



— February 2026 —

PETERBOROUGH GP ST PROGRAMME

Newsletter

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Welcome to Our First GP ST Programme Newsletter

Hello all,

We've effortlessly slipped into 2026 and, somehow, February is already upon us! With every new year comes a sense of freshness, renewed energy, and exciting possibilities — and this one is no exception. Although the year is well underway, it's never too late to say a warm "Welcome to Peterborough" to our ST1s, and to our ST2s and ST3s, we hope you are keeping warm and well through the winter months.

It is with great joy and enthusiasm that we share the first edition of our newsletter with you — a space to celebrate our community, keep connected, and continue supporting one another as we move forward together into 2026.

Trainer spotlight

We are thrilled to kick off our very first Trainer Spotlight by introducing one of our own Training Programme Directors – **Emma Hamilton**. We can't wait for you to meet her and benefit from her wealth of experience and insights—get ready to be inspired!

About Me

I completed my degree at the Imperial college in London. As part of my primary degree, I completed an intercalated year in management. As such I finished university with both my MBBS and a BSc in medical sciences with management. I moved to Peterborough to complete my GP training and have been working as a salaried GP in the local area since then. I've had experience of lots of different types of practice locations. Outside of work I have a 10- and 7-year-old daughter. They keep me busy with all their various activities! I love to travel and enjoy reading all things, crime and thriller. I sometimes think I should have been a detective.... but being a GP is pretty similar!



Teaching Insight

Always reflect with a lens on being a GP – whether you are in a GP or hospital post. I've never had to set up a sliding scale since being a GP. So, I think back to that reflection when I was doing endocrinology and question what my actual reflection should have been.

Trainee Takeaways

When considering communication skills – these can be applied to conversations with colleagues and not just patients.

Easier said than done but try to work on the portfolio as you go along – it's fresh in your mind. The same is true for work admin.

Seek help early – remember that the TPDs and your supervisors are there for you. They may have experience of whatever you're struggling with. We are here to help.

Fun Facts

I love crafts – I am often signing up to various craft workshops with friends. I will give anything a try.

My most amazing trip was to the Galapagos islands. I've travelled to some fantastic places, but this was beyond my wildest dreams.

I spent my elective in New Zealand. It was such a great experience, and I actually diagnosed a retinal detachment with fundoscopy. I think about this every time I do fundoscopy to reassure myself that I would spot something serious!

Educational resources



Examinations

New exam booking system – Now on the RCGP website and no longer on Fourteenfish.

Applied Knowledge Test (AKT)

Helpful resources :

- GP SelfTest (RCGP) (official resource)
- NICE guidelines and Clinical Knowledge Summaries (CKS)
- Various commercial examination preparation question bank such as Passmedicine, Pastest.

Helpful tips :

- Begin early: At least 3 months of dedicated study prior to exam
- Use active recall and spaced repetition
- Regular use of mock exams under timed conditions
- Form small study groups for accountability
- Identify weak areas early through practice questions and work on these areas.

Simulated Consultation Assessment (SCA) – Quick Tips

- Start early – aim for 5 months' preparation.
- Understand the exam format and marking, and tailor your study accordingly.

- Attend the RCGP 1- or 3-day SCA course and book early (fees often reclaimable). Focus on communication skills + clinical knowledge; work on weaknesses and strengthen areas of confidence.
- Form a study group and practise regularly using trusted case banks and resources.
- Use COT sessions to gain structured feedback from trainers and supervisors.
- Build stamina by practising six cases back-to-back to mirror exam conditions.
- On the day: arrive early, test equipment, minimise interruptions, and display a “Do Not Disturb” sign.
- During the exam: take one station at a time and move on quickly if one doesn't go well.
- Bring essentials: ID, devices + chargers, backup laptop, headset/camera, whiteboard, snacks, and SCA helpline (020 3188 7680).

Remember: The SCA assesses safe, everyday GP practice – prepare consistently, stay calm, and trust your training.

Money Matters



LET'S TALK GP FINANCES

GP finances do not need to be complicated, but they do need to be intentional. A solid understanding of your NHS Pension, disciplined cash-flow management, appropriate protection, and specialist advice will put you in a strong position—professionally and personally—from the very start of your GP career:

·Understand your NHS Pension

For most GPs, the NHS Pension Scheme is the cornerstone of long-term financial security. It is generous, complex, and frequently misunderstood. Key points to be aware of early in your career:

- Stay opted in unless there is a clear reason not to. For most GPs, opting out is rarely advantageous.
- Know which section you are in and when they want you to retire (spoiler alert: age 67-68, unless we plan for an early retirement)

·Manage cash flow before worrying about wealth

Strong cash-flow management reduces stress and gives you options when career opportunities arise. Before thinking about investing:

- Build an emergency fund (typically 3-6 months' essential expenditure).
- Avoid lifestyle inflation that assumes income will always rise steadily.
- Be cautious with debt beyond a sensible mortgage; high-interest borrowing (e.g. credit cards, overdrafts) can quietly undermine progress.

·Protect your income and your family

Your ability to earn is your most valuable financial asset. Protection planning is therefore fundamental. This is about resilience, not pessimism

-Income protection is often overlooked by doctors but is critical, and important to do whilst you are young and in good health

-Life cover should be reviewed as soon as you have dependants or significant financial commitments (e.g. a mortgage).

-Do not assume NHS benefits alone are sufficient; understand exactly what they do and do not provide.

·Be tax-efficient from the outset

Small tax decisions made consistently well can compound significantly over time:

·-Make use of ISAs and, where appropriate, additional pension contributions can sometimes work for tax efficiency.

-If you do any self-employed work, keep good records and work with an accountant who understands primary care.

·**Take advice early** – but make sure it is specialist. General financial advice does not always translate well to general practice.

NHS Pensions, GP contracts, portfolio careers, GP partnership, and changing tax rules requires specialist understanding. The best time to seek advice is before problems arise, not when you are trying to unwind avoidable mistakes.

Wellbeing and Lifestyle

With the demands of GP life, it's easy to spend most of our time rotating between work, revision, and the sofa. But Peterborough has some genuinely lovely spots that are perfect for switching off, getting fresh air, or just doing something that isn't medicine for a few hours.

If you're in need of a mini reset, here are a few local ideas worth checking out:

Sights & Chill Spots

Peterborough Cathedral (City Centre)

Beautiful and surprisingly calming — even a short wander can feel like a mental reset. They also host events such as Candlelight concerts and festivals, which are worth keeping an eye on via their website.

Ferry Meadows (Nene Park)

Perfect for walks, cycling, or sitting with a coffee and pretending your ePortfolio doesn't exist. In summers there are water activities like paddle sports and rowing boats.

Bowling & Games

Hollywood Bowl Mini Golf & Darts – Glo
Golf Escape Rooms – Escape
Peterborough Paintball – Alamo
Paintball.

Restaurants

When work is busy and revision is looming, it's easy to fall into the trap of toast and takeaway on repeat. But one small (and very enjoyable) way to look after your wellbeing is actually going out for a proper meal — whether that's with friends, colleagues, or just yourself.

Peterborough has some genuinely great food spots, and after extensive personal “research” (I can confirm I've tried them all), here are some local favourites worth checking out:

Katana – Brilliant Pan-Asian food if you're craving a bit of everything: sushi, noodles, and proper comfort dishes. Also great for celebrating birthdays, they do live Teppanyaki as well – real fun!

Kokoro – Great for Japanese food, especially if you want something quick but fresh and satisfying.

XOXO Steakhouse – Ideal if you're in the mood for a proper steak and a sit-down meal that feels like a treat.

Fast food favourites – Nando's, Lads, Five guys and Wingstop are reliable options when you want something quick, comforting, and low-effort after a long day.

Ibrahimi Buffet – Perfect if you're very hungry and want variety without having to think too hard.

 **Lahore Tandoori, 1498 The Spice Affair, Momoz & More, and S Dera** – All excellent for Pakistani and Indian food, whether you're going out with a group or ordering in for a cosy night.

East – A great spot for Thai food when you want something different from the usual rotation.

Making time to enjoy food outside of work can be a surprisingly powerful wellbeing tool — it's social, it's comforting, and it gives you something to look forward to that isn't an exam or a clinic.

Announcements



Change in leadership activity

The RCGP has changed its stance on what is included as leadership activity. Previously, a teaching episode was often used to demonstrate the skills- now this will not count.

Please see link for more information

<https://www.rcgp.org.uk/mrcgp-exams/wpba/leadership-msf>

All day teaching coming up on 3rd of March 2026.

Gentle reminder to all ST1s to apply for study leave and other trainees to inform their practice team.

Out of hours Shifts bookings

All ST3s are reminded to plan and book OOH shifts.

Upcoming AKT and SCA exams

Good luck to everyone sitting their exams in the next few months. You've got this!

Welcome!!

We'd like to officially welcome our new GP registrar who joins us this February- **Prince Esonwune**. We wish you all the best in your training.



Love is in the air this Valentine's season — a time to share kindness, appreciation, and warmth.

Every thoughtful gesture, big or small, can brighten someone's day.

Acknowledgements

Huge thanks to Amrit, Emmanuel, Areej and Greg Povey (Chartered Financial Planner) for sharing their time, ideas, and talent with us.

This issue wouldn't be the same without your creativity and effort—thanks for making it happen.



That's all for this edition – thanks for reading, and we'll see you in the next one with more news and updates!

*Newsletter Editorial team
Olaitan Okunoye, Adaugo Diribe , Ayuk Okongor, Adedade Adegoke*