

# Support for IMGs in Primary Care

## Experience and Feedback from the Southwest

**Dr Nicole Nation**

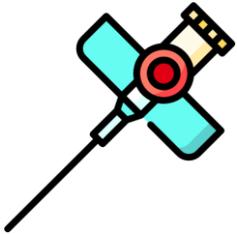
Near Peer Fellow, Torbay  
Salaried GP, Chelston Hall

**Dr Isaac Frank**

IMG Support Fellow, Southwest  
ED&I Fellow BSW Training Hub  
TPD Educator Fellow, Swindon  
GP, Great Western Hospital, Swindon



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The state of medical education  
and practice in the UK

# Workforce report 2023



General  
Medical  
Council

**Figure 11: Doctors joining the GP Register or Specialist Register each year**

		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2018–2022
<b>Joining the GP Register</b>	UK	2,288	2,372	2,267	2,270	2,187	-4%
	EEA	164	174	195	187	172	+5%
	IMG	321	448	519	828	936	+192%
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,773</b>	<b>2,994</b>	<b>2,981</b>	<b>3,285</b>	<b>3,295</b>	<b>+19%</b>
<b>Joining the Specialist Register</b>	UK	2,605	2,669	2,797	2,911	3,076	+18%
	EEA	945	1,015	851	636	509	-46%
	IMG	1,011	1,004	976	928	1,056	+4%
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,561</b>	<b>4,688</b>	<b>4,624</b>	<b>4,475</b>	<b>4,641</b>	<b>+2%</b>

# IMG Near Peer Fellow Programme

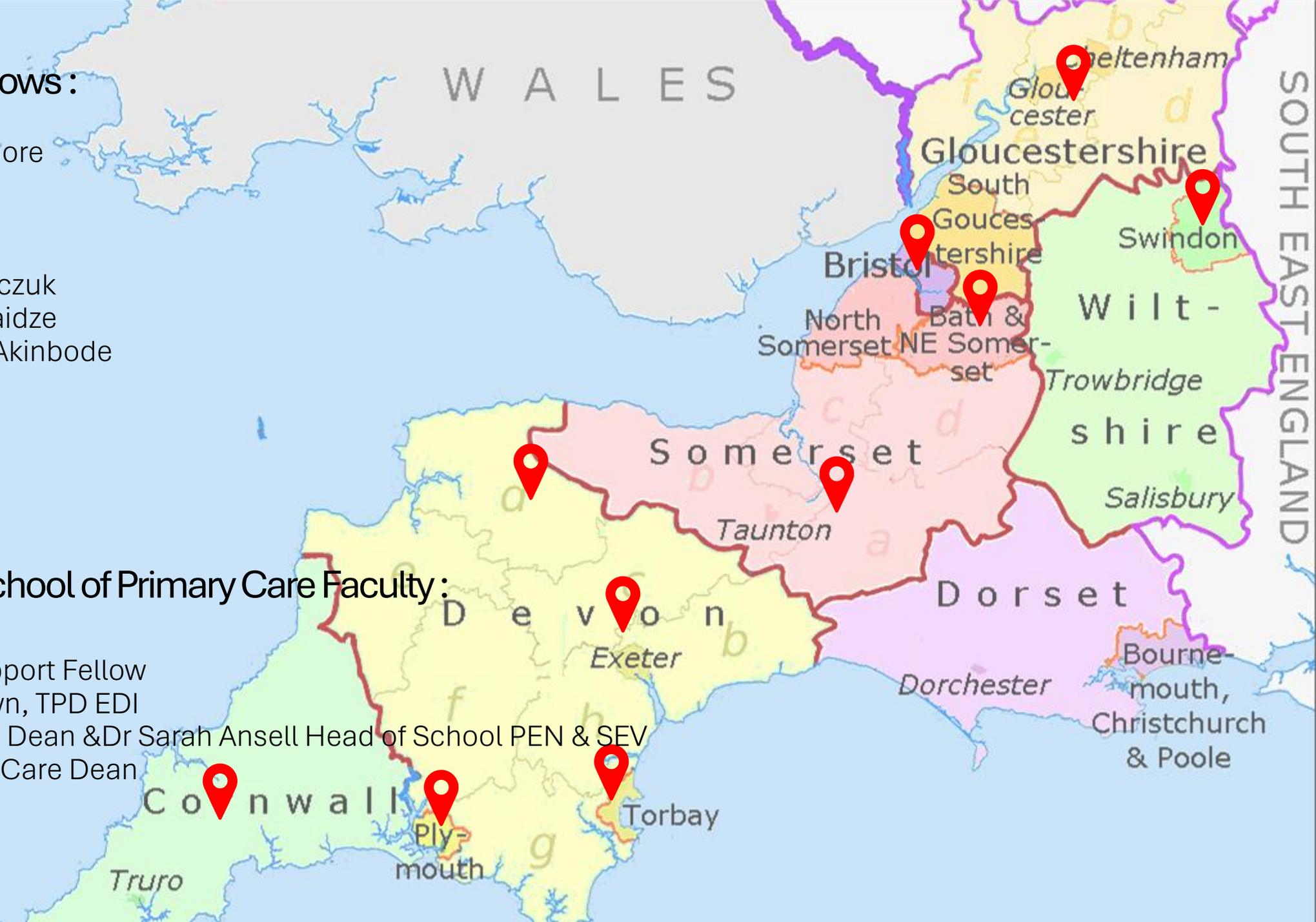
‘An initiative developed in collaboration with the Training Hubs  
to support IMG Doctors in Training in each VTS  
and address Differential Attainment’

**IMG Near Peer Fellows :**

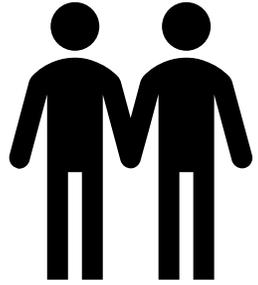
- Dr Antoinette Ashmore
- Dr Muntarin Kakita
- Dr Emily Cant
- Dr Jasmin Dargin
- Dr Natashja Kasianczuk
- Dr Fungai Mashingaidze
- Dr Oluwadamilola Akinbode
- Dr Nicole Nation
- Dr Motaz Abulaila
- Dr Matt Garcia

**NHS England SW School of Primary Care Faculty :**

- Dr Isaac Frank, IMG Support Fellow
- Dr Silvana Romero Brown, TPD EDI
- Dr Claire Fox, Associate Dean & Dr Sarah Ansell Head of School PEN & SEV
- Prof Lizzie Eley, Primary Care Dean



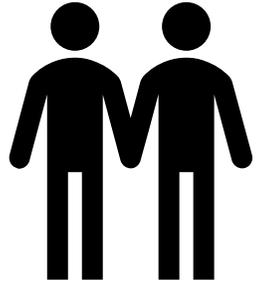
# Aims



**NEAR**

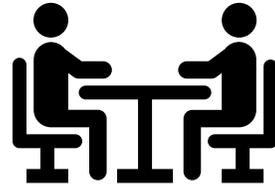
Recently qualified GPs, usually from the same patches they are placed.

## Aims



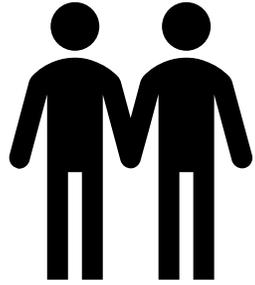
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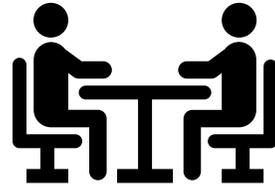
## PEER

To provide individualised support for issues IMGs face, many with lived experiences.



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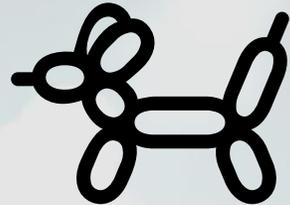
## PEER

To provide individualised support for issues IMGs face, many with lived experiences.



## FELLOW

Personal development as future educators and enhance diversification of the Faculty.



# Projects and Activities

# Activities



Pre-Induction



MRCGP 1 & 2 Prep



Regional induction



TH oversight boards



Drop-in sessions



Personal development



VTS Teaching sessions



Webinar development



Regional meetings



Resource development

# Activities



MRCGP 1 & 2 Prep



TH oversight boards



Personal development



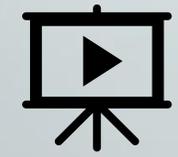
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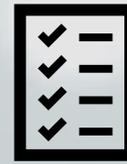


Regional induction

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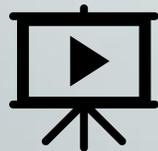
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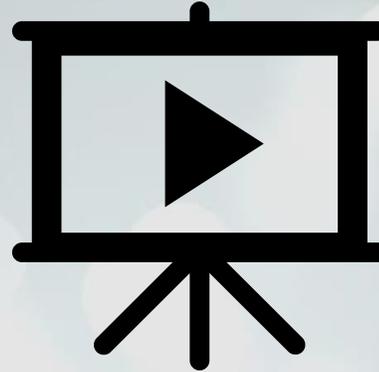
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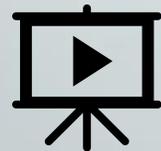
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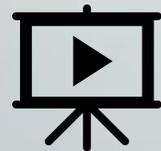
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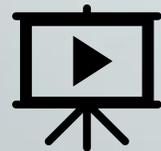
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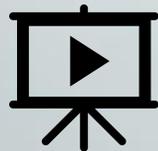
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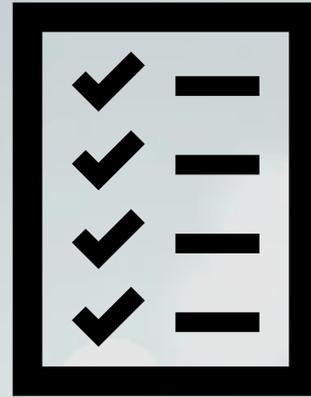
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# Regional IMG Induction

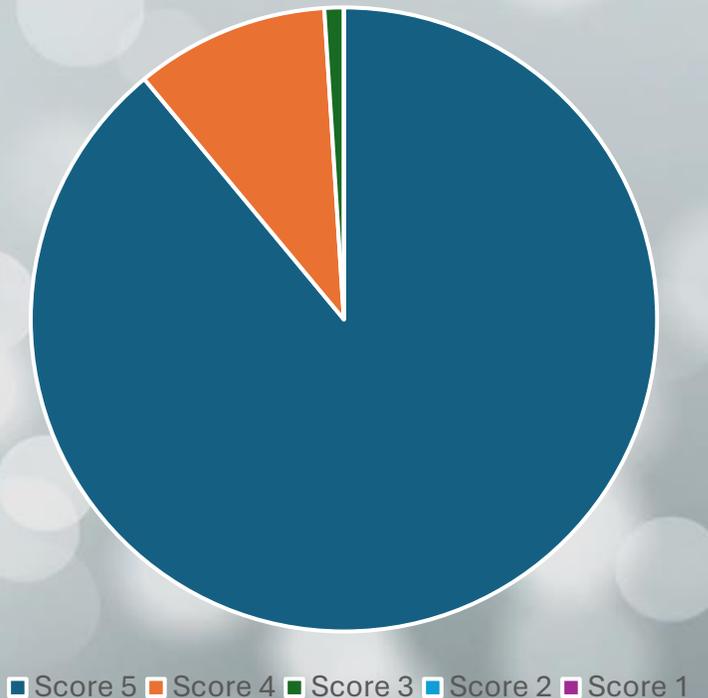
# Regional IMG Induction

- Southwest – wide IMG ST1s invited
- Full day event in Taunton
- 79 IMG ST1s attended in 2024
- September 2025 event planning underway

# Regional IMG Induction

- **89%** gave a 5/5 Score
- **100%** recommended that it continue to be a F2F Event
- The main themes from the feedback show that the ST1s benefitted from
  - Connecting
  - Discussion time in small groups
  - Learning on topics such as communication, confidentiality, ethics and professionalism.

How much would you rate the event?



# Near-Peer Fellowship (NPF):

An Innovative Pilot for recently qualified GPs to Support International Medical Graduate Doctors-in-training (IMG DiTs)

Dr Isaac Frank, Near Peer Fellow, Swindon GP Training Scheme

Dr Claire Fox, Associate Dean, ED&I, NHS England South West



## Introduction

In the South West, the number of IMGs has increased significantly over the past 5 years, to approximately 50% of GP DiTs. Transitioning to a new culture and healthcare system presents an additional challenge for IMG DiTs, impacting on experience and performance<sup>1</sup>. The added value of individualised support has been documented using experienced educators<sup>2</sup>. We recognised an unmet need in our region and created a programme to improve the training experience of our IMG DiTs with the combined aim of developing future educators and increasing diversity and representation within our faculty.

The Near Peer Fellow initiative was developed in collaboration with the Training Hubs to appoint recently qualified GPs to support IMG DiTs in each training scheme across the South West. The requirement to be near peer (within 2 years CCT), sets this apart from other initiatives. The hypothesis was that the DiTs may find the NP-Fellows more accessible and approachable than experienced educators, having recently completed the training programme.

The role of the NP-Fellow was designed to offer specialised support to IMGs in aspects of training (portfolio management, exam preparation, communication skills) and settling into life in the UK (visa processes, housing, obtaining driving licenses). The aim was that they would be able to lean on their individual experiences as IMG doctors and engage with DiTs on a personalised, one-to-one basis to effectively address their needs. The fellows undertook projects, developed resources, and organised learning events. They collaborated closely with the TPDs and also met quarterly with other fellows across the SW to share ideas and network, with the support of the Associate Dean for EDI.

We are in the second year of running the fellowship and present collated qualitative feedback evaluating the scheme.

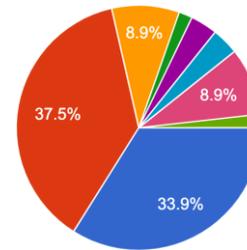


Fig. 1: "It was **easy** for me to contact my NP-Fellow"

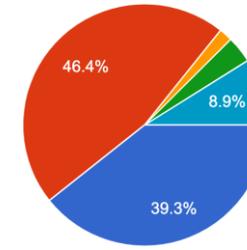


Fig. 2: "The NP-Fellow was **supportive** in my training"

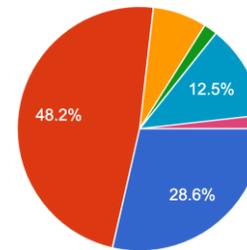


Fig. 3: "It was important that the NP-Fellow was **recently qualified**"

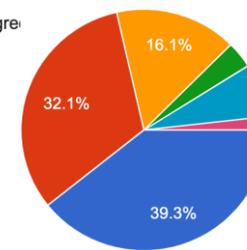
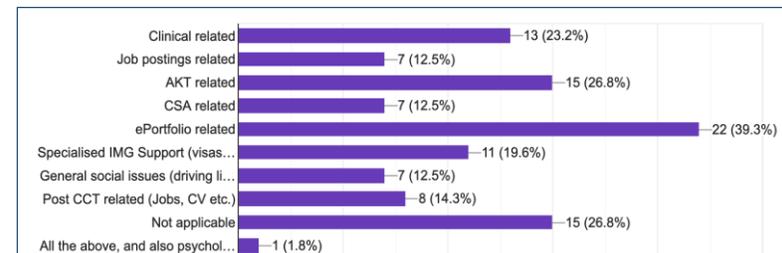


Fig. 4: "It was important that the NP-Fellow was **an IMG**"



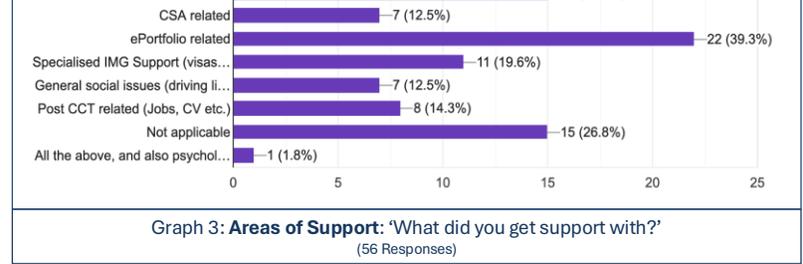
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## Methods

A questionnaire was created with expert advice to collect qualitative feedback. This questionnaire was directed to IMG DiTs and focused on areas such as qualities of and support from the Fellow.

It contained 12 elements, 5 of which had Likert scale-styled options, with text boxes for comments provided at relevant questions. The results were collated using Google Forms anonymously.



"Very helpful and supportive. Excellent support system for IMG GP Trainees"

"..gave me the confidence to come forward and speak to a newly qualified GP"

"..an excellent opportunity for an IMG to be involved in a lead role.."



## Discussion

This programme was set up to improve the training experience for IMG GP DiTs. The findings give valuable insights into the positive impact and accessibility of the NP-Fellows. The importance of recent qualification as a GP indicates that trainees value contemporary knowledge and relatable experiences in their mentors. They also highlighted how shared experiences can be particularly valuable in overcoming the unique challenges that IMGs face in the GP training pathway. The reported ease of access to the NP-Fellow reflects their approachability, adding support to the hypothesis that being near peer enhances accessibility. This accessibility is crucial as it directly correlates with the level of support received.

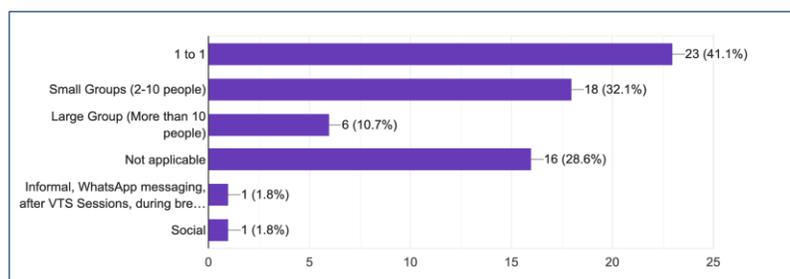
**A vast majority of DiTs (85.7%) reported that the NP-Fellow was supportive in their training.** The preference for one-to-one support over group sessions suggests that personalized guidance is highly valued by trainees, potentially leading to more tailored and effective learning experiences. The breadth of areas of support indicates a wide array of needs are being met, likely contributing to their overall satisfaction. The ability to choose multiple areas of support were appreciated and utilised. Finally, the finding that about 65% expressed an interest in becoming an NP-Fellow upon completing their training is a strong endorsement of the role and its perceived benefits. This would also suggest that they felt a sense of belonging and inclusion, hopefully increasing retention as well as positive implications for the sustainability of the programme.

We are continuing to evaluate the programme, including the impact on other stakeholders. Overall, these results confirm that the NP-Fellowship programme is fulfilling its intended purpose, offering meaningful and accessible support to GP DiTs across the South West and developing educators of the future, with the additional benefit of increasing diversity in our educational community, reflecting the current demographics of the doctors we are training.

## Results

We received **56 responses**, with a well-distributed representation across all ten SW training schemes. Data on settings, accessibility and areas of support offered are shown in the graphs and figures below.

- 50% of the responses were ST1 and ST2, and 50% from ST3 DiTs.
- **Approximately 65% of the respondents indicated that they would consider becoming an NP-Fellow upon completing their training.**



Graph 1: **Settings of Support:** 'If you had support from your NP-Fellow, what setting was it provided in?' (56 Responses)

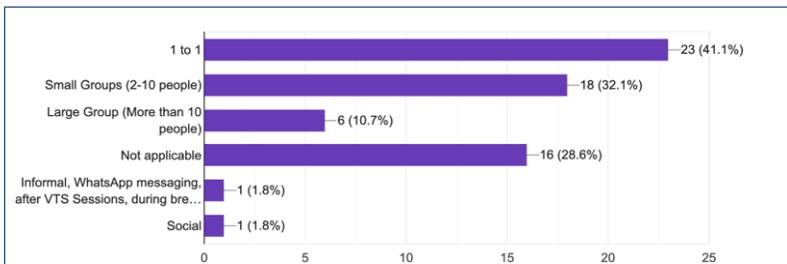
## Conclusion

**The NP-Fellowship program plays a crucial role in supporting GP DiTs, providing valuable mentorship and guidance.** The program's structure, which

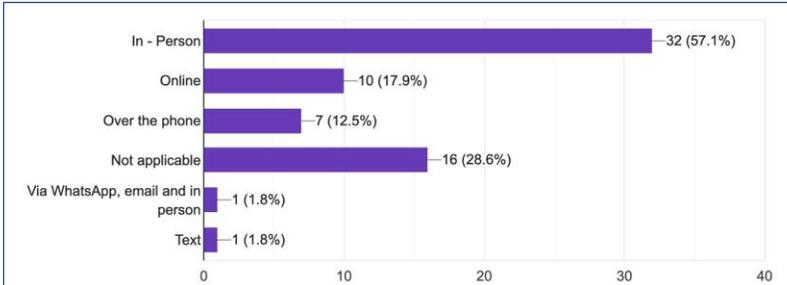
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Graph 1: **Settings of Support:** 'If you had support from your NP-Fellow, what setting was it provided in?' (56 Responses)



Graph 2: **Types of Support:** 'Was the support given in person, by phone or online?' (56 Responses)

"..trainees can relate with them better they are a good bridge between the trainee and the TPDs"

"..helps the smooth transition for IMGs.."

potentially leading to more tailored and effective learning experiences. The breadth of areas of support indicates a wide array of needs are being met, likely contributing to their overall satisfaction. The ability to choose multiple areas of support were appreciated and utilised. Finally, the finding that about 65% expressed an interest in becoming an NP-Fellow upon completing their training is a strong endorsement of the role and its perceived benefits. This would also suggest that they felt a sense of belonging and inclusion, hopefully increasing retention as well as positive implications for the sustainability of the programme.

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### Conclusion

**The NP-Fellowship program plays a crucial role in supporting GP DiTs, providing valuable mentorship and guidance.** The program's structure, which emphasises accessibility, personalised support, and relevance to the DiTs' needs, is instrumental in fostering a positive training environment. The program both meets the diverse needs of the DiTs and cultivates a culture of support and professional development that is essential for the success of future GPs. The interest in continuing the NP-Fellow legacy further underscores the program's impact. We would recommend other regions consider implementing such an initiative to further enhance the training experience and learning environment for IMG GP DiTs.

### Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude to Professor Michael Harris for his help in developing the questionnaire, Mrs. Kirsty Weaver, Training and Education Programme Lead, Dr Silvana Romero-Brown, EDI TPD as well as the past and present SW NP-Fellows for their hard work in supporting our DiTs.

### References

1. Wolfe, K., Viney, R., Rich, A., Jayaweera, H. Rigby, M., Griffin, A (2017), Fair Pathways for All: Understanding experiences of progression Part 2. General Medical Council.
2. Brown, J., Jenkins, L. (2023), Evaluation of the impact of the Differential Attainment Champion role in the GP School, Health Education North West. General Medical Council.



*“Thank you for your support to IMGs so far. You have been an immense encouragement...with easy access to us for the little things and big things that help to make our journey smoother”*

*“Thank you so much for your help....I had a satisfactory outcome in my ARCP!”*

*“Very helpful to have an IMG link and an honest insight about life as a newly qualified GP”*

*“Keep this post alive. This is highly valuable support for trainees”*



*“Initial challenge in engagement from DiTs, integration within VTS is key”*

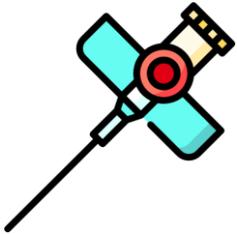
*“Increased educator experience as a NPF provided networking opportunities....leading to roles in education never thought possible”*

*“Over the past 18 months gone from strength to strength. Demonstrated significant development as educator”*

*“Being a NPF bridges the gap between DiT and substantive ES/CS/TPD making us more accessible, at least at the start of their training”*



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*“The Near Peer Fellow was an amazing guide at the beginning of my training, supported me with my portfolio, introduced me to other colleagues. They were always around, supportive and answered all of my questions.”*



# Questions