

Northwick Park

Northwick Park GP Training Programme

Department of Medical Education,
Northwick Park & St. Mark's Hospital
Watford Road
Harrow
Middlesex
HA1 3UJ

Description of scheme

Northwick Park is a longstanding GP training scheme with a rich tradition of innovation and learner centred education.

Learning is delivered through interactive methods in small and large groups. Activities include role-play; scenario-based learning, narrative education, reflection, team tasks and fun. We try to achieve a balance between work done entirely by the group and sessions facilitated by outside speakers with medical and non-medical backgrounds. Our weekly half day education sessions aim to provide a safe and trusting, enjoyable environment to nurture learning.

We are delighted that our full range of sessions have continued virtually throughout the COVID pandemic. Once we have permission to restart face to face teaching, we are hoping to return to meeting in person on Thursday afternoons. Our Half Day Release (HDR) Thursday afternoons run from 2-5pm and it is expected that all trainees attend these.

GP training usually runs over 3 years (full time). From August 2021, the hospital component of your training will be for 12 months and the GP component will be 24 months. The hospital posts in your training will mainly be based at Northwick Park Hospital, however some specialities (Paediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Psychiatry, A and E etc) require some split site working with Ealing and Central Middlesex hospitals. The GP posts of your training will take place in one of our approved training practices which may be in Harrow, Hillingdon, South Hertfordshire, Ealing, Brent and Barnet.

Each GP learner has the support of a personal tutor (one of the 3 Programme Directors) and we offer regular opportunities to meet to discuss both educational and pastoral issues.

Highlights of the scheme

2020 has not been a normal year for any of us, so our usual scheme highlights have been put on hold. We hope to return to these again as soon as it is safely possible.

Annual summer party: We have a celebratory annual summer party which is a wonderful event for all ST1-3 and recent graduates, and GP trainers. This is a super opportunity to get to know everyone who is involved with the scheme and is always a lovely relaxed and enjoyable evening.

Annual Away Day: A high point of the year is our Away Day, which consists of a circuit of clinical seminars from both consultants and GP's with special interests, followed by an afternoon of topics on the wider GP curriculum.

Annual 2 day Training Event: One of the great highlights of our Northwick calendar, is the Annual Northwick Park training event. This is usually in November at Cumberland Lodge, Great Windsor Park. Our training event consist of educational sessions by Programme Directors and experienced external facilitators. We cover a wide variety of topics such as leadership, GP professionalism, wellbeing, decision making, critical reasoning, consultation and clinical skills. During the course we also run a hugely popular clinical scenarios circuit with highly trained actors, facilitated by experienced GP trainers. There is a great emphasis on threading team building, making good friendships and bonding during this whole event. Some recent comments from the trainees on this event:

"The residential is an extremely important and valued aspect of the VTS scheme. We gain so much educationally and personally and it's fun!"

"Highly important for development as a General Practitioner because of the space and time provided to reflect on and improve on performance."

"Highlights for me include, team bonding, environment away from usual regular sessions, developing new skills. The CSA actors and simulation was invaluable."

Testimonials:

"Thank you PDs another very useful session. What a fantastic term of virtual learning delivered despite the whole pandemic!" Dr V (GPST1 August 2020)

"The VTS scheme gave me not just excellent clinical experience, but perhaps more importantly ways of understanding people and myself. The value given to understanding and nurturing the doctor-patient relationship (particularly through use of Balint groups), continues to influence my daily practice. We were always given the chance to shape our own VTS session content and style and had several multi-disciplinary learning sessions to give the wider health context to clinical issues. I found myself supported to be able to find my own identity as a learner, doctor and healer and can only thank the Incredibly creative and thoughtful role models and leaders of our scheme who shaped our learning culture". *Ellie Worthington GP Harrow*

"Northwick Park was a real eye opener for me; I will be forever grateful for how the GP VTS (vocational training scheme) approached our development into confident, safe and happy GPs for the future! My medical school (and foundation programme) taught me how to think about Medicine, and patients. But Northwick Park taught me how to feel about those same things. How to care for my patients, my colleagues and myself. How to become the GP I am today - going into work every day with a smile, ready for whatever challenges my patients bring through the door". *James McNally, GP Oxford*

"The Northwick Park VTS became a second family for me as I continued my professional journey. Many of those I learnt with, I am still good friends with. The course developed skills which I still use today. The tutors are engaging, supportive and very student centred. They provided continual guidance through and after my time at the VTS". *Jay Vyas, GP Partner Hertfordshire*

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