

West Middlesex

West Middlesex GP VTS

The West Middlesex Vocational Training Scheme was established in 1978 with one trainee and has expanded over the years to nearly forty. It is based in the hospital in Isleworth, West London and is linked to training practices radiating from Norwood Green in the Hounslow Health area to Hampton Wick in Richmond and North Surrey at Stanwell.

The hospital posts include Emergency Medicine, Paediatrics, Care of the Elderly, ENT, Obstetrics and Gynaecology (all within the Chelsea and Westminster Trust) and Mental Health (part of the West London Mental Health Trust). The hospital posts had largely good reviews in the recent GMC survey for education and supervision, particularly the Emergency Medicine unit.

The rotations include six-month ST1 or ST2 posts in general practice, either as full-time trainees or as ITPs (Innovative training posts). The ITPs are divided into General Practice and hospital sessions which include dermatology, rheumatology, ENT & Eyes, O&G with MH and Community/Hospital Paediatrics. The Programme Directors are members of the hospital Education Governance Group where concerns raised by Trainees in the hospital posts can be discussed with leading hospital Consultants who are very supportive of our scheme.

The final ST3 year is in local training practices attached to the West Middlesex VTS and whose Trainers are members of the local Trainers' Workshop where education ideas and programmes are shared.

The Trainees can express their preferences for their final training practices which might suit them better for geographical and other reasons, and wherever possible, Trainees are appointed to a practice of their choice.

Trainees are allocated an Education Supervisor who will be closely involved with education experience and completion of the training e-portfolio. This role usually passes on the GP Trainer for the final ST3 year.

We are a popular scheme and many of our alumni are partners and Trainers in local practices including one of our Programme Directors!

Educational activities

The VTS forms a vibrant active learning community. It is supportive, fun and provides excellent learning opportunities. The learning is based on good solid curriculum coverage and also a chance to talk in small groups. Trainees can take a lead to run the summer term and take on trainee talks

The summer term includes help with planning life after VTS such as preparing for the vast opportunities open to GPs. We also run sessions to preparing for interviews and practice accounts. Each year we try to visit places (such as the Chelsea Physic garden in 2018) or other places of interest.

We run a 2-day CSA preparation course run with actors and focussed talks on professional values.

We have run a residential for May for many years in Windsor Great Park on such topics as Leadership and Resilience. This is great opportunity to meet all the Trainers and have fun. The teaching and learning is varied and very useful.

Highlights

The PDs have close working relationships with the Consultants and this helps to support Trainees and deal with issues when they arise

We provide excellent pastoral support and one to one conversations when needed.

The CSA course is charged at a nominal charge to cover actors' fees. It is very useful and results have been very good.

Trainees are involved in planning and delivery of the programme.

The location of the training practices and quality is diverse and excellent.

PDs are approachable and committed to teaching and learning.

We give very good guidance on areas such as ARCP and Eportfolio

Testimonials

“Excellent VTS scheme with regular and varied teaching which fosters an environment of friendly and sociable trainees. Supportive and approachable PDs who go out of their way to help Trainees from first days, difficulties with hospital jobs, to exams and finding work after qualification. I have, and will continue, to recommend it!”

“The West Middlesex hospital VTS scheme was very supportive of me when I was unwell due to mental health related problems.

I had a 15-month period of sick leave and the programme directors were all very compassionate and understanding and showed interest in me as an individual.

My transition back into general practice training, initially less than full time was seamless with lots of reassurance along the way.

West Middlesex VTS is fortunate enough to be run by PD's who between them have a wealth of academic diversity and skills including an Associate Dean (with a pastoral care role for 'doctors in difficulty') and a CSA examiner. The VTS teaching afternoons were always varied and interesting with a move away from 'text book medicine' which can be self-taught, instead focusing on communication skills and medical humanities.

I would have no hesitation in recommending this scheme to anyone who was considering a career in General Practice.”

Programme Directors

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