

Training in the General Surgery of Childhood (GSC)

- It is considered important for access to treatment that general paediatric surgery (GSC) continues to be practiced in district general hospitals. Since the publication in May 2000, of explicit guidelines, and importantly the requirements for training, there has been a decline in the number of hospitals offering this type of surgery.
- In order to address the problem, the SACs in general and paediatric surgery were asked to review the situation and ascertain whether anything further could be done to facilitate training in GPS.
- The SACs and their colleagues in the Paediatric Surgical Forum consider that the most important step is the wider provision of suitable training 'slots' and the incorporation of such slots into specialist training programmes in general surgery.
- Clearly, it has been essential to agree the content of a curriculum for this training module in GSC, in order that training in any setting would be delivered to the same standard and would produce the same 'end product'. Debate has largely centred on the content of this module and whether it could be delivered in whole or in part outside of a Specialist Paediatric Surgical Unit (SPSU).
- While recognising that most of these training posts are likely to be established in specialist paediatric surgical units, it is understood that it may be possible to deliver the training module through a combination of General and Paediatric Surgery posts taken in parallel over an appropriate period. At some point, however, a period on a specialist paediatric unit must be included, if only for the purposes of assessment and 'finishing off'.
- Requests for educational approval for training for posts – whether new or through 'remapping' - should be directed in the usual way through the JCST, with support from the relevant regional specialty training committee in general surgery and programme director. The SAC in paediatric surgery will then be consulted and, if felt to be suitable, provisional approval until the next practical visiting date may be given.
- At the time of writing there are a number of additional general surgery NTN's available without funding for disbursement through the Deans to programmes incorporating suitable posts. If demand outstrips supply, the need to maintain a reasonable geographical balance will be taken into account.