

**Report of achievements of International Medical Graduate Support Fellows in  
Mid and South Essex – 18<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

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## **SUFFOLK AND NORTH-EAST ESSEX**

It has been a real pleasure to have supported GP trainees and TPDs across the Suffolk and North-East Essex in the last year in my role as International GP trainee support fellow.

My key achievements in this role were as following:

- helped new GP trainees with IMG background to transition into the GP training programme smoothly by arranging half-day online induction by collaborating with other IMG fellows
- facilitated in few consulting and communication skill workshops for new IMG GP trainees and also for GP trainees in different stages of their training which were organised at different levels; deanery and local training hub
- ran workshops on how to write up curriculum vitae and prepare for GP job interviews; I am very pleased to find out that some trainees that attended the workshop have managed to secure salaried GP jobs around the patch and one outside the patch by personal choice
- ran small group workshops to discuss about SCA format, grading, useful resources and how to prepare for it
- ran workshop on how to write up reflective logs
- I ran clinics for GP trainees where there were able to book in with me face-to-face or virtually to discuss anything that is troubling them
- my teaching style and presentation has certainly improved over the last one year

I am progressing well in my PG cert in Med Education due to complete in September 2025..

Challenges:

- I did wish some TPDs across the patch recognised that I could be a valuable resource to signpost to their trainees for support and guidance where needed and invited me over to deliver some workshops etc; missed opportunity

I do hope this fellowship programme continues in the future as it does provide a space for the IMG GP trainees to discuss problems whether personal or professional freely and get some advice from GPs that have been in their shoes and successfully completed the training not long ago.

**Dr Shobana Jayakumar**

Salaried GP at Woolpit Health Centre

International GP trainee support fellow for Suffolk and North-East Essex till May 2025

## **HERTFORDSHIRE AND WEST ESSEX**

### **Summary Report for International Trainee Support Fellowship Role (2024-2025)**

**Author – Dr Su Khant Chei (ITS Fellow)**

#### **Introduction**

This report summarizes trainee feedback on the fellow's support, highlighting the effectiveness of the current fellowship role and areas requiring continued support. The feedback has highlighted the need for continued support in targeted training and mentorship, particularly for exam preparation, portfolio guidance, and post-CCT career planning.

#### **Summary of Feedback**

##### **1. Positive Impact of Fellowship Activities**

Trainees consistently praised the fellowship-led sessions, highlighting:

- **Supportive Environment:** The fellow was recognized as enthusiastic, approachable, and confident, providing individualized attention that made a significant difference.
- **Exam Preparation:** The targeted SCA support sessions were particularly well-received, with trainees requesting further exam-focused preparation opportunities.
- **Induction & Transition Support:** The fellow has played a key role in organizing and delivering well-received induction events for new trainees.
- **Consultation Skills Development:** Many found the sessions highly effective in improving their approach to SCA exam scenarios and general GP consultations.
- **Constructive Feedback:** Trainees valued structured guidance on tackling consultation scenarios and appreciated the knowledgeable, engaging delivery by the fellow.

##### **2. Common areas of perceived struggles faced by IMGs**

- **Post-CCT Career Guidance**

Several trainees expressed anxiety about post-CCT job prospects, particularly those on visas, citing a lack of accessible information on career pathways, diplomas, and certifications.

A request for structured guidance on career progression, including fellowships and additional qualifications – 1 to 1 support and group session were provided for post CCT and visa guidance

- Portfolio Documentation & Structure Challenges

Many trainees find the e-portfolio format challenging and need more structured support in documenting clinical experiences, especially those in specialty rotations like psychiatry.

A need for clearer guidance on what types of entries are expected – 1 to 1 support was highly appreciated.

- Exam Support (AKT & SCA)

While existing SCA support was highly valued, trainees requested more frequent and structured sessions focused on consultation skills and communication.

Specific requests for useful phrases, consultation structures, and mock exam scenarios.

- Support for Neurodiverse Trainees

Some trainees highlighted difficulties in structuring consultations due to neurodiversity and expressed a need for tailored support.

Concerns were raised about a general lack of resources or accommodations for neurodiverse trainees.

- Preferred Learning Formats

Strong preference for **small-group or 1:1 support**, with suggested frequency of **fortnightly sessions**.

Requests for targeted, interactive workshops focusing on practical applications rather than large-scale lectures.

## Conclusion

The fellowship has made a meaningful impact on GP trainees, particularly by addressing the gaps in exam preparation, consultation skills, and career development. However, many of these gaps would require ongoing support to ensure sustained improvement. Without continued support with structured mentorship and tailored training, there is a risk that trainees—particularly those who face additional challenges, such as international medical graduates, neurodiverse learners, and those on visa pathways—may struggle with key aspects of their progression.

By maintaining and expanding fellowship-led initiatives, we can build on the progress made so far, ensuring that trainees continue to receive high-quality, individualized support. This would not only enhance their confidence and competence in clinical

practice but also contribute to higher exam pass rates, improved career preparedness, and overall trainee well-being.

Ultimately, continued fellowship support would bridge the gap between formal GP training and the real-world challenges that trainees face, ensuring a more seamless transition into independent practice. It would reinforce the commitment to equity in training, providing all GP trainees—regardless of background or learning needs—with the tools and mentorship necessary for success.

## **MID AND SOUTH ESSEX**

### **Dr Mahmoud Elkhoully, IMG Support Fellow Report – MSE**

#### **Introduction**

I am grateful for the opportunity to work with International Medical Graduates (IMGs) and support our GP trainees in the East of England (EOE). During my fellowship year, I have gained valuable experience in medical education, building networks, and delivering training sessions. Below, I outline my key activities and achievements throughout the year.

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#### **Key Projects**

Throughout my fellowship, I focused on five main projects:

1. **Supporting New Trainees** – Assisting with portfolio management and rotation inquiries.
2. **Post-CCT Preparation** – Helping ST3 trainees transition into post-CCT careers.
3. **Communication Skills Training** – Conducting sessions to improve doctor-patient interactions.
4. **CV Preparation** – Providing guidance on crafting effective CVs for career progression.
5. **Interview Preparation** – Training trainees to succeed in job interviews.

Additionally, I conducted **one-to-one tailored support sessions**, which included:

- Portfolio guidance (reflection and feedback).
  - Support for the **Simulated Consultation Assessment (SCA)** exam.
  - Post-CCT career pathways, including CV and interview coaching.
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#### **Timeline of Activities**

##### **April – July 2024: Establishing Networks and Foundations**

During this period, I focused on **building connections** within the MSE region and understanding trainee needs. Key activities included:

- **Networking with TPDs:** Engaged with Training Programme Directors (TPDs) from three different regions to introduce my role and plan trainee support strategies (virtual).
- **Introducing Myself to Trainees:** Sent emails to all VTS groups outlining my role and available support.
- **Participating in IMG Fellows Meetings:** Attended monthly meetings to exchange experiences and strategies with other fellows.

- **Chelmsford VTS Presentation:** Delivered an introductory session to Chelmsford trainees (June 2024).
  - **Organizing the Welcome Event for New IMG Trainees in EOE** (virtual).
  - **Developing Presentation Materials:** Created structured presentations, surveys, and feedback forms for future sessions.
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## **August – December 2024: Expanding Support and Training**

This phase involved **active engagement with trainees through structured sessions:**

- **Induction Presentation:** Introduced new ST1s to available IMG support at their induction in Southend (F2F).
  - **Southend VTS Training:** Delivered sessions on training pathways and available support (virtual).
  - **Communication Skills Training:** Conducted an in-person session for Southend VTS trainees (F2F).
  - **Trainers' Meeting in Southend:** Attended and presented updates on IMG support.
  - **Basildon VTS Sessions:**
    - Introduced the **IMG support fellow role** to trainees (F2F).
    - Delivered a **Communication Skills Training session** (F2F).
  - **One-to-One Support Sessions:** Assisted trainees with portfolio management, rotation planning, and reflective writing.
  - **Started my PGCert in Medical Education** (September 2024).
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## **January – March 2025: Advanced Training and Continued Support**

In the final phase of my fellowship, I delivered specialized training and **intensive career support:**

- **Chelmsford VTS:**
    - Communication Skills Training (F2F).
    - Post-CCT Career Pathways (Virtual).
  - **Basildon VTS:**
    - CV Preparation Session (F2F).
    - Interview Preparation Session (F2F).
  - **Online One-to-One Support:**
    - **SCA Exam Preparation.**
    - **Post-CCT Career Guidance (CV & Interview Coaching).**
  - **Continued PGCert in Medical Education at QMU.**
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## Conclusion

This fellowship has been a **rewarding experience**, allowing me to make a meaningful impact on IMG trainees' educational journeys. I have developed strong teaching, mentoring, and organizational skills, which will benefit my future career in medical education. I sincerely hope to continue contributing to the **MSE region**, supporting trainees in their transition through medical training and beyond.



## **NORFOLK AND WAVENEY**

Being an IMG myself, I know only too well the challenges faced by those joining an unfamiliar healthcare system. However, with time and support, I was able to bridge the gap and successfully complete my training. Harnessing my own experience, I wanted to contribute to the community which helped me to succeed, and act as a mentor for future trainees. Therefore, when I saw the application was open for the IMG Trainee Support Fellowship, that was the time I actually thought to put myself forward.

Following my interview, I was offered 6 months ITS Fellowship role in Norfolk and Waveney Area and I started working from October 2025. Initially I arranged meetings with different TPDs and conducted virtual sessions with the Norwich VTS IMG GP trainees. I also travelled to Great Yarmouth and conducted a wellbeing session, focusing more on in-person engagement and networking with the IMG GP Trainees.

I created a WhatsApp group where the IMG trainees are able to engage and share their thoughts/concerns/expectations. I also created a bi-monthly newsletter (attached) and encouraged other IMG trainees to continue this. We now have an IMG GP Trainee Representative who is helping us to maintain and grow this platform effectively.

In January, I helped the HEEoE Exam Support Team. I did three different virtual consultations to help the trainees with how to conduct an effective consultation/what needs to be done differently to work as a confident/competent GP in Primary Care. Additionally, I started Project 999, a virtual teaching series, on 28th January 2025 with a plan to conduct 9 sessions until 25th March 2025. We meet every Tuesdays at 1830 where I discuss the AKT high yield topics. At the end of each session, I keep the floor open for the trainees to ask questions.

Alongside Project 999, I have also conducted a 2-hour SCA and 2-hour AKT session virtually for the Norwich Trainees. Meanwhile, I received few requests from different TPDs to offer tailored, 1:1 sessions to IMGs who require extra support. One of the candidates recently sat for the SCA and other candidates are planning to sit for the SCA this month. I am also supporting a couple of IMGs who are struggling overall to manage the training, exams and their personal life. I was also offered to teach on continuous basis to support the GP trainees with their exam preparation.

When I look back, I never thought that I will achieve this much within such a short period of time. I think the IMG Trainee support Fellowship Program is a unique opportunity for the Newly Qualified GPs to help the future trainees, sharing their experiences and knowledge. The fellowship itself offers further funding to compete the PG Certificate in Medical Education – an invaluable qualification enabling Fellows to offer support in a more skilled/formal way.

I would like to thank the HEEoE for offering me the opportunity to develop my leadership skills and to help the IMGs on their training journey. I look forward to applying the skills I have gained throughout this fellowship in the future.

**Dr Meshkatul Islam Mohammad Saleh**

GP, London Road Surgery, Bedford (Mon, Wed & Thu)

IMG Trainee Support Fellow, Norfolk & Waveney (Tues & Fri)

GP Educator (Tier2B), BLMK | First 5 Lead, Bedford, RCGP

## **CAMBRIDGE AND PETERBOROUGH**

### **Summary of achievements as an IMG Fellow: Dr Nikhita Joglekar**

- 1) **Welcome Event:** Alongside other IMG fellows, planned and facilitated the IMG Welcome Event for new ST1s in July – with excellent written feedback received.
- 2) **Portfolio Support:**
  - a. Developed a portfolio resource guide sent to all trainees who expressed interest in additional portfolio support – 49 trainees
  - b. Conducted 1:1 drop in portfolio drop in sessions with 22 trainees – 17 provided feedback as follows:
    - i. 94% strongly agreed their queries were fully addressed by the session
    - ii. 94% strongly agreed they were more confident with their portfolio following the session
    - iii. 94% agreed or strongly agreed that the drop in session and resource guide addressed areas not covered elsewhere in the curriculum
  - c. Designed and delivered 3x3 hour portfolio support sessions for Huntingdon ST1 trainees again with very positive feedback received
- 3) **Evaluation of Transition Project**
  - a. Conducted a digital survey with 43 responses and 5 semi-structured interviews focusing on ST3 experience of the TP, exam preparedness, confidence on qualification and retention.
  - b. 1<sup>st</sup> draft of report has been completed, once finalised aiming to publish and present findings potentially both regionally and nationally
- 4) **Trainers Meeting presentation**
  - a. Presented an overview of my role and the Transition Project to Cambridge VTS trainers to provide a summary of support available to IMGs, with an offer for additional support in the future
- 5) **Adhoc support of IMG trainees in difficulty**
  - a. Conducted 1:1 drop in sessions for IMG trainees who self-identified areas for support, and those identified by TPDs as requiring input

## **BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON**

### **Summary of achievements as an IMG Fellow: Dr Joel Kanhai**

#### **Welcome Event**

Pre-Induction welcome event for incoming IMG trainees, focused on IMG specific challenges and support systems. Event served as an introduction event for IMG trainees to IMG Support Fellows and networking

#### **Integrated Teaching Across the Region Steering Group:**

Sharing best practices in training and education across the region.

#### **Locally**

##### **TPD and Postgraduate Dean Meetings:**

Attending the meeting and understanding the challenges facing learning across Bedford and Luton, advocating the IMG perspective when generating solutions for training issues. Coordinating delivery of service with other stakeholders as Exam Support TPD and Educator Fellow. Fostering cross service referral and ensuring directed support.

##### **At the VTS Level (Bedford + Luton) for Educators:**

##### **Educator Training Day:**

Delivering Workshops at the Educator Training Day. Using the opportunity to ensure educators (ES/CS) are aware of the services offered by the IMG Support Fellow and referral pathway and other EOE Services as Coaching and Counselling.

Workshops delivered: Understanding and Supporting IMG trainees, Giving Feedback, identifying a Trainee in Need and Managing Workload.

There is reciprocal gain; by engaging with the educators the IMG support fellow can understand the areas needed for support eg ensuring portfolios are ready in advance of ESR and initiate interventions to support.

##### **Practice Visits:**

Practice Level visits, utilizing the tutorial time within practices to engage with trainees regarding essential topics. Workload Management and Tutorial Planning being the key topics. Time spent understanding the challenges experienced and what mechanisms are available to support. Encouraging trainees to have a wider understanding of their practice population, services provided by the PCN and Borough such that they can efficiently support patients. Regarding tutorials, advocating trainees engage with trainers to have a joint plan for tutorials such that essential topics are covered as well as portfolio milestones are met and trainee specific interest are covered.

### At the VTS Level (Bedford +VTS) for Trainees:

#### Entire VTS:

General Support to VTS and developing relationships with the trainees such that there is increased uptake of services

Workshop Sessions based upon IMG specific issues as Micro Aggressions and Imposter Syndromes, promoting of regional services as Patient Support and Well Being Services.

#### ST Level:

Tailoring sessions to ST Level. At the ST 1 level discussing integration into the NHS / UK. Exploring challenges and how to approach them. Exploring essential issues as bullying and services as Freedom to Speak Up / Bystander Training, exploring how to raise issues. Maximizing use of portfolio personalised and goal driven placement planning meetings and Personal Development Plans.

At the ST3 Level, discussing careers paths and working as a GP (portfolio career, OOH and special interest) exploring how to gain experience and knowledge in these areas such that goals are achieved. Practical support in Job acquisition, CV writing and Interview Support, guidance on how to engage and network with groups as First 5 or PCNs / Learning Hubs to find job opportunities.

#### Trainee Level:

Delivery of 1:1 sessions between IMG Fellow and Trainee. Promotion of these sessions at VTS and by educators and TPDs, use of available self-bookable link to ensure ease of uptake by trainees.

Scope of sessions is left broad, portfolio support, integration to the UK and NHS support, personal and professional issues, career planning. Session allows space and privacy to explore issues and solutions. Reinforcement of systems available, general advice and specific plans are made for issues, advocacy for uptake of services as PSW which may be supportive and local support systems which would be of use. The role and limitations of the IMG support fellow are made clear and onward referral is done where needed.