A National Review of Level One Paediatric Training

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Introduction

The Shape of Paediatric Training is currently under review. Little was known about the current patterns and perceived quality of level one (ST1-3) training across the UK.

Project aims

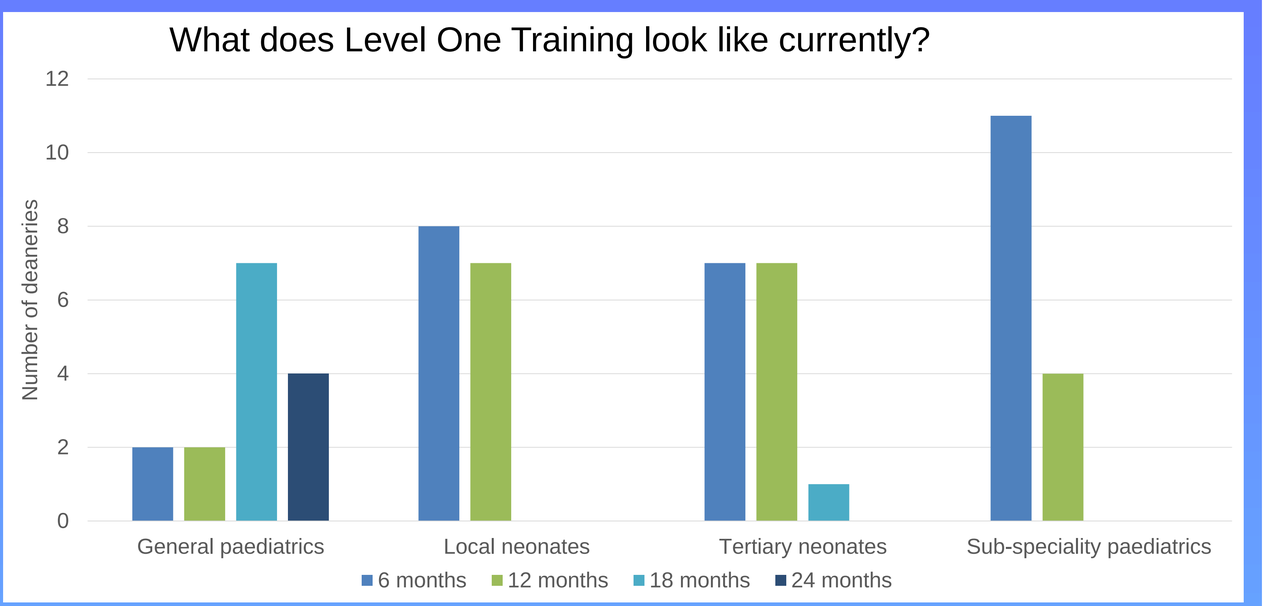
- Evaluate current patterns of level one training nationally
- Obtain trainee feedback to guide improvements to paediatric training in the UK

Methods

1. **Heads of Schools completed a survey** to compare the current formats of level one training across the UK. Responses were received from 15/17 deaneries.
2. **Nationally ST4-6 trainees completed a survey** assessing retrospective experiences of level one training. 156 responses were received.
3. **Qualitative workshop sessions** were conducted with ST3-5 trainees to gain more in depth information about trainee experiences. Four sessions were completed in different regions.

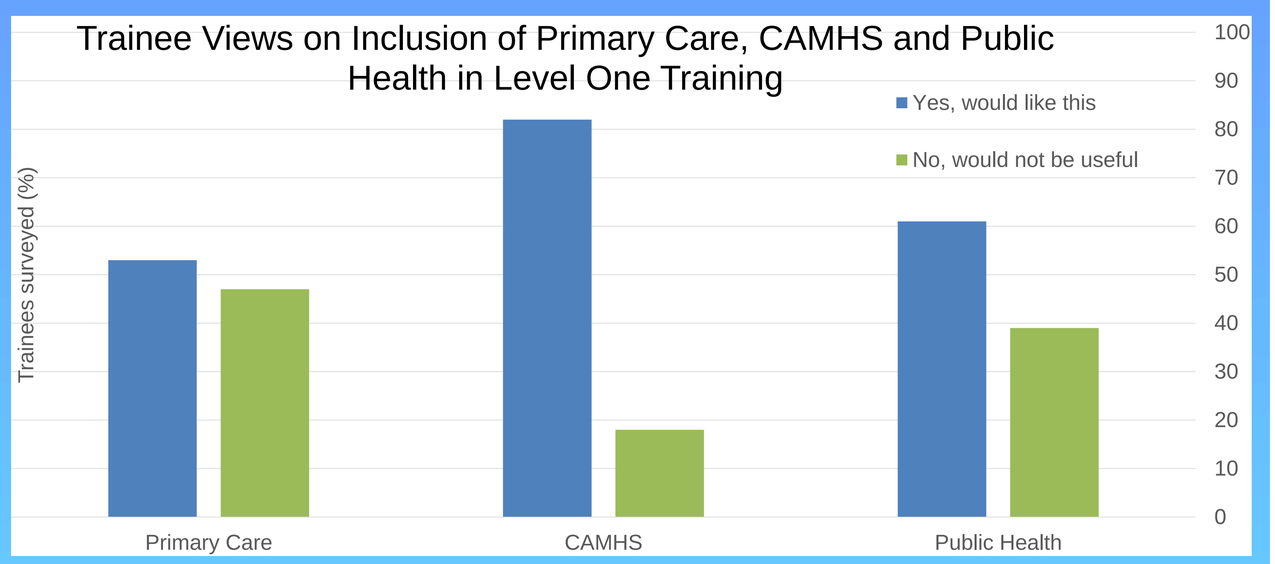
Heads of School Survey Results

- Variation in the time spent in different specialities during level one training
- Wide variation in subspecialty opportunities across the UK
- Limited training opportunities currently in:
  - Community & Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) (2 deaneries)
  - Primary care (no deaneries)
  - Public health (1 deanery)
- Variation in allocation processes for posts
- 80% offered “step-up” or “senior SHO” posts
- In 40% of deaneries, trainees worked on the middle grade rota



Trainee Survey Results

- 28% of trainees reported suboptimal time spent in general paediatric training, whilst 23% wanted more subspecialty training
- Trainees would value time spent training in Primary Care, CAMHS and Public Health settings. However, new opportunities should not detract from adequate general paediatric experience.
- 81% of trainees felt their level one training prepared them to work as a registrar
- 55% had worked in a “step-up” post; this was unanimously reported to be beneficial



Qualitative workshops

How did you feel about level one training at the time? How do you feel about it now?

Describe your experiences of transitioning to work as a registrar

What could make transition better?

What makes good level one training?

“You can end up not doing general paediatrics for two years before becoming a registrar which is not ideal”

“Empowering people earlier in their training, everyone starts ST1 with a different level of experience…looking at people as individuals and giving more responsibility if a trainee can manage it”

“ST3 needs more flagging as being different and trainees need more support to help them make their own decisions”

“It would be good to have a recognition that you’re not the same as a GP/F2 trainee, you have a vested interest in paediatrics”

“It’s difficult as a brand new ST4 to be on the same rota as someone who’s ST8, it’s difficult not to feel inadequate”

“A more consistent approach between consultants and ST3s would have been good…sometimes you step up at the last minute and feel unprepared then the next day not at all and it doesn’t help build confidence. It can feel conflicting”

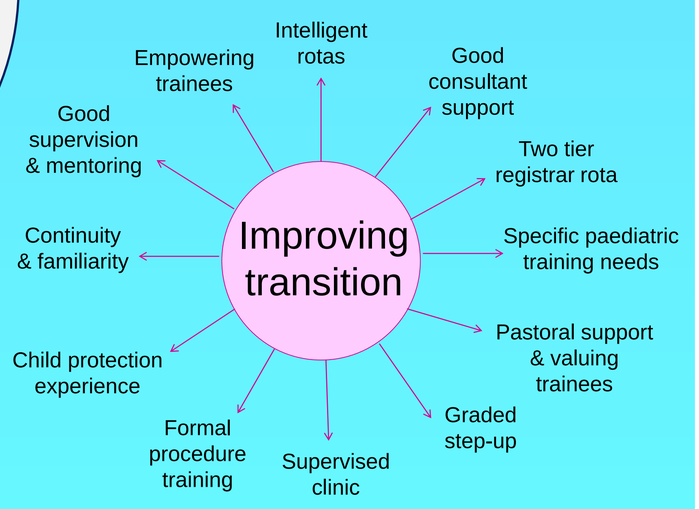
“Good to go back in ST3 to the same hospital you will step up in. You know how that hospital works and the staff…makes the transition to middle grade smoother”

“Clinic experience within ST1-3…you don’t have your own list, but it’s educational. You see (patients) yourself and the consultant reviews with you. One on one training …to get assessments and feedback ”

“There is a constant battle with rota gaps and training takes an aside…leading to less resilience and less time to focus on training”

Key themes

Improvements



Conclusions

- Current national patterns of level one training are variable
- Trainees would value time spent in Primary Care, Community & Adolescent Mental Health and Public Health training, but not at the cost of cutting general paediatric training
- Key themes in trainee experience include optimising content of training, improving teaching and training and the transition to registrar role. Unfortunately, service provision demands are often detrimental to training opportunities. There is a significant need for improved trainee support and pastoral care.
- Implementation of improvements at a national and local level are essential for recruitment and retention of trainees
- The shape of training in the future should reflect these important findings