

Surviving as a new consultant: What I wish I'd known when I started out

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- You have completed medical school
- You've completed Core training and MRCS
- You've probably done a research degree or educational qualification
- You've completed higher surgical training
- You've passed FRCS and obtained a CCT or CESR
- You've probably done at least one Fellowship

You deserve a
break!

- Whether starting as a locum or a substantive role - negotiate a start date and a break.
- They are going to own you for 25-30 years, so 1-2 months off before you start is well worth taking and owed to your families after their support in your career.

Job plan

- This will potentially cause you more of a headache than anything else in the first year.
- If replacing someone you normally inherit the job plan, secretary and office space.
- If you are in a newly created post – the job plan is often fictitious and needs to be created (based around the model proposed in the advert).
- Push for a regular theatre list, you may have to start flexibly and constantly re-negotiate.

Job Plan

- This can take 1-2 years to evolve, but will be reviewed annually and can be adjusted as you develop your specialist interests.
- Check yours, seek advice from others and be prepared to negotiate
- Set up a clinic profile you are happy with (it will only ever increase with time)
- Finally make sure you are paid appropriately (easier said than done) – and on the correct tax code!

First on-call

?panic

- If you've worked in the trust in the last few years, then its fine to start on calls immediately.
- Have your 'phone-a-friend' prepared for a late night conference call

- If not, ask for time (a month or two) to adjust to the geography and systems of your new hospital.
- 2nd Consultant on call (providing senior back-up) may be useful initially
- Choose a colleague to follow during an on-call

Working in a team

- Find out what secretarial support and office space you have before you start.
- Find out what team or firm you are allocated to you before you start.
- Find out who your juniors are and allied health staff that are relevant – cancer nurse specialists, etc.
- The MDT is a good time to meet relevant colleagues in your discipline.

Admin

- Allocate a regular PA or time to keep on top of your admin.
- This often starts well.
- As you get busier it becomes very hard to track and stay on top of.
- (We haven't found a perfect solution yet)

Dealing with trainees

- Be nice to everyone.
- You will evolve to be a different type of trainer to each trainee's need.
- If they are a trainee in difficulty, sometimes one fears getting to know them better but that is what is required especially if you take on Educational Supervisor roles.
- Don't take on too much too soon. Remember it is OK to SAY NO (not always easy).

Work/life balance

- Very slightly better than as a registrar.
- You can choose how hard you work.
- Be aware of new tax and pension rules (quite new and complex).
- Take regular holidays - a week off every 2 months if you can. Sounds easy and gets harder. Even harder if you have kids (spouse may have other plans).
- Remember your own health and well-being.

- Often feel the need to prove yourself as a new consultant and gain the respect of others.
- We are both probably equally guilty of that.
- A lot can be achieved but most of that drive dissipates over about 5 years so requires a new focus or project as your career evolves.
- Remember that poor or unexpected outcomes take a toll on you and now you have to support juniors through it too which takes a greater toll.

Clinical

- Choose your cases wisely.
- Involve your colleagues on complex cases.
- Get a second opinion if something doesn't feel right. Choose your opinion wisely.
- Make sure you keep within your area of comfort, but if you have a specialisation make sure you discuss how you implement it with your CD/DD.

Reflection

- The dreaded word from your training...
- But don't underestimate the importance of a good moan. Or a debrief.
- Don't take your problems home – vent them where it is safe.
- Niroo and I prefer ours over a mutual beer...

Enjoy the new role. Set an example
to your team. Don't forget the 3 A's.
Availability, affability, ability

Thank you