

Lewisham

Lewisham GP Vocational Training Scheme

Lewisham is one of six boroughs that make up South East London. Being central to all six, it has excellent transport links to central London (London Bridge is just 12 minutes away by train), whilst maintaining easy access to Kent and the other southern counties. Housing is affordable and the community is a rich mix of cultural diversity with a real community feel. Lewisham also has its own shopping centre, plenty of green spaces and a thriving nightlife. Something for everyone.

Primary Healthcare in Lewisham is delivered from 42 practices across the borough, approximately half of which are training practices, some with more than one trainee. The borough is also served by the Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Foundation Trust with whom the GP Training scheme has an excellent working relationship. Virtually all of our hospital jobs are based at the Lewisham Hospital site or at community placements within the borough. The hospital has a dedicated paediatric A+E which provides an excellent training experience for those worried about gaining the necessary paediatric experience. The hospital consultants fund an annual summer party for all junior doctors at the hospital which is a real perk of working there. The scheme also offers Integrated Training Posts (ITPs). These split training time 50/50 between a General Practice placement and a community placement. This allows for greater exposure to specialties that would not warrant a full time post, but do offer valuable skills and experience for the work of a GP. All of our rotations include 6 months full time in a GP practice as well as a 6 month ITP post prior to a full time placement in General Practice for your ST3 year (often at a different practice from your previous 6 month practice). The other year of training (either ST1 or 2) is made up of 3 x 4 month posts to again increase the number of specialties that trainees are exposed to better prepare you for both exams and life as a GP.

The Trust benefits from strong links with both Guy's and St Thomas' and King's College Hospitals. Similarly, the VTS also shares strong links with their respective training schemes also and joint VTS sessions are an annual highlight for all the trainees involved. GP trainers in Lewisham also benefit from shared learning with trainers from other schemes - a setup that is unique to SE London. This integration and uniqueness continues into Out Of Hours training which is done primarily at South East London Doctors Cooperative (SELDOC). SELDOC is a collaboration of all the practices in Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham and so you will have the opportunity to mix with trainers and trainees from other schemes when undertaking shifts.

The Lewisham GPVTS scheme has an excellent success rate when it comes to passing MRCP and many of our graduates continue to live and work in the borough - a testament to the quality of the scheme and the welcoming environment created by both other healthcare workers and the patients. Current trainees are a good mix of run-through trainees and more mature junior doctors, from all over the country and help provide a varied peer support network. The scheme runs 3 x 12 week terms a year roughly aligned to school academic years and at most sessions, there is time for each year group to spend time together with their lead Program Director. We have a mixture of external speakers and peer-based teaching. We like to give over the last session of each term to the trainees to organize something for the whole group and these sessions have taken us to escape rooms, pottery making,

community garden projects and more. We welcome new trainees with a welcome reception and there are Christmas and summer parties, so even if new to Lewisham (or London), there will be plenty of opportunity to meet and mix with peers. Educationally, we have away days at the beginning of the academic year and another for ST3s in the summer term to offer greater support in transition from trainee to Newly Qualified GP.

Here are what some of our current trainees have to say about the scheme:

“Lewisham is a great place to train, lots of diversity and very friendly PDs”
Komal Patel

“Very supportive, friendly and approachable trainers and group. The VTS is keen to ensure you are receiving excellent training and will intervene if you aren't”
Rebecca Holland

“Lewisham is a great, friendly hospital and VTS – it's fun and flexible”
Ed Morris

Programme Directors in Lewisham:

Dr Leo Emordi

Leo has been a GP and trainer in Lewisham for 5 years, having trained on the Lewisham VTS himself. He is the Clinical Lead for his group of 5 practices and had been a Programme Director for 1 year.

Dr Niro Amin

Niro is a sessional portfolio GP who does her GP work in Lambeth but her education work in Lewisham. She has vast experience in both Coaching and Adult education and has been a PD on the scheme for the last 6 years.

Dr Chris Ferdinand

Ferdy is a GP Partner and trainer in Lewisham and was a graduate of the Lewisham VTS and still works at his training practice. He also has roles in the local LMC and is a PCN Clinical Director. He cycles wherever he can. He has been a PD for 4 years.

If you would like more information about any aspect of the GP training scheme in Lewisham, please feel free to email Dr Chris Ferdinand (cferdinand@nhs.net)