Refresher

NI GP Development Scheme
Information and Guidance

The NI GP Development Scheme has been established to:

- Respond to the strategic direction and recommendations in “Transforming Your Care” and support the current transition towards service provision in primary care and the shift of activity from the secondary sector.
- Retain and develop GPs who are unable to work full-time for specified and short term reasons. This is designed to avoid performers in exceptional circumstances becoming returners.
- Ensure that GPs trained outside the NHS can be appropriately inducted and provided with a working knowledge of the NHS with the necessary skills for the provision of GMS.
- Ensure that a GP whose first language is not English has a level of linguistic competency compatible with safe practice.
- Retain the necessary supply of GPs to:
  - Promote practice development.
  - Support an increase in the range of services available to patients.
  - Link to HSCB commissioning priorities.
  - Secure access to primary care services for patients in Northern Ireland by having a supply of GPs in the context of anticipated levels of retirement and the changing demographics of the GP workforce.
- Assist the HSCB Responsible Officer with meeting the obligations of the Health and Personal Social Services Medical Profession (Responsible Officers) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 in respect of GPs on the NI PMPL.
- Assist GPs who meet eligibility criteria for the scheme with meeting the requirements of revalidation.

General Information

The scheme is a joint HSCB and NIMDTA initiative for GPs on, or seeking inclusion in, the NI PMPL. It was developed in conjunction with NIGPC. Applications for the scheme will be reviewed by the PMPL committee.

There will be an emphasis on directing the funding for the scheme to areas within Northern Ireland with known difficulties for patients in accessing primary care, taking into account the service needs of the patients and the needs of the individual GP.

Scheme GPs should be prepared to commute a maximum of 60 minutes each way to their employing practice. Since the number of practice placements available is limited, it is not guaranteed that a practice in the desired location will be available.

The scheme can operate successfully only if there are sufficient practices available to undertake training, and it is possible that in some cases a training practice may not be secured. Practices will require to assess whether they are in a position to
meet the training needs of the GP in question while sustaining service delivery to patients.

The NI GP Development Scheme has two separate elements;

**Induction and Refresher Element.**

This is for GPs who have been absent from provision of clinical general practice in the NHS for a period in excess of two years ("returners") or for an IMG or EU GP who has not previously worked in UK general practice. Some of these doctors will not have undertaken medical training in English.

Details for each element of the scheme are given below.

**Retainer element.**

This is for GPs on the NI PMPL who are experiencing exceptional circumstances which impact on their ability to undertake a standard GP post for a period of time. It is intended to provide more stability than can be secured when working as a sessional doctor and would be available only during a period of exceptionally challenging circumstances. It would be intended to prevent such doctors from becoming "returners".
Induction and Refresher Element of the NI GP development Scheme

Eligibility Criteria

This element of the scheme will be for GPs who

- Qualified in the UK but have not provided GMS in the NHS for two years or more preceding application to the scheme.
- Qualified in the EEA and have not provided GMS in the NHS in the two years or more preceding application to the scheme.
- Qualified outside the EEA and have been awarded Article 11 certification by GMC and have not provided GMS in the NHS for two years or more preceding application to the scheme.

and who require a period of observed time in a general practice to provide assurance to the HSCB Responsible Officer with regard to their performance.

Doctors will be eligible for the refresher/induction element where they meet the following criteria;

- Have full registration with the GMC and hold a JCPTGP/GMC (PMETB) certificate of completion of training (CCT or CECPR) or have an acquired right to work as a GP in the UK.
- Are eligible for inclusion in the NI PMPL.
- Have level 7 scores in the academic International English Language Testing System (IELTS) in each of the following:
  - Overall
  - Speaking
  - Listening
  - Reading
  - Writing

This criterion will be revised in line with any outcome of GMC review of language skills.

The applicant must also have the linguistic skills required to participate in the scheme and this will also be informally assessed at the interview which takes place prior to commencement of the scheme.

- Have a stated commitment to working in clinical general practice in Northern Ireland.

Time waiting for inclusion in an educational scheme will be taken into account in assessing applications of a similar nature, ie. in these circumstances decisions will be made on the basis of chronology of receipt of application forms. Decisions regarding whether a doctor can appropriately be included in the scheme will be made by the Director of GP training at NIMDTA.
Application and Assessment Procedures

Application and Initial Assessment

The application procedure and initial assessment procedure will be designed to enable NIMDTA to:

- Establish whether a GP would benefit from the scheme.
- Establish the length of time that the doctor is likely to require to be in the scheme part-time up to a funded maximum of six months full-time or equivalent part-time.
- Identify those applicants where six months full-time equivalent in the scheme would not be sufficient to enable them to work as an independent practitioner providing general medical services.
- Screen out any GP with retraining or induction needs but who do not have the necessary level of knowledge and skill to practice safely in a clinical setting.
- Establish that the GP has not previously been part of a returner, induction or remedial training scheme. Where this is the case, the doctor will not be funded for inclusion in the NI GP development scheme.

The application and initial assessment procedure will include the following;

Application on a Structured Form and CV.

The form will require provision of full details of qualifications, employment history including reason for leaving general practice previously, reasons for training need including any conditions on practise, two references, details of English language skills and intended career path on successful completion of the scheme.

Shortlisting against Specified Criteria.

Shortlisting will be based on the standard application form and CV. IT will be based on meeting specified criteria in terms of qualifications and inclusion in, or eligibility for inclusion in the NI PMPL. Written evidence will be required in relation to the following;

- The applicant must be able to work at least half time (4 clinical sessions and 1 peer support or CPD session in each week) during the period of training. Exceptions to this will be made rarely and at the discretion of the PMPL committee at the time of consideration of the initial application to the scheme. The weekly support/CPD session will form part of the funded sessions.
- The applicant undertakes not to work as a locum in primary care or in out of hours provision during the period of training.
- The applicant should be prepared to have transport appropriate to the requirements of the practice placement and to commute to an identified practice. Since the number of practice placements available is limited, it is not guaranteed that a practice in the desired location will be available.
- The applicant is resident in NI at the time of application and has a stated commitment to providing GMS in a substantive GP post in NI following completion of their training.
- The applicant has the necessary references for inclusion in the scheme.
• The applicant has a satisfactory enhanced criminal records check.
• The applicant has evidence of a satisfactory occupational health assessment where appropriate.

Pre Programme Assessment.

The pre programme assessment is in two parts;

MCQ Knowledge Test

Applicants will be asked to complete an MCQ knowledge test before commencing on the scheme. The MCQ is delivered by computer using Pearson VUE testing centres. The assessments are held 4 times a year. You will be able to schedule a place at your nearest test centre once your application has been accepted. There is a fee of £100. You are allowed a maximum of 3 attempts.
This test is derived from questions used in recruitment for GP training, and the pass mark will be set by the Deanery providing the test. Applicants will be limited to three attempts. The test is delivered locally through Pearson Vue centres.

The cost of this test will be funded by the applicant. The current cost is £100 approximately per test.

http://www.gprecruitment.org.uk/refresher.html

Pre Programme Assessment in Practice

Before commencing on a refresher/induction programme, an applicant will require to undertake a week long assessment placement in a practice. This will be for eight sessions week, or equivalent part-time by agreement. This will be designed to fully assess needs, develop a detailed training plan and establish the length of time required for them to be in the scheme. For doctors whose first language is not English, appropriateness of their language skills to the provision of GMS will be assessed as part of this practice placement and will form part of a report prepared by the practice for NIMDTA on their training needs. It is possible that the assessing practice will consider that a doctor does not need to proceed further with a refresher or induction programme at this stage. This period of a week will form part of the funded programme.

Following the initial assessments NIMDTA will provide a report to HSCB on the applicants to the scheme and the estimated number of places and of weeks required for each applicant to enable an outline cost to be estimated for that year and any necessary follow up action to include conditional inclusion in the NI PMPL to allow for the practice placement to proceed.

Validated Simulated Surgery (Some Applicants Only)

The simulated surgery will take place once the applicant has passed the knowledge test and will include contextualised linguistic assessment if English is not the applicant’s first language It will be required where English language or consultation skills give cause for concern during pre-programme assessment. The
assessment will be held at the RCGP CSA centre. Applicants for the Induction and Refresher element of the NI GP Development Scheme are:

- Limited to a maximum of two attempts at the simulated surgery to be taken after they have passed the knowledge test.
- Required to commence a placement in practice within 12 months of passing the assessments. If more than 12 months elapses then they have to repeat and pass the entrance assessments to demonstrate that they have retained the necessary knowledge and skills for the scheme.

If the applicant scores 60% on the entry simulated surgery, the applicant may not require to sit an exit surgery unless there are concerns identified during the placement in a practice.

The cost of the simulated surgery would be funded by the applicant. The current cost is £750 approximately per surgery plus travel to London.

**Length of Programme**

The scheme will be time limited for each GP included in it, and the dates for which it is approved will be confirmed to the GP prior to commencement. The maximum period time available will be 26 weeks for up to 8 sessions per week. A minimum of 4 clinical sessions and 1 peer support or CPD session will be required each week.

**NI Primary Medical Performers List**

The HSCB will conditionally include applicants in the NI PMPL with the condition of satisfactory completion of the programme within the specified timeframe.

Any applicant that does not meet the entrance criteria should be referred to the NI PMPL advisory group as this is likely to mean that inclusion in the list would be subject to conditions that they could not meet, hence the application for inclusion in the list is likely to be rejected.

**Assessments During Placement**

Regular workplace assessments to include case based discussion will be undertaken and recorded in the NHS Induction Booklet.

The trainer will provide a report on the placement to NIMDTA for consideration and sign off.

**Exit Assessments**

Exit assessments will be based on those for GP trainees and will include the following;

- MRCGP applied knowledge test (AKT).
- NIMDTA equivalent of the NHS Induction Booklet and appropriate level of workplace based assessment signed off by the trainer.
- An exit assessment in the validated simulated surgery may be required at the discretion of NIMDTA based on the practice report on the practice placement. This will be held quarterly in the RCGP CSA centre. The GP will be limited to a maximum of 2 attempts in the exit simulated surgery to be taken after the midpoint in the scheme.
placement. The costs of an exit simulated surgery and the AKT would be funded by the applicant. The current cost of the AKT is £480 approximately plus travel to London.

NIMDTA will decide whether the programme has been successfully completed and will provide the necessary information to the HSCB to enable any necessary action to be taken in relation to the NI PMPL. NIMDTA will make a final recommendation to the HSCB and PMPL Committee as required in relation to inclusion in the NI PMPL, and will provide information relevant to revalidation.

General Requirements including Sessional Commitment

- The scheme is based on full time being defined as nine sessions per week (37.5 hours per full time working week) as per the GP model contract. A session therefore will be 4 hours 10 minutes. The maximum number of sessions is eight.
- GPs on the scheme must work sufficient sessions to comply with revalidation requirements and the scheme will be reviewed as necessary in light of experience of implementation of revalidation and any changes to the NI Primary Medical Performers List Regulations.
- It is recognised that some sessions may be longer (morning surgery and visits) than others (evening surgery) but the overall weekly hours worked should equate to the number of sessions approved.
- Sessions should include clinical work (surgery, visits, on call, telephone consultations and directly related administration) less allocated CPD and educational supervision/mentoring time.
- Daytime on call duties must be included in the clinical sessions.
- OOHs working time is not counted within the scheme sessions but may be undertaken as part of the training programme in addition to the sessions in the practice at the discretion of the NIMDTA.
- The scheme GP cannot do any other general practice work, including locums.
- The scheme GP can do non general practice work that does not interfere with their time in the practice, at the discretion of NIMDTA and the employing practice.
- GPs and practices cannot enter into a contract before the proposed education programme is fully approved by NIMDTA and funding is approved by HSCB. The start date must be no later than three months after approval.
- The scheme will last for a defined time period as advised by NIMDTA. Salary is to be negotiated between the GP and practice.
- The GP will fund their own professional expenses.
- The scheme GP will have a NIMDTA approved educational supervisor/mentor in the practice.
- Access to a car or suitable transport appropriate to meet the requirements of the scheme is required.

Educational/clinical development sessions

- There should be a system to enable the scheme GP to attend practice meetings.
General Support

- Practices should release the scheme GP and their buddy/educational supervisor to meet for 30 minutes per week of protected time.
- NIMDTA will nominate an educator (e.g. associate director or tutor) for the GP Development Scheme to support the scheme GPs and review their placements annually.

Practice Responsibilities

Practices applying to the scheme should:

- Commit to providing an assessment report after a one week placement which includes assessment of English language where appropriate using a standard form available from NIMDTA.
- Offer a sufficiently wide range of GMS services to enable the scheme GP to maintain skills across the full spectrum of GP work.
- Be active in GP education
- Submit a structured report on the doctor’s time in the practice and outcomes, using a standard form available from NIMDTA.

Practices that do not currently meet training criteria may be approved if they can demonstrate that they are active in education and can show plans to progress towards core criteria similar to the minimum educational criteria for training practices, over an agreed timescale.
Funding Arrangements – Induction and Refresher Programme

Payments to Participating GP

Salary payments are to be negotiated between the GP and the practice. Payments to the GP are made by the providing practice.

Payments to Participating Practice

A trainer grant of £7,500 per annum pro rata to the duration of training up to a maximum of 26 weeks will be payable by HSCB.

In exceptional circumstances additional supervised sessions for specified activities (eg additional English language assessment) can be funded at £170 per session up to a maximum of 5 Sessions. These will be payable by the HSCB, provided that they are agreed in advance by both HSCB and NIMDTA.

Reimbursement of 50% of a standard GMS clinical session (£170) will be made by HSCB which are worked by the scheme doctor up to the maximum agreed weekly number.

Funding will be provided for up to a maximum of 26 weeks for up to 8 sessions each week. A minimum of 4 clinical sessions and 1 peer support or CPD session are required in each week.

Costs which must be met by the Participating GP

- Fees for tests;
  MCQ
  Validated Simulated Surgery (where required)
  AKT
  Plus travel to providing bodies.
- Indemnity costs
- Car and/or travel expenses

A Summary Table for the NI GP Development Scheme which illustrates funding arrangements is given below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element of Programme</th>
<th>Eligible participants</th>
<th>Anticipated average length of programme</th>
<th>Arrangements for Payment to GP</th>
<th>Payment to practice by HSCB</th>
<th>Assessment/ costs payable by GP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Induction Element</strong></td>
<td>Doctors trained outside NHS/Never worked in NHS GMS.</td>
<td>Up to 26 weeks for up to 8 sessions each week (Minimum of 4 clinical sessions and 1 peer support or CPD session in each week)</td>
<td>Salary to be negotiated between the GP and the practice. Payment to GP to be made by the practice.</td>
<td>Trainer grant £7,500 per annum pro rata for duration of training up to a maximum of 26 weeks. Reimbursement of 50% of standard GMS clinical session (currently £170). Exceptionally - additional supervised sessions for specified activities (eg English language) agreed in advance and funded at £170 per session up to a maximum of 5 sessions.</td>
<td>MCQ (currently £100) Validated Simulated Surgery (currently £750) AKT (currently £480) Plus travel to providing bodies. Indemnity costs.</td>
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<td><strong>Refresher (returner) Element</strong></td>
<td>GPs absent from NHS GMS for in excess of 2 years (regardless of location/nature of practice in the interim eg could be other sector of HSCNI/primary care in another country).</td>
<td>Up to 26 weeks (dependant upon period of absence from provision of NHS personal medical services) at up to 8 sessions per week (Minimum of 4 clinical sessions and 1 peer support or CPD session in each week)</td>
<td>Salary to be negotiated between the GP. Payment to be made to the GP by the practice</td>
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