

Royal Free

NHS England, North Central and East London The Royal Free GP Specialty Training Programme 2026

Programme Description

The Royal Free Specialty Training Programme (GPSTP) offers approximately 20 postgraduate training programmes each year for future general practitioners. Training is for three years and the first two years (ST1 & ST2) consist of 4x6m posts in rotation. Two of these posts are based in general practice and two within secondary care, mainly at the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust and its associated sites. Year three (ST3) is spent fully in general practice. An educational half-day release programme takes place on Wednesday afternoons for trainees in all three years of the programme

Location

[The Royal Free Hospital](#) is one of London's major teaching hospitals and also provides general hospital facilities to its local population. It has around 900 beds and provides one of the three main teaching campuses for UCL Medical School. The main hospital site is in Hampstead, London NW3. The hospital is renowned in many areas of research, teaching and clinical care including Liver, Kidney and Bone Marrow transplantation, Renal, HIV, Infectious Diseases, Plastic Surgery, Immunology and Paediatric Gastroenterology. It is a leading cancer centre with a range of specialist diagnostic and treatment services in Oncology and Haematology and a major Neuroscience base with a network extending throughout North London and the Home Counties. The Royal Free GPSTP works closely with North Central London Integrated Care Board, Primary Care Networks, Learning Hubs and a large group of experienced and committed training practices across North Central London.

All Royal Free GP practices are in North Central London and within easy reach of the Royal Free by public transport. See map and current list of training practices here: <https://royalfreegptraining.blogspot.com/2018/03/gp-training-practices.html>

GP placements are not linked to specific rotations but are allocated each 6m on a rolling basis depending on which practices have capacity at the time.

Allocation in ST1/2 is based on best match for trainee postcodes. For ST3 placements trainees will have the opportunity to rank their preferences amongst the practices available at the time and we have an algorithm which aims to provide best match across the whole group.

All trainees will have experience in at least two, and usually three, practices over the programme as a whole.

Posts

Exact ST1/2 rotations will vary each year depending on posts available but will include two posts from the following list of specialties: *Paediatrics, Obstetrics & Gynaecology, A&E, ENT, Ophthalmology, Trauma & Orthopaedics, Rheumatology/Dermatology, Neurology/Stroke medicine, Dermatology, Elderly medicine, Diabetes/Endocrinology, Infectious Diseases/HIV, Public Health.*

Most hospital posts are based at the Royal Free except ENT (Barnet/Royal Free), Psychiatry (Camden & Islington Mental Health Trust), Public Health (Islington CCG), Palliative Medicine (Eden Hall Hospice).

We also offer one Innovative Training Post (ITP) in Medical Education which will actively involve trainees in medical student teaching in general practice – and count as a “GP+” post in ST1/2 (see below).

“GP+” posts

During ST1/2 all trainees will have the opportunity to include a special interest “GP+” attachment for 3 sessions per week during their second 6m GP training post. A range of pre-approved GP+ attachments will be available to apply for internally subject to availability each year.

ST3 posts

Year three (ST3) will be based in an approved local training practice. ST3 practice allocations will be made following a trainer/trainee matching process during year two.

Precise combinations of posts are to be finalised by NHSE recruitment team and will not be available prior to offers. Successful candidates will have the opportunity to rank their rotation preferences following offer of appointment. Candidates who score higher at selection will have a higher chance of gaining their preferred London training scheme and preferred combination of posts. Please note that allocation of programmes and rotations is managed entirely centrally by NHSE and therefore any queries regarding post combinations should be directed to the NHSE support portal at: <https://lasepgmdsupport.hee.nhs.uk/support/home>. NB GP+ attachments are not pre-allocated but applied for within programme.

Job descriptions for individual posts are available from Royal Free Hospital HR Department via rf.leademployerservice@nhs.net. All posts and all rotations are pre-approved for GP training. All rotations are balanced in terms of experience required by RCGP/GMC.

Posts cannot be swapped once rotations have been accepted, and HEE take the view that it is not educationally disadvantageous for GP trainees to repeat one or more hospital specialties already experienced during previous training.

Academic Clinical Fellowships

A small number of our rotations each year are allocated as Academic Clinical Fellowships (ACFs) in Primary Care. ACF programmes provide clinical training in

general practice combined with training in academic primary care (research and teaching), over a four year period. There is a separate national application process for ACF posts (see <https://gprecruitment.hee.nhs.uk/Recruitment/Academic>).

Applying for deferral

UK applicants for GP training can apply to defer the start of their ST1 programme on statutory grounds such as personal ill health or maternity/paternity/adoption leave. Successful applicants cannot apply to defer entry to GP training on non-statutory grounds. However they may be able to transfer their final recruitment score from one recruitment round to another recruitment round.

All questions around deferral should be directed centrally to the NHSE recruitment team via: <https://lasepgmdsupport.hee.nhs.uk/support/home>

Combined Training pathways

The Combined Training pathways provide the opportunity to combine previous relevant experience with your GP training programme.

Your previous experience may be from another UK specialty training programme, a substantive paid or SAS role, or relevant overseas experience above Foundation level or equivalent. The amount of time contributing can vary from 3 to 12 months depending on the breadth of your experience, the quality of evidence you can provide, and your progress in the first twelve months of the GP training programme.

There are two combined training pathways:

Accreditation of Transferable Capabilities (ATC) for applicants who are transferring to general practice training from another GMC approved specialty training programme

Certificate of Completion of Training: Combined Programme (CCT CP) for applicants who have relevant experience from outside a GMC approved specialty training programme. This might include substantive clinical roles or overseas training and experience.

For further information on Combined Training see <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/training-exams/discover-general-practice/qualifying-as-a-gp-in-the-nhs/combined-training.aspx>.

All questions around combined training should be directed centrally to NHSE recruitment please via: <https://lasepgmdsupport.hee.nhs.uk/support/home>

Educational Activities

Throughout the three-year programme Royal Free GP trainees meet every Wednesday afternoon during academic term time for half-day educational release.

The programme normally takes place on the Royal Free campus but is currently run remotely. It aims to provide a broad range of educational sessions and if possible at least one away day (optionally residential) course in each academic year. The topics for half day release sessions are largely self-selected by the GP trainees themselves and the Programme Directors also enhance the learning experience with carefully chosen topics aimed at broader aspects of the GP curriculum e.g. inter-professional learning, Clinical Skills Assessment (CSA), and GP simulation days. Each hospital post also has its own specialty related educational activities.

The Royal Free training programme is also closely linked to UCL Medical School's academic Department of Primary Care and Population Health (PCPH) which can offer opportunities for interested trainees to take part in undergraduate teaching both in hospital and in general practice.

Less than Full Time Training

Any trainee offered or in a substantive HEE approved training post can apply for less than full time training (LTFT) if they meet the eligibility criteria. Full details can be found here:

<https://lasepgmdsupport.hee.nhs.uk/support/solutions/7000006974>

All LTFT applications and queries are managed via the [NHSE support portal](#)

Global Health Fellowships

GP Trainees in London can apply for a small number of one-year Clinical Fellowships in Global Health (GHF) in developing countries. If approved these posts are taken as Time out of Programme Experience (OOPE) between ST2 and ST3. Further details at: <https://london.hee.nhs.uk/global-health-fellowships-time-out-programme-oop>

Royal Free GP Training Programme Directors

- Dr Vik Dave
- Dr Marcus Lewis
- Prof Joe Rosenthal (for hospital posts and academic programmes)
- Our Trainers' Workshop Convenor (leading on practice allocations is Dr Jonathan Sheldon)

Application process and queries

For general GP training and recruitment information see national details at: <https://gprecruitment.hee.nhs.uk/>

For information on Academic Clinical Fellowships see: <https://gprecruitment.hee.nhs.uk/Recruitment/Academic>

For information on applying to GP training in London see:
<https://gprecruitment.hee.nhs.uk/recruitment/letbs-deaneries/lr>

For all general queries on *GP training and recruitment in London* (including deferrals, shortened programmes via ATC, Less than full time training and content of rotations please contact the HEE support portal via:
<https://lasepgmdesupport.hee.nhs.uk/support/home>.

For Royal Free specific queries (only) email: royalfreegpsts@gmail.com