MIAA
2023/2024 Checklist Series – Consultant Job Planning

January 2024

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The need for effective and efficient use of consultants' time and resources is critical in the current demanding environment within the NHS. Therefore, job planning has become essential for organisations to plan activities and review performance, maximising results and the resources available. In addition, it offers consultants clarity and an effective tool to plan professional development.

Job Planning was outlined in Schedule 3 of the *Terms and Conditions – Consultants' Contract* (England, 2003) as part of the contractual obligations for consultants and employers. It sets out the requirements that in 2011 the British Medical Association (BMA), along with NHS Employers, detailed in *A Guide to Consultant Job Planning*. BMA's guide expands on best practice standards for effective job planning, advocating for a collaborative approach. Job Planning should be:

- Undertaken in a spirit of collaboration and cooperation
- Completed in good time
- Reflective of the professionalism of being a doctor
- Focused on measurable outcomes that benefit patients
- Consistent with the objectives of the NHS, the organisation, teams and individuals
- Transparent, fair and honest
- Flexible and responsive to changing service needs during each job plan year
- Fully agreed and not imposed
- Focused on enhancing outcomes for patients whilst maintaining service efficiency

Best practice standards were reviewed and issued by NHS Improvement in July 2017, *Consultant Job Planning: A Best Practice Guide*, highlighting electronic systems to capture job plans, the monitoring arrangements of consistency committees and the importance of annual reviews of job plans against planned activities.

This checklist is designed to support organisations in providing assurance on Consultant Job Planning systems and processes and mirrors the best practice guidance.
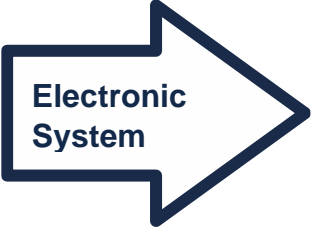
Consultant Job Planning Checklist

Areas for Trusts to consider		Organisation's Response
	Governance Arrangements	
Policies and procedures	• Do you have written policy/standard operating procedures (SOPs) in place for job planning that reflects guidance and have been appropriately approved and communicated?	
	• Have you identified a team or forum to keep the policy under review, ensuring it is in line with national best practice guidance; providing advice, training and support for staff on how job planning should be designed, managed, etc…?	
	• Has your Local Negotiating Committee (LNC) agreed and approved your job planning policy/SOP?	
	• Do you have a Medical Job Planning Consistency Committee that meets regularly and has oversight over the job planning process?	
	• Have you identified a framework of roles and responsibilities for the sign off of job plans?	

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Areas for Trusts to consider	Organisation's Response
• Do you provide training/guidance to consultants and managers on how job planning should be designed and managed?	
• Is there a mediation and appeal resolution process policy in place? Has it been communicated?	

	Areas for Trusts to consider	Organisation's Response
Approval of Job Plans (arrow graphic)	**Approval of Job Plans**	
	• Do you have a timescale of key dates that cover all phases of job planning design and approval processes?	
	• Are there discussion meetings scheduled for consultants and managers to design and agree job plans within the set timescales?	
	• Are job plans agreed and approved by managers and senior members as per your framework of roles and responsibilities?	
	• In those cases where consultants have private or external work commitments, do you ensure that appropriate working hours are approved and that	

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Areas for Trusts to consider	Organisation's Response
the private or external activities do not represent potential conflicts with Trust activity?	
• Does your Medical Job Planning Consistency Committee oversee the signing off of job plans and ensure compliance with approval processes?	
• Does a designated team or forum have oversight over the mediation and appeal resolution process to manage situations where consultant and manager have difficulty in agreeing a job plan?	

	Areas for Trusts to consider	Organisation's Response
Electronic System	**Electronic Job Planning Software**	
	• Do you have an electronic job planning software that provides audit trail?	
	• Do you provide training/guidance to consultants and managers on how to use your electronic job planning software?	
	• Are job plans uploaded and available on your electronic job planning software?	

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Areas for Trusts to consider	Organisation's Response
• Are job plans signed off and published on your electronic job planning software in line you're your defined framework of roles and responsibilities?	

	Areas for Trusts to consider	Organisation's Response
	Job Plans Content	
Job Plans	• Do job plans have a start date and end date?	
	• Are job plans aligned with the Trust overall strategy and the operational objectives of the service/area?	

	• Have consultants outlined their professional/personalised service objectives following the SMART formula?
	    o Specific
	    o Measurable
	    o Achievable
	    o Realistic
	    o Timed	

Areas for Trusts to consider	Organisation's Response
• Do job plans include a timetable/diary card of programmed activities (PA) and on-call support, detailing total hours? Does each activity include start and end times?	
• Are supporting professional activities (SPA) included in job plans? Are SPA objectives and hours detailed?	
• Do job plans include private or external work when applicable?	
• Do consultants indicate any supporting resources necessary to achieve objectives when applicable?	
• Do job plans reflect any agreed flexible working arrangements?	
• Is travelling time captured in job plans when necessary?	
• Do you ensure that consultants sign a private practice declaration form when applicable and that activities are accurately included in job plans?	
• Do you ensure that a conflict of interest declaration form is completed by each consultant and that job plans indicate compliance?	

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Areas for Trusts to consider	Organisation's Response
Monitoring Arrangements	
Monitoring and reporting • Do you ensure that your identified team or forum responsible for the job planning policy and procedures has oversight over the progress and outcome of job plans?	
• Are end-of-year reviews undertaken to review outcome of job plans versus planned activity?	
• Following end-of-year review reports, do consultants meet with managers to discuss performance against planned job plans?	
• Does your identified team or forum keep a log of end-of-year reviews, ensuring all reviews are followed up?	
• Do you have a control in place to review total hours of PA to be paid against payroll payments?	
• Are there reporting arrangements in place to provide assurance to the Trust Executive Team with regard to job planning annual review and outcome?	

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