

Wessex Head of School Newsletter

July 2024

Welcome from Dr Manjiri Bodhe (Head of School) & Dr Nick Moore (Deputy Head of School)

Welcome to our July edition of the Wessex newsletter. I wanted to update you on what is being offered in Wessex for our Trainers and our Doctors in Training (DiT).

We'd like to extend a warm welcome to our ST1s joining us in August, we look forward to you starting your Training with us in Wessex.

Contact Updates

Since September 2023, our contact details have been updated, please ensure you are using the up-to-date email addresses going forwards.

GP School england.gp.wx@nhs.net

Dorset england.dorsetgptraining.se@nhs.net / england.dorsetgptrainers.se@nhs.net

Mid-Wessex england.mwgpe.se@nhs.net

Portsmouth england.portsmouthgpenquiries.se@nhs.net

Southampton england.sotongpeuteam.se@nhs.net

Welcome to Wessex

We will be running our Welcome to Wessex event and our speciality induction for our new Cohort of DiT on Monday 23rd September 2024, please keep a look out for your email invite.

Exams

If you are a GPST2 please speak to your Educational Supervisor about the best time for you to sit your AKT exam. Please see the RCGP AKT pages for further information

<https://www.rcgp.org.uk/mrcgp-exams/applied-knowledge-test>

You can view recorded SCA webinars and Q&A sessions for Trainers and Trainees here.

<https://www.rcgp.org.uk/mrcgp-exams/simulated-consultation-assessment/preparing#Webinars>

Wessex AKT Pass rates are improving – Thank you for your hard work

We are pleased to be able to update you on the results of a detailed analysis of AKT outcome data for Wessex covering the past three years.

There is still a significant differential between AKT pass rates for IMG and UK-educated trainees in Wessex, which we continue to work to close. However, we have seen a year-on-year rise in the first attempt pass rate for IMG trainees for the last three years.

Of particular note, for the January 2024 AKT sitting we saw the:

- Highest Wessex overall AKT pass rate within this three years' worth of data (70.2%)
- Highest Wessex IMG first time pass rate in this period (75.0%)
- Highest Wessex overall IMG pass rate in this period (64.7%)
- Highest Wessex overall first time pass rate in this period (84.2%)
- And for the first time during this data period, the Wessex overall AKT pass rate was higher than the national overall AKT pass rate (Wessex 70.2%; national 68.4%)

We must remain cautious about whether this January 2024 sitting success continues and we will continue our efforts to narrow the significant differential attainment gap. However, the wider data suggests clear progress in the Wessex AKT results over the last three years.

Thank you to the whole team in Wessex who have put so much effort into this - especially all the Trainers, PDs and other educators who work so hard to support the trainees, as well as the trainees themselves.

For any trainees who would like further information about the support available for AKT, please discuss with your Educational Supervisor, Programme directors and review the resources at <https://wessex.hee.nhs.uk/general-practice/mrcgp-exams/> <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/mrcgp-exams/applied-knowledge-test/akt-preparing>.

Wessex AKT Support on Exams (SOX) upskilling course

For any educators who would like to develop further skills in this area and have not already attended an AKT SOX course, then next one is a virtual, half day afternoon session on Tuesday 8th October 2024.

For further details please contact england.gpexams.wx@nhs.net

Exceptional Fifth Attempts

If a trainee wishes to apply for a 5th exceptional attempt to the RCGP for the AKT or SCA, please see the current RCGP page <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/mrcgp-exams/mrcgp-important-info>

The Head of School will normally complete and submit the application but will require initial information from the Associate Dean and the DiT as documented in the guidance below.

- [MRCGP exceptional fifth attempts policy \(PDF file, 646 KB\)](#)
 - [MRCGP exceptional fifth attempts form \(DOC file, 59 KB\)](#)
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Trainer & Trainee Support

In addition to the Trainers Grant, we also have several other resources to support trainees. The Professional Support and Wellbeing Service (PSW) can provide pastoral support to trainees. We now have two additional Associate Deans, one with responsibility for specialist exam support and the other for international medical graduates, and each Patch now also has their own Training Programme Director with specific responsibility for looking after our growing number of international trainees. In addition to this we also have some funding to pay for an experienced trainer who can come in and work alongside a trainer and trainee to provide advice, additional tutorials and help with triangulation of assessments. Most deaneries use this multi-disciplinary approach such that the additional work is not entirely on the trainer's shoulders.

If you feel you or your DiT would benefit from additional support, please speak with your Patch Associate Dean who can advise on the best way we can help.

A referral to The Professional Support and Wellbeing Service (PSW) should be jointly conducted by the DiTs and the Trainer. For more information about the PSW team please see the website. <https://wessex.hee.nhs.uk/wellbeing-and-support/psw/>

Specific Learning Differences Screening

All new GP DiT starting training in Wessex are invited to complete a short questionnaire to help identify any doctors, at an early stage of their training, who may have a specific learning difference, specifically dyslexia.

Dyslexia can also impact on organisational skills and learning in the workplace, so early recognition and coaching from our dyslexia specialists can be of benefit both during training and post-qualification.

If we are informed as early as possible in the ST1 year of any trainee with a high score on the questionnaire, indicating that more in-depth assessment is needed, we will offer referral to one of our dyslexia specialist coaches.

The provision of this service is funded without cost to GP DiT by the GP School. If you are offered screening and agree to accept the offer of an appointment, be mindful that this is an expensive resource to run, so please make the best use of any offers.

Education Funding Agreement

Thank you for your engagement with education and training of the current and future workforce. To recognise the support you give the learners, educators and learning environments, we will soon have a new Education Funding Agreement (EFA) to enable the relevant payments. All GP Practices should receive the new Education Funding Agreement (EFA) shortly. The EFA is a three- year agreement running from 2024/25 through to 2027/28 and replaces the Education Contract.

This is an important document which will enable the Primary Care School to make certain payments (e.g. for doctors in training and pre-registration student placements etc) directly to practices who sign the document. It is necessary because neither NHS England nor the PCS are signatories to your practice's GMS/PMS/APMS contract which means we are unable to use that contract to pass money to your practice. We therefore need an alternative contractual mechanism to do so. The EFA provides this mechanism.

We have therefore asked for the EFA to be sent to all practices. The document is a standard template and relates to all medical training and education providers including NHS Trusts, Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) as well as GP practices. There will be a specific section which refers to primary care, as the rest of the document is not bespoke to general practice. This document enables us to pay you more easily and quickly for many training and education activities.

We recommend all practices sign and return this document when you receive it.

Trainers with GMC conditions

All our trainees fall under the Postgraduate Dean as their Responsible Officer (RO), which means that any GMC issues, for example if a trainee has conditions imposed, are automatically flagged to the training programme. However, for GP trainers their RO will be via their local NHSE performers list. This means that any issues would not be flagged to the Deanery unless the trainer themselves brings them to our attention.

We want to remind trainers that if they have any involvement with the GMC, we expect this to be flagged to your local patch Associate Dean so that we can ensure both you and the trainee receive appropriate support. In exceptional circumstances, we might have to consider placing a trainee with another trainer until these issues are resolved. Although the requirement to declare any GMC involvement is part of our re-approval form, as this is only completed every 5 years, if anything crops up in the interim, we would not be aware of it. If you aren't sure if an issue needs flagging with us, please talk with your local patch team who will be happy to discuss any concerns with you in the first instance.

Doctors in training supervising other members of the practice team

As we all know, practice teams have changed dramatically over the last few years with the advent of ARRS roles. Some of these team members may be in training themselves to gain additional competencies. All of these staff should have a nominated, fully qualified GP as their point of contact for clinical queries. This responsibility should not be passed to a trainee. Whilst it may be appropriate at the end of ST3 for trainees to gain experience of mentoring other members of the team, this should only ever be part of a clearly defined educational objective, with appropriate supervision in place. However, using trainees to supervise ARRS staff on a routine basis, for example signing off prescriptions or debriefing cases on their own is not appropriate.

We have been aware of instances where this has been occurring, and so we wanted to remind trainers and trainees of the GP School's guidance on this issue.

ARCP

Please note ARCP is an integral process in training and is not optional for either ESs or DiTs to complete. The final ARCP is particularly important as this is the DiTs pre CCT ARCP which recognises completion of all components of training and their ability to practice safely as an independent GP.

The Deanery team send out reminders pre ARCP and there is a checklist on fourteen fish to ensure that this is as easy as possible. Please use this checklist to ensure that you have everything in place prior to your ARCP.

If there are mitigating circumstances, such as illness or bereavement, ensure there is a portfolio entry recording this and ensure the Form R is completed with all sick and absence days documented. If this is not recorded accurately there is a risk that you will be unable to CCT on time or that you will not receive your CCT certificate from the GMC. Please see all ARCP information here:

<https://wessex.hee.nhs.uk/general-practice/gp-training/>

<https://wessex.hee.nhs.uk/accreditation-and-revalidation/arcp/>

<http://www.rcgp.org.uk/mrcgo-exams/wpba/annual-review-of-competance-progression>

Time off due to sickness

We occasionally come across issues where the lead employer or local patch team are unaware of trainees having had time off due to sickness. Please can practices ensure that they inform the local lead employer via their local returns process of any time trainees have missed. If there are concerns regarding a prolonged period of sickness or if a trainee may need support, it is also always helpful to flag this to your local patch team at an early stage. Trainees are obliged to record any time out of training on their annual Form R for their ARCP, but this process only takes place annually.

Periods of sickness over 30 days need to be added to the Eportfolio and TIS record, please ensure that any periods of sickness are also forwarded to the Patch Admin Team, Medical Hr, and the Deanery.

Placements

Placements for August are now finalised and planning for the February rotations have begun, these will be confirmed in mid-November, 12 weeks prior to the February rotation change.

Unfortunately, with pressures on General Practice, we may not always be able to place DiTs in their ideal post, please do not ask for changes in placements for choice. If there are occupational health needs, then of course we will try our absolute best to accommodate this with the reasonable adjustments put in place.

TSS (TIS Self Service)

With the updated TIS Self Service (TSS) trial, there were no placement confirmation emails sent in May and we are planning to continue utilizing the TIS self-service. You will be able to log in and view your placement details at Code of Practice, these will be uploaded in the weeks leading up to code of practice.

Going forwards you should receive an automatic notification and email from TSS 12 weeks prior to a new placement.

OOP

If you are considering taking time out of training, first explore the website to gain further information. <https://wessex.hee.nhs.uk/general-practice/gp-training/>

DiTs must approach their ES, TPD and Patch AD, in the first instance to discuss a potential application.

Please submit your application in a timely manner, as the process can take several weeks, we encourage you to submit your completed application no later than 3 months prior to the start date of anticipated OOP. As per Gold Guide 9th Edition, OOP should not be used to manage ill health. If you are considering needing time off, please speak to your trainer about support available.

<https://wessex.hee.nhs.uk/trainee-information/trainee-journey/out-of-programme/>

Less Than Full Time Training (LTFT)

There are two application windows per year, applications need to be received 16 weeks prior to the rotation change over. The window for February 2025 will close on 16th October 2024.

Please see our LTFT guidance on our website below:

<https://wessex.hee.nhs.uk/general-practice/gp-training/>

<https://wessex.hee.nhs.uk/trainee-information/trainee-journey/less-than-full-time-training/>

I would urge all ES/CS's to support their trainees on their application where they can, but please do not promise DiTs space in your practice. This piece of work is part of a larger placement work done by our Associate Deans and TPDs for each patch. Reducing percentage means that trainees must stay with that ES for longer periods of time which can impact on other placements. In addition, payroll cannot implement this immediately either.

If there is not enough detail on your application, we may email to ask for further details - you will need to have had a discussion with your Patch AD prior to submitting your application.

MPS Indemnity

As a doctor, you have a professional responsibility to ensure you are indemnified for your full scope of practice as a doctor in training. (Please see the guidance on the [GMC website](#))

Doctors who undertake training in General Practice or in a non-NHS setting (e.g. local authority, voluntary and third sector, hospice etc) need to arrange for additional indemnity cover.

NHS England has an arrangement with Medical Protection Society (MPS) which gives all Wessex GP Doctors in Training with access to free medical indemnity. NHSE provides details of new trainees to MPS who make direct contact.

If you are a current DiT and haven't already signed up more information can be found, <https://wessex.hee.nhs.uk/trainee-information/employment-matters-2/medical-indemnity/> there are steps you need to take to register to gain your indemnity cover.

IMG

IMG doctors who are new to the Wessex region are required to attend a Wessex IMG Induction Programme (for doctors who are new to the NHS) your meeting link will be sent out shortly for the two sessions 16/09/2024 and 21/10/2024.

We are also running a Q&A drop-in session on the 17/07/2024 2-4pm, this is a fantastic opportunity to ask questions and get to meet the team.

Doctors who are new to the UK may find it beneficial to attend one of the GMC's FREE Welcome to the UK Practice workshops. Further information on these workshops including booking arrangements can be found here

<https://www.gmc-uk.org/about/what-we-do-and-why/learning-and-support/workshops-for-doctors/welcome-to-uk-practice>

As of December 2023, we now have an IMG Welfare Service who can support new-to-UK GP trainees across the whole of Wessex Deanery with practical aspects of settling into a new country and community. For further details (including self-referral form) please see <https://wessex.hee.nhs.uk/trainee-information/trainee-journey/international-medical-graduates/> or <https://www.hiowpeople.nhs.uk/img-welfare-service/>

Visa Sponsorship

Have you considered becoming a visa sponsor?

As you will be aware, increasing numbers of GP trainees, both nationally and here in Wessex, are international graduates. Whilst some of our IMGs have been in the UK for many years, increasing numbers are new to the UK at the start of GPST1.

As GP training is three years, and it takes five years to qualify for "Indefinite Leave to Remain," IMGs who are new to the UK when they start their GP training require ongoing visa sponsorship when they complete their training.

As announced in May 2023, CCTing GP trainees are now eligible for a 4-month extension to their visas whilst they arrange substantive post-CCT employment with a new visa sponsor.

For new trainees, this additional four months should be added to the visa automatically when the trainee first applies for the visa. Existing trainees who wish to do so (i.e. those who have not already finalised a post-CCT job with a sponsoring practice) must apply for this extension when they are nearing the end of their training.

There is work ongoing nationally to push for all CCTing GPs to automatically qualify for Indefinite Leave to Remain on completion of GP training; however, we are not there yet. In the meantime, practices may want to consider becoming registered as visa sponsors.

Information on becoming a visa sponsor is available from <https://www.gov.uk/uk-visa-sponsorship-employers>.

The Home Office has [announced](#) that from 6 April 2024, employers that already hold a sponsorship licence will no longer be required to apply for a licence renewal after four years.

There is no action needed for employers. If a practice has a sponsorship licence that is due to expire on or after this date, the Home Office will automatically extend the expiry date on the licence by 10 years.

We'd like to congratulate those Doctors due to CCT in August, we wish you all the best in your General Practice career. Thank you once again to all Trainers for all the great work you are doing in medical education.