Annualised job planning

Many consultants, particularly but not exclusively those with managerial responsibilities, do not have a working pattern that lends itself to preparing a job plan based on weekly activities. These individuals may need to prepare job plans that are wholly or partially annualised. These job plans will not have weekly timetables, but will include the major responsibilities the individual will be expected to take on over the coming year and usually the relative amounts of time spent on each.

Furthermore, many consultants or teams of consultants may wish to have an element of their job plans annualised. However, the principles of job planning remain unchanged. The job plan should be a prospective document that sets out the requirements of the organisation and the priorities for the individual to meet those requirements. Like all other job plans, it should include the objectives for the consultant or team of consultants and the support the organisation agrees to provide.

Three groups of consultants may need to have part or all of their job plan agreed on an annualised basis.

1. Full time or part time annualised job plan
   Individuals who have an exclusively non-practising clinician role, for example a full time medical director, may need to have a completely annualised job plan. For individuals who need to have a major part of their job plan agreed on an annual basis but who also have a significant clinical commitment, it may be most helpful to regard the job plan as having two halves, a clinical job plan and an annualised job plan. It is sensible, however, to make clear what and when the time commitments are for each part of the job plan so that one part does not regularly encroach upon the other. If this does become the case, a job plan review may be necessary.

2. Clinical variation
   An example of an annualised element of a job plan for a clinician might be variation in the number of programmed activities (PAs) worked at different times of the year. So, for example, an individual and the organisation may agree that during 28 weeks of school term time, an individual works an 11 PA job plan, but during the remaining weeks only 8 PAs are worked, with the total amount being averaged over the year to derive a 10 PA job plan. Many paediatricians, for example, have heavier workloads during the winter months. It may well be most appropriate for their job plans to be based on the average number of PAs undertaken on average over the whole year.

3. Chunking time
   Some individuals, particularly clinical academics, may need to agree a job plan that has periods of time devoted to patient care and other major periods of time devoted to a different activity, such as academic research. For example, two clinical academics may wish to agree that one will spend the first six months undertaking research whilst the other undertakes clinical work, with their roles then swapping.

These examples are not the only ways in which an annualised job plan can be used to reflect the needs of both clinicians and organisations, but serve to give ideas for how the job planning process can be used flexibly.