Research indicates that some established benefits of Balint groups include; feeling more supported and more validated; better interpersonal outcomes in the Doctor- patient encounter; higher feelings of job satisfaction and generally feeling less isolated and less burnt out. (Kieldmand & Holmstrom 2008; Benson & McGrath 2005).

We hope that the experience of Balint support group will be a start of peer emotional support group among medical staff in acute services where a safe, confidential space is created and continued to grow among group members. This is prioritising compassion at the heart of leadership and utilising creative ways of empowering employees and promoting staff wellbeing in such crisis.

A qualitative study will be conducted half way into running the groups focusing on subjective experience of the attendees as well as burnout indicators.

We anticipate poor initial engagement will be an issue due to stigma, exhaustion and lack of exposure to Balint.

In crisis such as Covid-19 pandemic leaders has to be innovative using resources smartly and also inclusive on welcoming and promoting new ideas in order to support staff wellbeing.

Introduction of Balint group to other specialities will offer them tools to maintain a safe confidential peer support system at the time of crisis as well as normal times in order to reduce burn out.

A key challenge early in the COVID-19 pandemic was to identify staff able to meet the demand for senior medical assessment of an influx of acutely unwell respiratory patients. At UH&C we proposed that specialist physicians without recent general medicine experience could be safely and effectively redeployed to support the acute medical take.

A rota of consultant physicians from 8 medical specialties, who did not participate in the acute medical take, was developed at pace to work alongside the medical registrar, in the segregated respiratory area of ED, following limited training. Two shifts were implemented within 6 days of inception, fitted around doctors’ ongoing specialty roles.

We gained feedback iteratively during the early phases. We then used a survey of all those asked to redeploy to explore their lived experiences and perceptions, with a 71% response rate.

Median time since consultants had participated in an unselected medical take was 12 years. 66% were not GIM accredited. 84% found the online training useful. Many had concerns regarding availability of PPE and the risk of passing infection on to others, including their own vulnerable patients. 81% described concerns around personal competence.

63% of respondents felt this redeployment had made a positive difference to the COVID-19 response. However, 57% felt other groups should have been redeployed before them, and 45% reported they would not agree to be redeployed in a repeat scenario. Transparency regarding who was redeployed and equity amongst all physicians were the most important factors influencing decisions on future redeployment.

We rapidly implemented a consultant redeployment programme during the pandemic, and redeployed doctors felt they made a positive difference. However, the same staff group may not willingly be redeployed during any future