

Gastroenterology Today



**18 Week Support Gastroenterology:
Partnering to Succeed**



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18 WEEK SUPPORT & GASTROLEARNING: AN UP TO DATE APPROACH TO PROVIDING UP TO DATE EDUCATION

Continuing Professional Development is an integral part of a doctors life. Continuous learning in endoscopy is equally important and furthers our technical skills, disease diagnosis and management, decision making, recognition and avoidance of complications, non-technical skills and ongoing care.

Quality, safety and efficiency are central to our culture in 18 Weeks Support. This is why we have partnered with GastroLearning, an endoscopic educational platform pioneered by University College London consultants.

18 Week Support JAG quality standards generally exceed the UK average (National Endoscopy Database) and our complications are lower than those quoted by most studies. However our aims, through rigorous governance, webinars and GastroLearning, are to enrich education focussing on the following areas:

- Technical endoscopic skills
- Endoscopic diagnosis (detection and characterisation)
- Endoscopic management of disease (guidelines and therapy)

Covid has changed how professional education is delivered

The Covid pandemic has acted as a catalyst for a change in the approach to providing medical education. However, changes in medical education were already happening long before it's unwanted arrival. The current and younger generations of doctors, surgeons and allied health professionals are more than competent digital learners. Education through digital channels can be tailored by content and delivered very flexibly. "Snack" learning has become particularly popular - everything you need to know on a subject in a concise, clear format delivered by an engaging educator. Today's generation of practitioners are now less likely to see value - or to justify - the time and expense involved in spending days in conference halls listening to lectures that may or may not be relevant to their specific need or practice. The modern approach in education is where GastroLearning excels.

Conference organisers must learn to adapt

Of course there is still a place for face-to-face conferences, both from an educational and social networking point of view. Conference organisers with an innovative and dynamic approach to education will likely learn from the many new digital trends that have taken centre-stage in the past year. But some will not and will likely be less popular. Whilst the past year has seen a plethora of digital learning events, transplanting the traditional format of a conference online does not work. Few can sit in front of a screen for an endless stream of lectures for hours on end without interaction and there is little educational benefit in doing so. Digital education is here to stay but it must be delivered in an innovative fashion that meets the needs of the modern generation.

New ways of digital learning in CPD provision

GastroLearning has been involved in the provision of Gastroenterology education for over 10 years, most notably through running national and international conferences. But we have always recognised the need to modernise. For the past 3 years we have supplemented the traditional face-to-face conference with the delivery of interactive digital education through a bespoke platform on iPad and, in November 2020, we launched our online platform which already has a global following.

All 18 Week Support Practitioners Access Free Education

Our weekly "Express Packages" published every Thursday provides a selection of educational material utilising varying formats, from edited video cases and 5 minute lectures to "Top Tips" presentations and literature summaries. These packages are aimed at covering important topics in a concise fashion while catering for differing educational needs.

We also run a hugely popular 30 minute "Live Show" on the first Wednesday of every month in which an expert is interviewed on a topic relevant to every Gastroenterologist. The show is supplemented by additional educational material to maximise the learning opportunities and key topics are accompanied with interactive quizzes to reinforce the learning. Finally, we understand the importance of social media and are active on Twitter (@GastroLearn) with a rapidly rising number of followers. Twitter is becoming an increasingly popular method for individuals to access and share education. It provides the opportunity to receive "snack" learning and key messages can be shared, reaching a global platform.

All practitioners registered with 18 Week Support are able to access all of this education content free of charge.

A future of effective partnerships and even newer technology

Ways in which CPD and its associated learning are delivered will continue to evolve rapidly. Although digital approaches are already the norm in many areas of medical education, there is an increasing footprint of artificial intelligence and virtual reality in our day to day lives which provides immensely exciting possibilities to enhance education further. GastroLearning and 18 Week Support will strive to be at the forefront of this and ensure high-quality education is delivered to all of its practitioners and to the wider gastroenterology community in the UK.

Dr David Graham and Dr Matthew Banks

Join us: www.gastrolearning.com Follow us on Twitter: @Gastrolearn

If you have an excellent NHS record and want to help clear waiting list backlogs, reduce RTT waiting times and provide high-quality patient care, get in touch by calling on **0203 869 8790** or email us at Recruitment.team@18weeksupport.com Alternatively if you are procurer of 18 Week Support services, please contact busdev@18weeksupport.com



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