

Northern Ireland

# General Practice Specialty Training



# Getting Started

ST1 Induction Booklet

Version 12 (July 2025)

Produced by GP Specialty Training Team

# Welcome to GP Training

Congratulations on your appointment to the Northern Ireland GP Specialty Training Programme! There are many enthusiastic and talented people within our Deanery to help you during your training.

The programme we deliver will fully equip you for a life-long career in General Practice. Due to the short duration of the training programme we encourage you to engage fully from day one. There are many educational days organised by the Deanery, which are a valuable opportunity to develop the skills you need to be a successful GP.

Every learner is unique, with different educational needs. Please seek out the various opportunities available in your posts (hospital and GP based) and engage continually with your ePortfolio for success in GP Training.

Our programme offers a wide variety of training in rural and urban settings, covering all socio-economic groups.

## Your Training Programme

The GP Specialty Training Programme normally consists of 18 months hospital-based placements and 18 months in General Practice. GP trainees must complete a minimum of three of the following hospital specialties: Emergency Medicine, General Medicine, Paediatrics, Obstetrics & Gynaecology, and Psychiatry.

**NB** Travelling to different clinics may be necessary in your postings and it is important that you have a valid driving licence and access to a motor vehicle.

- **GPST1 year** - 2 X 6 monthly posts or 3 X 4 monthly posts
- **GPST2 year** - 2 X 6 monthly posts:  
1 General Practice post and 1 Hospital Post
- **Or ITP GPST2 year**— one six month post with 50% spent in General Practice and 50% hospital-based and one six month General Practice post
- **GPST3 year** - 12 months in a General Practice post

More information can be found in the [Allocations Policy](#).



Our website: [www.nimmdta.gov.uk](http://www.nimmdta.gov.uk)

We would encourage you to use the NIMDTA website and LMS. It is regularly updated and contains important information about your training and key dates. Many of the queries we receive are answered on the NIMDTA website.

The main web pages which will interest you are in the GP Specialty Training area:

- [Educational Programme](#)
- [ePortfolio & Exams](#)
- [LearnHSCNI](#)
- [Trainee Policies](#)



## Educational Supervisors / GP Trainers

At the start of your training programme you will be assigned a GP Trainer. This will be your Educational Supervisor (ES) during your ST1 training. They are responsible for overseeing your ePortfolio. All trainees should make regular ePortfolio entries and release these throughout the year for their ES to read. It will not be possible for supervisors to comment on entries released shortly before the report for your ARCP is due.

On commencing your training you should arrange to meet with your ES. You should meet with your ES three times during the first six months of your ST1 placement. Each session should last between 2-4 hours. All trainees should be in regular contact with their ES via comments on the ePortfolio.

## Clinical Supervisors - Hospital post

You will be assigned a Clinical Supervisor (CS) during your hospital placement. The CS is a Consultant who is appointed by the Trusts to provide supervision during your hospital placements. **Please contact your Trust Human Resources Department if you have not been given this information.** It is your responsibility to obtain the name and email address of your CS. Please provide GP Specialty with these details within the first month of employment by e-mailing [gpspecialtytraining.nimmdta@hscni.net](mailto:gpspecialtytraining.nimmdta@hscni.net) this will enable the Admin team to add the CS details to your ePortfolio, allowing the CS to access it.

For each of your hospital placements you will need a clinical supervisor's report (CSR) which will be completed towards the end of your placement.

## Your ePortfolio (FourteenFish)

Your ePortfolio is the mechanism through which trainees record evidence to demonstrate progress and completion of mandatory WPBA. This is an essential component of the RCGP requirements in order to achieve Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT).

It is essential that you engage with your ePortfolio from the beginning of your training programme. This is achieved through making **regular entries** and **releasing these frequently** to your supervisor for comment. Timely supervisor access to ePortfolio entries will facilitate preparation for your ESR.

Your ePortfolio will be reviewed at ARCP. A decision regarding your progress will be based solely upon your ePortfolio content. The ARCP Panel need to see development during your training.

There is a minimum evidence requirement to be completed throughout each year.

[RCGP WPBA Minimum mandatory evidence](#)

## ARCP Panel

An Annual Review of Competence Progression Panel (ARCP Panel) take place every 12 months of your training programme. The Panel will review your ePortfolio and make a decision regarding your progress to date. The Panel will decide if you can progress to ST2.

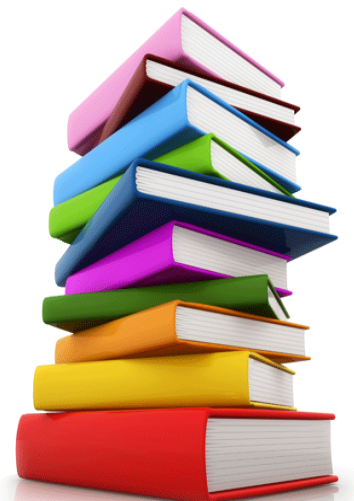
You can read more about the role of the ARCP panel in the [Gold Guide](#) (*A Reference Guide for Postgraduate Specialty Training in the UK*) a link is available on our Policies page.

## RCGP Curriculum

The [RCGP Curriculum](#) is available on the RCGP website. There is also a super-condensed format available [GP curriculum super condensed guides \(rcgp.org.uk\)](#)

We have designed curriculum guides which are shortened versions, to help you get the most out of hospital based training with an emphasis on General Practice learning.

The guides are on the [Educational Programme](#) area of our website and [LearnHSCNI](#)



## The MRCGP

All GP Trainees are required to complete the MRCGP to obtain a CCT (Certificate of Completion of Training). The MRCGP consists of the AKT (Applied Knowledge Test), SCA (Simulated Consultation Assessment) and the WPBA (Workplace Based Assessment recorded on the ePortfolio). There are a limited number of AKT and SCA attempts. Therefore it is important that you adequately prepare for these exams. [MRCGP exams](#)

Please visit the RCGP website for full information on the MRCGP including how to book the AKT & SCA. The earliest you can sit the AKT is during your ST2 year. We advise that you wait until you have completed a substantial portion of your GP ST2 placement before sitting the AKT. The SCA is taken during your ST3 year. During your ST1 year you will concentrate on the WPBA part of your MRCGP through your e-portfolio.

## Training Programme

NIMDTA runs a training programme consisting of Regional and Locality days throughout your **three** years. These take place on Thursdays. It is a minimum requirement that you attend over 80% of these tutorials. If you are working in a hospital post please contact your HR department as soon as possible to advise them of your tutorial dates. The HR department, where possible, should facilitate these requests. If you are struggling to be given study leave for these tutorials please complete the [Difficulties in Attending Training Days](#) form outlining the steps you have taken. Please forward this form to NIMDTA and to your PD. Dates for your ST1 tutorials will be provided at the ST1 Induction and can also be found on the LMS section of the NIMDTA website.

**If a Thursday tutorial is not timetabled it is expected that you will be in clinical work, either in hospital or in practice.** *You are entitled to a maximum of 30 days study leave per year. Many of these days will be taken up by the tutorials organised throughout the year.*

### ST1 Tutorials

A mix of approximately 10-12 Regional and Locality days

### ST2 Tutorials

Trainees in a GP post & Hospital post

A Mix of approximately 25 Regional and locality days

If there is no tutorial scheduled then it is expected that you will be in practice or your hospital placement.

### ST3 Tutorials

A mix of approximately 25 Regional and locality days

If there is no tutorial scheduled then it is expected that you will be in practice.

Attendance at tutorials is recorded and monitored by NIMDTA with evidence available to your ARCP panel. If you are unable to attend a regional / locality day you should complete and return a '[Non-attendance Form](#)' which can be downloaded from the NIMDTA website (under Educational Programme section).

## Changing your contact details

Please inform us of any changes to your personal details by completing and emailing us the '[Change to Personal Details form](#)' available on the Policies page of our website.

During your hospital post you will also need to inform the Trust of any changes to your personal details. Remember we email trainees regularly and you will miss out on important information if we do not have an up to date email address. Please also ensure that your preferred e-mail and home address is on your eportfolio. Your home address is used to facilitate allocations.

## Keeping us informed of Statutory Leave

Please inform us immediately of any time off work beyond the annual leave entitlement (including sick leave, maternity leave or jury service) this is part of the Educational Agreement which you will be required to sign in your e-portfolio. The RCGP scrutinises all training in detail and counts every day missed in training. Your CCT date could be changed at the last minute if your training time calculated is short!

We endeavour to support all Trainees who have periods of time out of the programme. Please take time to review the Trainee Policies page of the website and the [Allocations Policy](#) which explains how your training will be organised if you are out of sync.

Whilst you are in a hospital placement the Trust acts as your employer and will determine your annual leave and provide HR functions. During General Practice placements the Practice acts as the employer and NIMDTA provides HR functions.

## The GMC Survey



Each year the GMC issues a survey to all Trainees to monitor the quality of education and training in the UK. The survey opens in April/May each year and we would ask that you complete this survey by logging on to GMC online.

Further information on this survey can be found on the GMC website <http://www.gmc-uk.org/education/surveys.asp>.

# Trainee Assist Pathway

The GP training programme is relatively short taking only three years. We understand that everyone may experience difficulties at various times and we have supported many trainees over the years. Challenges may arise through personal circumstances, examination failures, workplace issues or health problems. Our experience suggests that many things can be resolved quickly if addressed early. Please get in touch promptly for assistance.

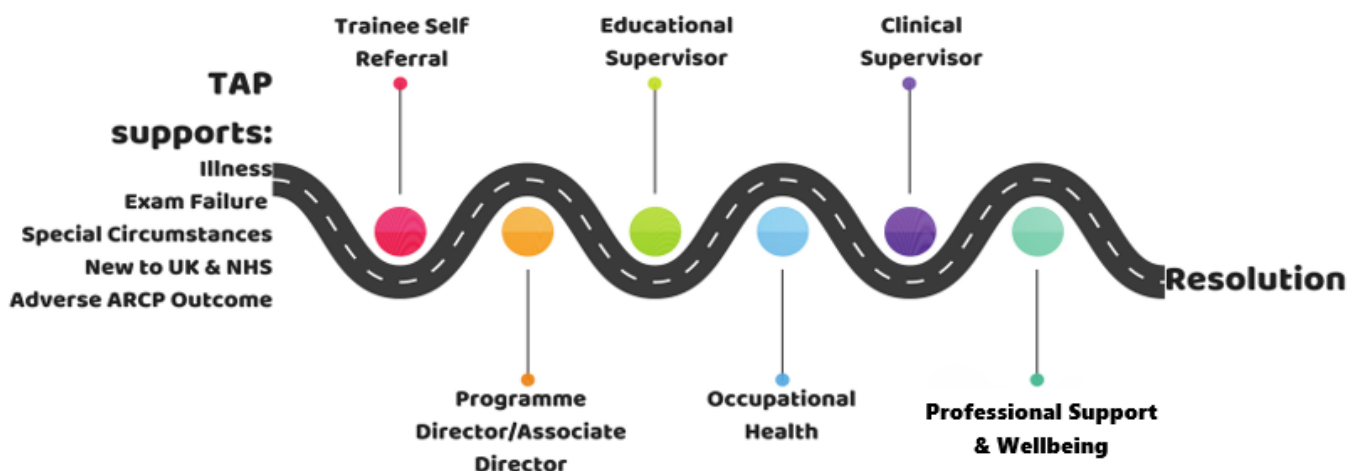
In the first instance please speak to your Educational Supervisor (ES) and Programme Director (PD). They are there to assist you at any stage during your programme. Many issues can be resolved with their help.

Sometimes additional input is required and you may be referred to the Trainee Assist Pathway (TAP). The TAP has been running for a number of years. The diagram below illustrates the role of TAP and how to access it.

There are a number of ways to be referred into TAP: self-referral, by your PD, ES or clinical supervisor. If you are new to Northern Ireland, or unfamiliar with the NHS, you may find the Trainee Assist Pathway (TAP) supportive as you settle into your new environment.

The Deanery maintains a database of trainees requiring additional input called the Trainee Assist Pathway (TAP) This is regularly reviewed to ensure trainee support is available as needed. Once you have been included in the TAP database you may need to meet with one of the Associate Directors at NIMDTA. We can discuss problems, develop a plan and schedule a review to assess the situation. We can also liaise with the [Professional Support Well-being](#) (PSW) for their expertise.

To access the pathway, email [gpspecialtytraining.nimmdta@hscni.net](mailto:gpspecialtytraining.nimmdta@hscni.net)



## ST2 Placements

We realise you have just entered ST1 but many of you may be curious about your future General Practice placements. We recommend reading the ['Allocations Policy'](#).

Before starting your ST2 GP post you must have medical indemnity to cover your work in primary care. This can be arranged by contacting the medical indemnity providers (MPS, MDU and MDDUS) to receive quotes before selecting which provider you will choose. Although you will have to make the initial payment you can claim for [reimbursement](#).

In addition you must also be registered on the Northern Ireland Performers List (PMPL). This is arranged by GP Specialty and the PMPL is managed by the Professional Support team at BSO. Please ensure that your contact details and Access NI certificate is still valid. This certificate will have been checked as part of the pre-employment documents.

The Placement Ranking Form for ST2 GP will be sent to you for online completion.

## Policies

There is a policies section on the website which will provide you with information on a variety of issues: Hyperlinks below

- [Allocations](#)
- [Less Than Full Time Training policies](#)
- [Special circumstances](#)
- [Appeals](#)
- [European Working Time Directive](#)
- [Study Leave](#)



## **We love to abbreviate...**

AKT	Applied Knowledge Test (Trainee exam)
ARCP	Annual Review of Competency Progression
BSO	Business Services Organisation (formerly CSA)
CbD	Case based discussion (part of WPBA)
CCT	Certificate of Completion of Training
COGPED	Committee of General Practice Education Directors
COT	Consultation Observation Tool (part of WPBA)
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CSA	Clinical Skills Assessment (Trainee exam)
CSR	Clinical Supervisors Report
DME	Director of Medical Education (Hospital)
ES	Educational Supervisor (GP Trainer)
ESR	Educational Supervisors Report
FY2	Foundation Year 2 Trainee (Hospital Trainee)
GMC	General Medical Council
GPST	General Practice Specialty Training/ Trainee
HSCB	Health and Social Care Board
IDT	Inter Deanery Transfer
L&T	Learning and Teaching
LTFT	Less than full time training
MDU	Medical Defence Union
MDDUS	Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland
MPS	Medical Protection Society
MRCGP	Member of the Royal College of General Practitioners
MSF	Multi Source Feedback (part of WPBA)
OOH	Out of Hours
OOS	Out of Sync (trainee who is outside Aug-Aug rotation)
PD	Programme Director
PMPL	Primary Medical Performers List
PSQ	Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire (part of WPBA)
RCA	Recorded Consultation Assessment
RCGP	Royal College of General Practitioners
ROS	Record of session (form)
SLA	Service Level Agreement
VTS	Vocational Training Scheme (now replaced by term ST)
WPBA	Work place based assessment



## **A message from the Royal College of General Practitioners, Northern Ireland (RCGPNI)**

As a member of the Royal College of General Practitioners the College is here to support you, not only through your training, but also throughout your career.

Working for you, we lobby and campaign for a better general practice environment, from education and training to workforce planning for the future. We work

to improve the health and wellbeing of our GP population, improve standards in primary care and provide you with the tools and resources you will need to improve patient care now and in the future.

As a GP trainee your views are very important to us, so please have your say:

### **Associates in Training Support**

RCGPNI engage with Associates in Training via a number of mediums including College wide member bulletins and educational events specifically targeted towards their needs.

For all queries, please email [NICouncil@rcgp.org.uk](mailto:NICouncil@rcgp.org.uk)

[Learn more about your AiT membership](#) and access the wealth of information and learning via our website [www.rcgp.org.uk](http://www.rcgp.org.uk)

Come to one of our networking and learning events - [click here](#) for further information.

Our office is at 3 Joy Street, Belfast, BT2 8LE and we have meeting spaces that you/and or colleagues could use free of charge. Contact [NICouncil@rcgp.org.uk](mailto:NICouncil@rcgp.org.uk)

For any further information please contact the Belfast office on 020 3188 7722.

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## Getting in touch



If you need to contact us we prefer that you email the shared Team mailbox [gpspecialtytraining.nimdta@hscni.net](mailto:gpspecialtytraining.nimdta@hscni.net) and the relevant member of the team will respond.

The Team regularly receives a large number of enquiries. We would appreciate your patience in waiting for a response.

Remember we are here to help you succeed in your GP training. We can't help you if we don't know something is wrong.



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