprofessional".

Details of learners concerns will be collated centrally in order that patterns and trends can be identified and action taken where necessary to resolve recurring problems.

A summary report of learner concerns dealt with under this policy will be presented to the Trust Education, Training and Research Committee annually.

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## 5. LEARNER HEALTH AND CONDUCT LEVELS OF CONCERN

Concerns could be on a number of levels as described below. The actions taken will depend upon the level of concern.

### **LEVEL ONE (least severe)**

These issues should be resolved locally between the learner and their 'supervisor'. This may require involvement from the education team responsible for the learners placement, eg, Undergraduate Medical Education, Practice Education Facilitators.

Level 1 concerns are likely to involve such things as:

- Attendance
- Sickness
- Dress/attitude (in line with organisational policy)
- Finance

Recording forms must be copied to the Education team responsible for the student.

### **LEVEL TWO (medium severity)**

Level 2 concerns may include such issues as:

- Knowledge base
- Data protection
- Interpersonal skills
- Communication skills
- Clinical skills
- Ill health
- Probity
- Trauma/stress

Level 2 concerns may need investigation and may ultimately be reportable depending on the investigation outcome.

Concerns at Level 2 will be dealt with by the responsible education team with a report sent to the learners Higher Education Institute.

### **LEVEL THREE (most severe)**

Level 3 concerns will include:

- Patient harm (intended or unintended)
- Substance abuse
- Theft
- Fraud
- Plagiarism

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- Physical or verbal aggression
- Mental health risk – self harm or to others
- Conduct unbecoming of the profession or bringing the profession into disrepute

Level three concerns may be of such a serious nature that the Trust automatically halts the learner's progress, gathers evidence and refers the matter on to the University from which the individual is placed. In such cases it is unlikely that concerns will be dealt with at Level 1 or 2 initially.

Level three concerns may result in termination of the placement or course.

## 6. INVESTIGATION

Where an investigation into a concern is identified as being necessary, an Investigating Officer will be appointed. They will be supported in their efforts by a member of the education team to which the learner is allocated.

Part of the investigation process will be the triangulation of all available data. This means that the investigating officer may find it necessary to interview witnesses who could provide evidence to support the investigation process.

The learner may be supported by a third party (fellow learner, union rep, personal tutor or Practice Education Facilitator) during interviews if they so wish.

Interviews will be conducted as quickly as is possible depending upon the nature of the issue under investigation. Investigations should routinely be conducted within three weeks from a concern being raised.

Trust and University Policies will be applied to learner where this is appropriate.

## 7. MAINTENANCE OF CONFIDENTIALITY

The confidentiality of any issue dealt with under this policy shall be upheld with only those individuals who need to have access to information doing so.

## 8. SUPPORT AGENCIES

A number of support agencies are also available to provide learners with support in relation to concerns. Details of some of these are included in Appendix 2. This is not an exhaustive list.

Universities may have other support services available to students.

## 9. LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

Where learners are employed by the Trust, they will also be subject to other Trust Policies, eg, performance management policy, attendance management policy, staff development policy, Doctors in Difficulty Policy

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Learners who are not employees of the Trust will also be subject to the policies and procedures of their University or Awarding Body.

## 10. APPEALS PROCEDURE

The appeals procedure will allow learners to challenge the outcomes of an investigation, if they consider it has not been carried out properly or fairly. Any appeal must be lodged within 21 days of the outcome being notified to the learner. Appeals should be submitted through the Educational Lead responsible for the Learner.

## 11. DOCTORS IN DIFFICULTY

Any trainee doctors who are experiencing difficulty should contact their supervisor or the Learner Support Team. Additionally all Educational Tutors, Supervisors or a member of staff can also raise concerns about a trainee and should contact the Learner Support Team informing of the difficulty being experienced by the trainee. Contact details in Section 3.

## 12. AUDIT AND MONITORING

The effectiveness of this Policy is through bi-annual quality outcome reports, which are submitted to the Education Strategy Group and the Education, Research and Training Committee.

## 13. TRAINING

There are no specific training requirements to support the effective delivery of this Policy.

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## LEARNER CHARTER

### Purpose

The purpose of the Learners Charter is to outline your rights and responsibilities as a learner on placement with Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

It also outlines our duty of care to both learners and patients.

### Our commitments to you

#### **We aim to provide:**

- A Quality assured learning experience and environment
- A Positive Learning experience
- Mentorship and supervision by appropriately trained individuals
- A complaints channel for concerns you may have
- Support for Learners in difficulty
- An explicit link between your learner experience and that of high quality patient experience and quality of care
- Appropriate and effective learning resources
- Access to team and multi-professional learning
- A learner centred learning experience
- Equality and Diversity for all
- Support to help you celebrate achievements
- Opportunities to give us feedback
- Self directed learning within an educational framework which ensure you are involved in your learning
- Careers support
- An acceptance when you challenge unsafe practice

#### **In return we ask that you:**

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- Respect the environment and the professionals within it
- Attend and inform of non attendance in a timely manner
- Uphold the professional standards of the Trust
- Declare any issues which may impact on your performance or patient safety
- Put the patient at the centre of everything you do
- Maintain confidentiality at all times, particularly in the use of social networking
- Follow Trust policies where these apply to you
- Maintain professional conduct both inside and outside of work
- Be proactive in managing your own learning
- Seek feedback on your performance
- Provide feedback on our performance
- Be safe – knowing your own limitations and perform within agreed levels of competence
- Contribute to the safety and quality agenda in the Trust by challenging unsafe practice
- Maintain a Professional appearance
- Seek support if you feel you need it
- Look after your own health and well being
- Reflect on your own practice
- Help and support others to learn
- Take graded professional responsibility

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## APPENDIX 2

## SUPPORT SERVICES

<b><u>Alcohol</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drinkline Advice, information and support for anyone Concerned about their own or someone else's drinking</li> </ul>	Free phone 0300 123 1110
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alcoholics Anonymous</li> </ul>	0800 9177 650
<b><u>Bereavement</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Death Helpline Telephone helpline for anyone affected by the death of a child.</li> </ul>	Free phone 0800 282 986
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cruse Bereavement Care Helpline for the bereaved and those caring for the bereaved people.</li> </ul>	0844 477 9400
<b><u>Carers</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carers line Wednesday, Thursday only 10am – 12 noon and 2pm – 4pm Advice and information for all carers.</li> </ul>	Free phone 020 7378 4999
<b><u>Children and Young People</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Childline Helpline for children and young people up to the age of 18 in danger, distress or with any other problem.</li> </ul>	Free phone 0800 1111
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NSPCC Free text 18001 0800 056 0566 24 hours a day. Helpline for children and young people or anyone concerned about a child or young person at risk of abuse.</li> </ul>	Free phone 0808 800 5000
<b><u>Consumer Advice</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumer Direct <a href="http://www.consumerdirect.gov.uk">www.consumerdirect.gov.uk</a> Monday – Friday 8am – 6.30pm Saturday 9am -1pm. Offering help and clear, practical advice for consumers in the UK.</li> </ul>	03454 04 05 06
<b><u>Disability</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dial UK Call for details of your local DIAL group</li> </ul>	01302 327800
<b><u>Drugs</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frank 24 hours a day Information about drugs and solvents for those who use them, their families, friends and colleagues.</li> </ul>	Free phone 0300 123 1099
<b><u>Emotional Support</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Samaritans 24 hours a day. <a href="http://www.samaritans.org.uk">www.samaritans.org.uk</a>  Confidential, emotional support. Helpline for anyone in a crisis.</li> </ul>	116 123

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Careline</li> <li>A telephone counselling service for the general public.</li> </ul>	0151 233 3000
<b><u>Family</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parentline Plus</li> </ul> Support and information for parents or anyone in a parenting role.	Free phone 0800 800 2222
<b><u>Housing</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shelter line</li> </ul> 8am – 12 midnight 7 days a week Legal and housing advice line offering independent information and advice in confidence to anyone with a housing problem.	Free phone 0800 163 5773
<b><u>Legal</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Legal Service Direct</li> </ul> Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm. <a href="http://www.cisdirect.org.uk">www.cisdirect.org.uk</a>	0845 345 4345
Providing free information, help and advice on a range of common legal issues.	
<b><u>Immigration Advisory Service</u></b>	
24 hour answering service for people who have been refused asylum or have immigration problems.	0844 887 0111
<b><u>Missing people</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Missing People</li> </ul> 24 hours a day. Advice, practical help and support for anyone whose relatives or immediate family members are missing.	Free phone 116 000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Message Home</li> </ul> 24 hours a day. Helpline for people who have left home or run away, enabling callers to send messages to their families or carers.	Free phone 0800 700 740
<b><u>Money and debt</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Debt line</li> </ul> Help for anyone in debt or concerned they may fall into debt.	Free phone 0300 456 2726
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gamcare</li> </ul> Confidential counselling, advice and information for anyone affected by a gambling dependency.	020 7801 7000
<b><u>Older People</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AGE UK</li> </ul> Welfare benefits advice for older people Free information on issues affecting older people	Free phone 0800 169 2801
<b><u>LGBT Foundation</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lesbian and Gay switchboard</li> </ul> Support and information for lesbians and gay men.	0345 3 303030
<b><u>Violence and Crime</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Domestic Violence Helpline.</li> </ul> Run in partnership by refuge and women's Aid, providing safe	Free phone 0800 2000 247

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accommodation for women experiencing domestic violence.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Victim Support line <a href="http://www.victimsupport.com">www.victimsupport.com</a> Offering emotional support and practical advice for anyone affected by crime.</li> </ul>	0808 168 9111
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crime stoppers – UK Wide <a href="http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org">www.crimestoppers-uk.org</a> Crime Stoppers is a community service which helps prevent and solve crime across the UK. Anyone who has details about criminal activity may pass them on anonymously and without fear of exposure or retribution.</li> </ul>	Free phone 0800 555 111

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