

Training Standards Committee statement on Paediatric Emergency Medicine

May 2026

Concerns have been raised regarding the revised 2025 Key Capabilities (KCs) within Specialty Learning Outcome 5 (Paediatric Emergency Medicine competencies), specifically whether the increased level of granularity is realistically achievable for most Higher Specialist Trainees (HSTs).

This concern is particularly relevant given the sustained operational pressures across Emergency Departments, especially within mixed adult and paediatric EDs, where service demands often require prioritisation of longer adult waiting times over shorter paediatric waits. In practice, this may reduce opportunities for HSTs to gain sufficient paediatric exposure, particularly where paediatric patients are seen preferentially by non-HST clinicians or where trainees are redeployed to support adult care pressures.

At present, it remains unclear whether these revised KCs will prove unachievable for some trainees, with potential implications for the forthcoming summer ARCP process. We would therefore request that, where trainees are unable to evidence attainment of Paediatric EM competencies, ARCP panels explicitly recognise the potential service-related barriers contributing to this. These may include limited time within Paediatric EDs, competing departmental staffing pressures, or restricted access to relevant clinical cases.

The Training Standards Committee (TSC) will monitor this closely through the ARCP externality process, alongside direct feedback from Training Programme Directors and Heads of School.

In parallel, the TSC intends to revise the document *A Framework for Paediatric Emergency Medicine Training and Assessment in ST4–6* to provide clearer guidance on how these competencies may best be achieved within the realities of current service pressures. While this updated guidance is unlikely to be available in time for this summer's ARCPs, it is anticipated for the next academic year and will incorporate learning and feedback from the upcoming ARCP cycle.