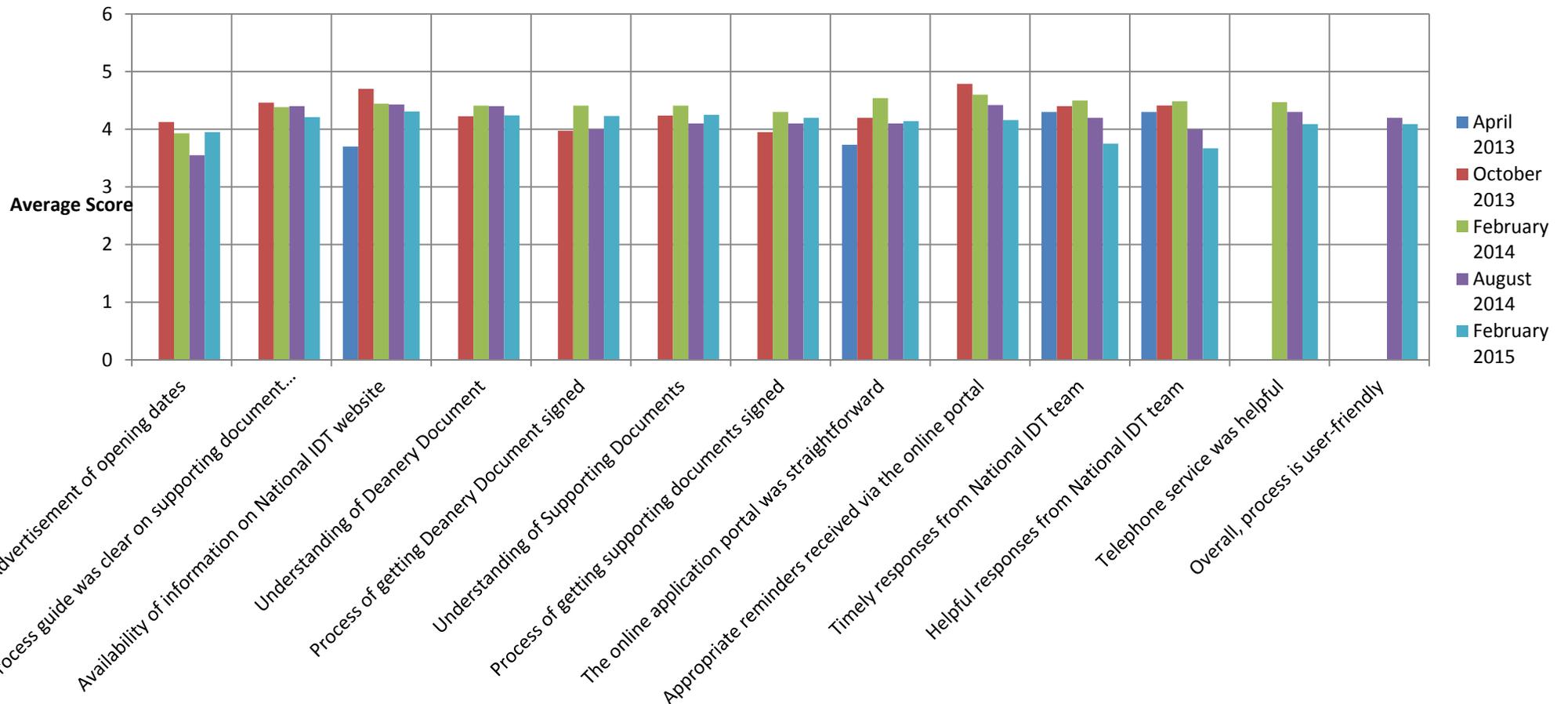


## The National IDT trainee feedback survey report – February 2015

In each transfer window, the National IDT team collects feedback from trainees who have recently applied in order to ensure that we are providing a service that is user-focused. Results are published in order to remain transparent and to demonstrate our commitment to making changes that will benefit trainees applying for an IDT.

The feedback survey has become more standardised recently which means direct comparison between results is now easier. This allows us to highlight where improvements have been made and where things haven't gone so well so we know what to focus on ahead of the next transfer window.

### Trainee Survey Overview



## Comments section

This section of the feedback report shows all comments made by trainees in the free-text box of the feedback survey. We've also included some follow-up information from the National IDT team on all of the comments received from trainees.

### IT Issues

**"The online application form often would not load fully on my computer meaning I was unable to upload my supporting evidence until very near the deadline which was stressful!"**

We do appreciate that the transfer process in itself can be stressful, without the added complication of misfiring IT. We will look into which web browsers best serve the IDT portal and application form and make this information available as soon as possible on our website.

**"It was difficult making the documents small enough to fit the document maximum size."**

If you are having difficulty submitting documents or find that you run out of space, you can email your documents to us and we will attach them to your application. Please ensure when making an application that you have read 'How to complete an IDT application' at the following link <http://specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk/inter-deanery-transfers/how-do-i-apply-for-an-idt/>

**"Supporting documents templates are given at the bottom of the page without any mention elsewhere. It would be helpful if they were made clear and prominent as they are the most vital part of application."**

Thank you for this feedback, we will look into making supporting documents more prominent on the website.

**"The free text boxes did not accept cut and paste from word documents (from a new laptop with recent office update). Typing directly was clunky with letters missed if typing at normal speed requiring either extremely slow typing or lots of corrections.**

**"Because of my unique situation i had to upload quite a few supportive letters and there was not much space to upload - I bundled them up in pdf files with more than one page but that might not be the best solution."**

Again, thank you for this feedback. The testing we did on the system did allow for copy and pasted text to be added so this is not an issue we have come across before, we will look into this before the next window opens.

**"It is still not entirely MAC compatible - could not upload my documents on my MAC so had to abandon and find a windows computer. There should be more sections to upload the supporting evidence - i have had to merge pdf files which is not that easy so it just makes one document - would be A LOT easier to be able to upload the documents separately i.e. document D then evidence as a separate/ additional upload section to save having to merge documents. Luckily I know someone who helped me but otherwise I would not have been able to do this."**

MAC compatibility has been an issue and we will make it clear on the website which systems and browsers work best with the IDT portal. There should be enough space to upload the documents required without merging them; if you are having any trouble doing this you can email documents to us and we will add them to your application.

### **Application Process**

**“Resubmitting a new application every 6 months makes no sense - the new deanery should be able to hold your application until a number becomes available otherwise it is possible to miss out on a number especially in small specialities.”**

**“If applying for the same transfer in subsequent windows, it would be helpful to trainees if things could be streamlined to prevent repetition of the same forms, perhaps a single form verifying the same application with just TPD approval and any changes from last application?”**

We do not currently run any kind of waiting list system - Trainees are required to submit new applications and supporting documents each time they wish to apply so that the National IDT team can verify eligibility for that specific application window and make sure that a trainee still requires a transfer. This may seem unnecessarily burdensome, but it does ensure an equitable and consistent process that delivers decisions that are made on current and correct information.

**“The application process for me meant that I had to speak with and send documents to a number of different people, and therefore had to keep an eye out for email responses etc. During the working week, whilst working this proved difficult. Also having to print off documents to sign and then scan them back in after other signatures seems very long winded and my consultant colleagues signing the form were less than happy with having to do things this way.”**

While we do appreciate that the necessity of getting signatures and sign-offs can encroach upon your normal working week, it is an important part of the verification process and the IDT process as a whole. It tells us that you have discussed your situation locally and that your TPD or Dean are aware of you entering the National IDT process. In some cases, the TPD or Dean also verifies the unique situation you are describing, so these signatures are very important to your application.

**“Example of application forms i.e. how much to write and how much to explain would be useful”**

I understand that it is sometimes difficult to know exactly what to write but we think it is best for us not to prescribe any minimum or maximum lengths and not guide the kind of detail you might want to include as part of your application. Trainees applying for IDT do so with a set of unique circumstances and it is important that you are able to go into the detail necessary for your application. However much you write, keep in mind that you need to show an unforeseen change in circumstances, how this affects you and why the transfer would help.

**“The eligibility criteria were not clear in that I thought my interim ARCP would be acceptable as would be my RITA this is not clear. Also it doesn't specifically say those on maternity leave will be excluded or discriminated against. This needs to be made clear so our time is not wasted. It is unhelpful not to have vacancies published in advance also as our time could be wasted.”**

With regard to the first question here, our guidance has been updated to make it clear that interim ARCP/RITA are not acceptable as Outcome evidence.

With regard to the second point, the wording in our guide runs as follows:

*“Trainees requesting an IDT while pregnant or on maternity leave should also be applying during the transfer window which will allocate placements with start dates nearest to the date that they would be planning to return to training in their current region.”*

We recognise that getting transfers arranged well ahead of schedule would be preferable to some trainees as it would mean that greater time could be spent planning for the move and getting things organised e.g. childcare.

However, the National IDT process has been set up to provide assistance to those trainees who need immediate support and for this reason vacant placements cannot be held open through the process and transfers cannot be deferred. The deferral of a transfer would make an available placement unavailable for another trainee who may need to move more urgently or who could start in post straightaway.

With regard to the third point, we often get feedback about vacancy number being made available. The vacancy numbers are collected at the end of the window to ensure that as many vacancies as possible are declared by specialties across the country to help as many trainees as possible.

It would be ideal if we could provide vacancy information ahead of the application window and is something we have looked into in the past. However, this would be very problematic for trainees as well as LETB/Deanery colleagues.

The information we would provide ahead of the window would only be indicative and this may influence someone’s decision to apply (or not). However, vacancy numbers do change throughout the process which would mean situations would arise whereby a trainee either decides to put in an application based on vacancy information but then this vacancy is withdrawn from the process, or whereby a trainee decides not to submit an application only for a vacancy to be declared later in the process when it is too late to submit an application. Both situations would be common place if we were to collect and publish vacancy numbers before the application window.

**“It is difficult to assess the impact of disability and stress through an online application form alone. I'd say it is even difficult to assess the needs of individual applications without an interview process of some sort.”**

While I appreciate that individual trainees would like to know there had been some kind of qualitative assessment of their application, given the variety of possible reasons for a transfer based on the national eligibility criteria, we can actually run a much more fair and equitable process with our current system. It would be extremely difficult for anyone to assess the impact of disability and stress on a trainee, let alone choosing between two trainees in very difficult situations, so it is hard to see what an interview process would actually assess. It is our job to ascertain that you meet eligibility criteria, if you do, your application will be treated equally with other applications in accordance with our published guidelines.

**“Although the information I received from the National IDT was helpful, my situation was quite unique and it was therefore difficult to advise.”**

The National IDT team will try not to advise on particular circumstances. The decision to transfer is a major one and it is important that you make the decision as fully informed as possible. The IDT team will always direct you to the information on which you can base your decision.

**“The process and system is completely unfair. The applications should be reviewed and weighted, it is crazy that someone could have applied many times and not got a transfer and then someone else comes in and gets on in their first round. Also some people are eligible on multiple criteria this should be taken into account.”**

We are continually working with our partners to ensure that we have as fair a system for everyone as possible and that we complete as many transfers as we can in each window. At the moment, each transfer window is viewed in isolation from the last – this ensures that we treat every application received equally for that window. The introduction of a waiting list has been discussed but was thought to have a possible negative effect on those seeking transfer for health reasons. We do recognise that sometimes, someone may be extremely unlucky with their transfer but each window is dependent on many variables such as the number of applications we receive and how many vacancies are submitted. We will be discussing this again in the national working group.

### Timelines

**“There should not be a date restricting when you can apply - the training programme directors need at least 12 months to plan the rotation and programmes for trainees so they should know in advance that someone is trying to transfer in to their deanery who is eligible so that can plan and integrate a new trainee. 6 months’ notice is not enough. They should also know as it may be a way of covering fellowships for other trainees or planned leave.”**

**“Finally the system does not seemed joined up with national selection, people who have a NTN and are progressing well should be allowed a transfer if they meet the criteria prior to new ST3 post being allocated.”**

**“Appalling system where numbers are released to open application before IDT. Futile. System messing with people’s lives. We are meant to be working in a caring profession but treated worse than cattle.”**

**“The IDT process itself was straight forward - my bigger concern is the timelines. My understanding is that all the potential numbers are declared for the NTN process and so therefore there are none left as 'available' for transfers even if the criteria for transfer are met”**

The task of setting dates for National IDT windows is a tricky balancing act between ensuring we can provide trainees and regions with at least 3 months’ notice (in line with junior doctor’s contracts of employment) and being compatible with national recruitment rounds in order for as many vacancies as possible to be declared for the IDT process.

The timings of the window have been set after agreement between COPMeD and HEE after a process of seeking feedback from a wide range of contacts, including trainees, colleges, LETB and Deanery administrative teams, TPDs and other trainers and educators. It was felt that holding a National IDT window after a recruitment round would not give enough time for notice periods to be

properly served ahead of transfers taking place. The current timings also mean that regions now have greater discretion on how to fill their vacancies and are given the option to declare a vacancy for the IDT process ahead of declaring it for some national recruitment rounds.

We have discussed the option of introducing a waiting list with the national COPMeD working group, but it was felt that the introduction of such a scheme could inadvertently adversely impact on trainees who need an urgent transfer for health reasons.

**“Deadlines and timeline for future responses and replies would be helpful, as my home Deanery are also querying what the actual procedure is”**

**”My local education supervisor was not very clear on the process, neither was my previous supervisor. I have fed back what I have learnt about the process, so hopefully this will clarify things for future trainees. However the IDT team were very accessible.**

**It's not easy to get hold of the Dean. The Local IDT nominee was much easier to get hold of and extremely prompt and helpful in signing and providing further information.**

**It would be nice to have some further clear information, should one not be successful for transfer in this round, as to indicate what paths are available. Perhaps in diagram form? And how this would impact training in the long run. “**

If the information on our website (<http://specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk/inter-deanery-transfers/>) does not give you the information you need, please feel free to contact us on our email service ([IDTinfo@southlondon.hee.nhs.uk](mailto:IDTinfo@southlondon.hee.nhs.uk)) where you will receive a response within 48hours. On the website there is also guidance for both TPDs and LETB/deaneries. We are also looking at expanding our stakeholder base so that you can find the information you need in more places.

Regarding other options available to you if you are not successful in obtaining a transfer, we will always refer you to your local team who will be able to advise you, however we will look into providing you with further information on possible alternatives on the website.

### **Other Comments**

**“The application system was well run. I would like to see more transparency in who and how the application is dealt with”**

**“I found the whole process unnecessarily time consuming and difficult to navigate. The process has been reduced to a case of computer says no. The people running it and deciding on eligibility are not clinical and simply administrators who do not understand what being a doctor is about. Insisting people can't apply for transfer until a change of circumstances has taken place has forced me out of programme as I can't afford to run 2 households. The transfer system is a farce.”**

Transparency is a really important issue to us. We want you to know that your application has been dealt with fairly and in accordance with the published guidelines. We will certainly look at providing you some more information about what happens to your application once you have submitted it – look out for this in the FAQ and Guide section of our website.

To address the second issue here, the change of circumstance is really the crux of the process. This is to ensure that we help trainees who are in need. In partnership with COPMeD and the BMA, we have formulated guidelines which will hopefully benefit as many trainees as possible, taking into consideration regional rotation planning practices, national deadlines (e.g. those concerning placements) and recruitment dates, for example, as well as many other considerations.

**“It was a bit tricky to find the documents that need to be forwarded to the appropriate signatory for approval. ID team support was amazing throughout the process. I was not able to find enough details from different deaneries but inter deanery transfer team emails were very informative, self-explanatory and supportive.”**

Supporting documents are now uploaded to the website on a page marked ‘Supporting Documents’ four weeks prior to the transfer window opening

<http://specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk/inter-deanery-transfers/supporting-documents/>

**“It would be useful to have direct and clear answers to the questions asked rather than referring to the guide.”**

The National IDT team will always try and be as helpful as possible in order to help ease the natural anxiety of the transfer process. The guide, developed with our partners, is the best explication of the criteria, rules and process that drive Inter-Deanery Transfers so we often refer to it in our answers to queries in emails. We are often asked for advice – we feel the best way to respond to this is to give information that will help inform a clear decision on your part.

**“I think that with regards to applications for moving with regards to a committed relationship the options for joint financial responsibility are difficult to obtain if you live apart and there needs to be consideration of other ways of providing evidence for this”**

The team will always look in to new ways of providing evidence but it is important that there is some form of evidence that those in a committed relationship have to provide so we can clearly see that you meet the eligibility criteria.

**“I found it difficult to actually find the application website initially. I spent time trying to google Interdeanery Transfer and found information on some websites which directed me to the London Deanery Website, which does not directly link to the <http://specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk/inter-deanery-transfers/> website. On the Mersey Deanery website it does direct you to the correct website, however the link is hidden within a lot of text.”**

**“The inter deanery website is difficult to find, and there is no direct link from most deanery websites and on a google search you would never find it.”**

**“Finding the opening to the portal online was actually quite difficult. It doesn't come up on search engines and the IDT website emphasises the advice rather than the portal.”**

We are currently doing some work on search engine optimisation and we hope to improve this soon so we are more visible on engines such as Google. You should be able to find a link to our website on

all deanery/LETB pages, there is also a link on the BMA website and we hope to continue to expand our base of stakeholders who can hold this information and link to us.

There is now a very clear entry to the portal on our website.

**“I wasn't clear that I needed to also submit my last ARCP whilst still in clinical as well as my most recent ARCP whilst OOPR”**

Trainees are only eligible to apply if they are on a satisfactory outcome. The reason we ask for your last clinical outcome if on OOP is because the Outcome 8 only signifies that you are not in programme and does not give any indication to your progress within the programme. If you are on OOPT or OOPR with time counting to training, we also want to see your last 'on-programme' outcome as evidence that you are making satisfactory progress.

This information is in the Guide to Applying for IDT.

**“To have longer opening hours for the helpline”**

As mentioned in previous survey feedback, we would like to be able to have more hours open for the application hotline also. Unfortunately, due to the size of the National IDT Team (just two!) and the high volume of other work we need to carry out, we do not have the capacity to do so.

If you are not able to contact us via the hotline, please email the IDT inbox ([idtinfo@southlondon.hee.nhs.uk](mailto:idtinfo@southlondon.hee.nhs.uk)) and we will contact you within 48hrs. Our actual average response time to emails is 11.5 hours so you will receive a quick and informative response.

**“I wasn't informed about the IDT via a deanery email. Not sure if this happens normally? I found out via the IDT website which is very clear.”**

Our website will always have the most up to date information on the transfer windows. We do disseminate this to LETB regions/deaneries. If you want to receive up to date information through your inbox, you can register for the National IDT team newsletter through the following website <http://www.lpmde.ac.uk/training-programme/training-matters/idt> or email us at [IDTinfo@southlondon.hee.nhs.uk](mailto:IDTinfo@southlondon.hee.nhs.uk)

**“The process itself is clear and transparent to the point of application however and the IDT team seem very approachable - a credit.”**

**“I had been told that it was very time consuming and difficult. It wasn't as bad as I was expecting! In particular there was far less paperwork required than I was expecting. Overall I thought it worked well and was easy to use. I was particularly impressed with swift email responses from the IDT help team. “**

**“The IDT team were absolutely amazing at answering my (many) queries and are a credit to the system.”**

**“The advice was thorough and clear. Many thanks to the team.”**

We thank you for these comments, we are always trying to improve the system, where we can, to help facilitate more transfers but where this has not been possible, we will at least always try to provide the best customer service.