

The role of the Professional Support Unit (PSU) in Specialty Training

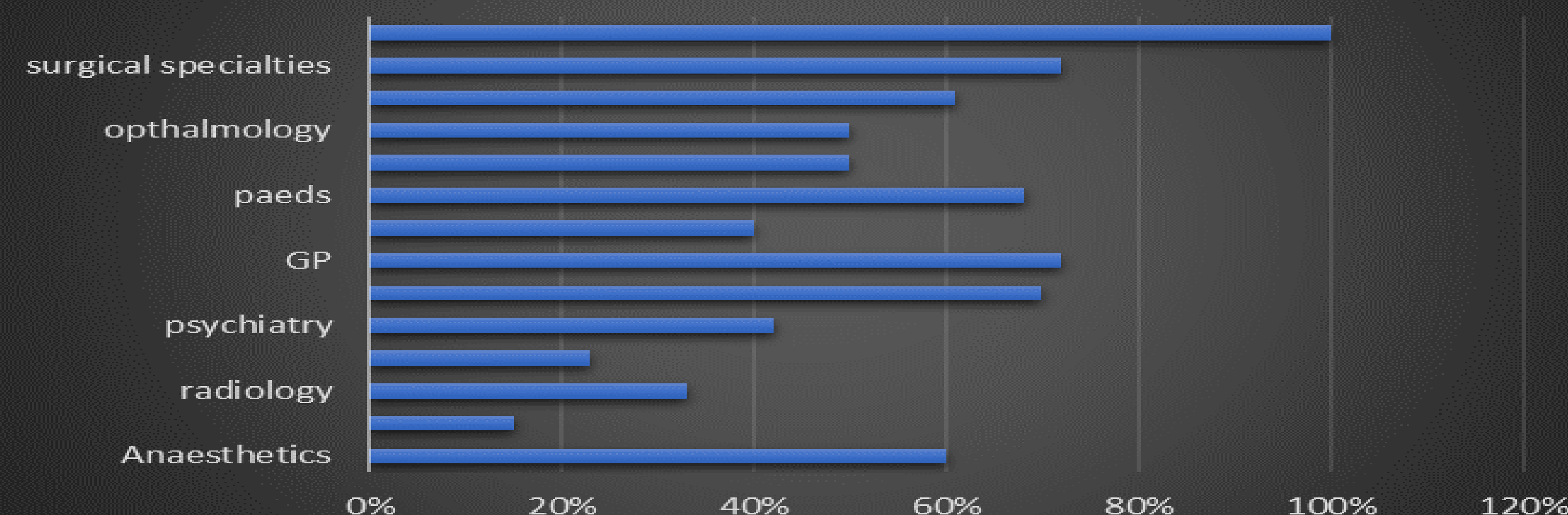
Background

In Wales there are 3200 doctors & dentists in training and approximately 12% receive PSU support at any one time. All trainees are offered PSU support following outcome 2 and 3 at ARCP but it is not mandatory to engage. The figure below summarises what the PSU does:

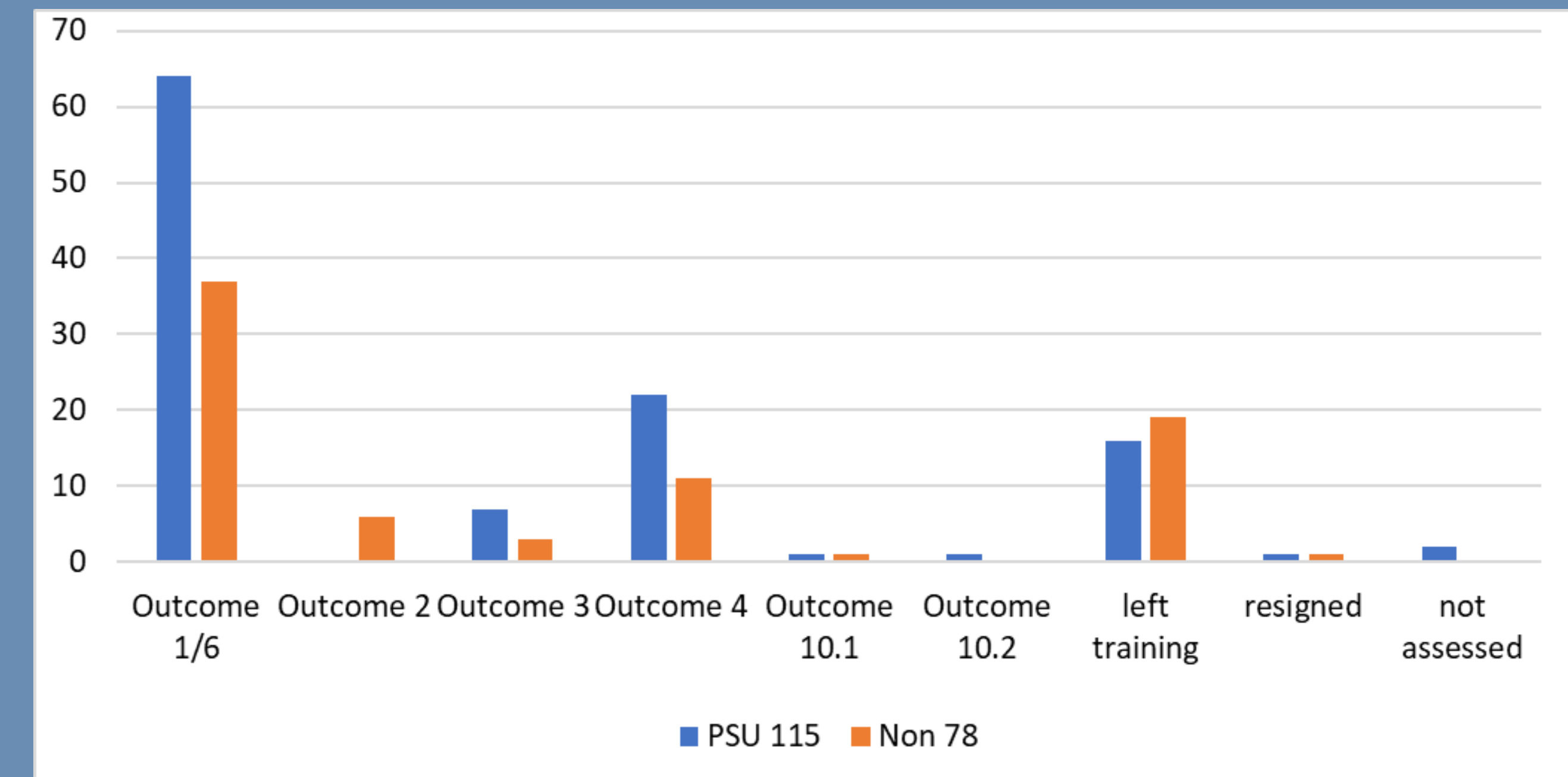


Review of trainees receiving outcome 3 at ARCP in 2016-7 were reviewed. Following engagement with the PSU trainees(58.1%) were 11% (p value 0.15) more likely to return to outcome 1/6 versus those who did not engage(47.8%). This process was extended reviewing all trainees from 2016-20

Specialty engagement



Results 2018-20



2016-20 analysis demonstrates 64/115 (55.6%) trainees returned to outcome 1/6 following PSU support versus 37/78 (47.4%) in those who did not engage. This Reaffirms previous data with ongoing benefit for trainees in difficulty confirmed. If COVID outcomes (10.1) were added statistical significance would be even greater (158/264 giving 11.2% improved return to outcome 1/6) . We have not included these cases so that these numbers could be analysed safely with pre-Covid data, however the chart above illustrates the most recent trend. Not all trainees were remediable ending in outcome 4, of the 22 under PSU in years 2018-20 all but one case involved exam failure or running out of outcome 3 additional training time. It is a reminder that support in terms of managing anxiety and time is indeed beneficial but ultimately the trainee must pass their professional qualifications. Of concern 19 trainees left training without any support where other options such as re-deployment could have been discussed and these trainees have made uninformed significant decisions surrounding their medical training. Of note during the review was the variety among specialties in the uptake of PSU support (see figure left) and therefore we must work with TPDs in all specialties to promote engagement with PSU when needed and offered.

Conclusions

- Sustained statistically significant benefit of the PSU in enabling trainees in difficulty to continue in training & return to outcome 1
- All parts of the United Kingdom should offer PSU support to trainees, with all specialities made aware of the benefits
- Financial benefits for the NHS will follow keeping trainees in training and health economical data to be gathered for publication
- Outcome 3 trainees 10.5% (p value 0.03) more likely to return to outcome 1/6 in all data review
- Not all trainees are remediable with exam failure overwhelmingly the reason
- Trainees in difficulty should be strongly encouraged to discuss all options before leaving training

All data return to outcome 1/6 following Outcome 3

PSU	Non-engaged
264	183
156 (59.1%)	89 (48.6%)
10.5% (p value 0.03) more likely to return to outcome 1/6 when PSU supported (0.8 power calculation reached)	