

# Quick Guide to Foundation Year Trainees

## Who are they?

Foundation Year (FY) trainees have obtained a medical degree (so are no longer students), and are in the first 2 years of postgraduate medical training (formerly known as PRHO (FY1) and SHO (FY2) years). After completing FY1 doctors can be granted full GMC registration.

## What is Foundation Training?

Foundation Training forms the bridge between medical school and specialist training. The training typically consists of 6 x 4-month placements over 2 years in a variety of specialties and healthcare settings. Foundation Training develops doctors' medical skills and ensures they have the competencies necessary for specialist training. The training also includes generic professional skills such as interpersonal and team-working skills.

The FY trainee is NOT learning to be a psychiatrist. The aim of the rotation is to provide a meaningful experience in psychiatry and to allow the doctor to achieve the Foundation Programme competencies. However, if FY trainees have an interest in psychiatry, they should be supported in accessing other additional learning opportunities.

## What level of support do FY trainees need?

When they first start, most FY1 doctors will be inexperienced and will require support from their supervisors and the team. This will change as the year goes on and they move into FY2. They will start to develop their skills, knowledge and confidence in their clinical work under your direction and supervision. FY2 doctors remain under clinical supervision but take on increasing responsibility for patient care.

It is important that FY trainees 'learn by doing', as they will learn more effectively when they are responsible for their actions. Although inexperienced, they will be little different from our current Psychiatry Core Trainees when they start, at least until the FY programme is fully operational. Like all new trainees, whether Core or FY, they will need to be well supervised to allow them to develop as doctors whilst ensuring patient safety, and the necessary supervision time should be factored into consultant job-plans. It is worth pointing out that this is exceptionally valued, and is the area in which we score the highest of all the medical specialities.

## Why are Foundation psychiatry placements so important?

Following the Broadening the Foundation Programme (BTFP) Report, a rapid increase of psychiatry placements is taking place. The purpose of increasing the exposure of the next generation of doctors to psychiatry is not to persuade them to become psychiatrists. Even if not a single extra junior doctor opts for a career in psychiatry, provided that they have learned something from their placement that will ensure that they are better equipped to meet the challenges of the future NHS, it will be a job well done. But it would be disingenuous to pretend that this is also not an opportunity to improve recruitment to our own speciality.

We really need to embrace this opportunity to ensure that we are offering high quality Foundation Training in Psychiatry to our doctors. The stakes are high – the rewards even higher – for patients, for the next generation of doctors, and for our profession.

**Professor Sir Simon Wessely**  
**President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists**