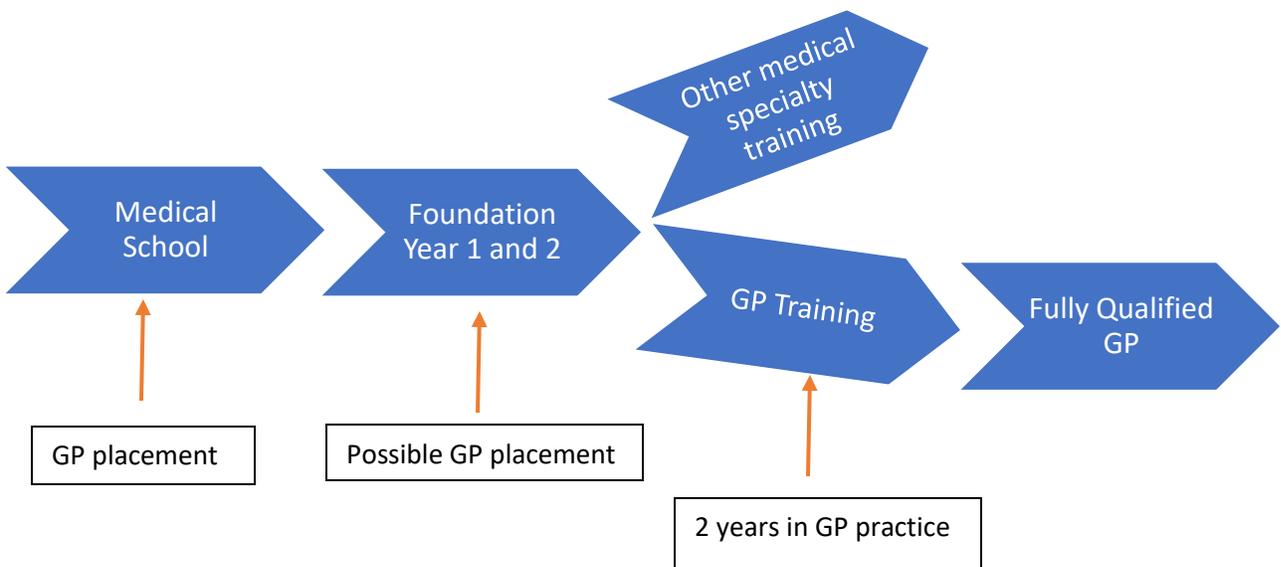


Doctors in Training at Stockbridge Surgery

As I sadly come to the end of my year-long placement at Stockbridge Surgery as a GP registrar, I have reflected upon how I and other GP trainees across the country are perceived by our patients. During my time at Stockbridge, whenever I have introduced myself to a patient as “Dr Rosser, one of the GP registrars”, each patient I have spoken to has very kindly simply continued the consultation, never questioning my seniority/stage in training. However, in my mind, I often wonder how the role of “registrar” is interpreted by the patient. The career path to become a fully-fledged GP is fairly lengthy, and within training a host of different terms are used to describe the junior doctor role. I hope the below information will give some clarity as to the role of a “GP registrar”, but also help patients understand the various stages of training of other doctors/students they may see at the practice.



- **Medical School:** The path to become a GP starts at medical school, normally involving 5 years at university. During medical school there will often be a short placement within a GP practice, so as a patient you may be spoken to by a **medical student** - this consultation will be very closely supervised by a senior GP and any management decisions will be made by the GP, not the medical student.
- **Foundation Year 1 and 2:** If all goes well with the daunting final year medical school exams, the next stage of becoming a GP is Foundation Year 1 and 2. We are now officially known as “**junior doctors**”- qualified doctors in training but still working under the supervision of a senior doctor. The foundation program is a mandatory 2-year program for all UK medical graduates, with the aim of “forming the bridge between learning as an undergraduate in medical school and the transition into caring for patients on the frontline of the NHS.” It usually consists of several 4-6 month placements within a variety of hospital and community settings, giving a broad

experience of different specialities within the NHS. A Foundation Year doctor can have a placement within a GP practice and will normally introduce themselves as an “**FY1**”, “**FY2**”, or simply “**junior doctor**”. Prior to the introduction of the foundation program in 2005, an FY1 was known as a “**house officer**” and an FY2 “**senior house officer**” – these terms are still sometimes used amongst doctors which understandably can cause great confusion for patients! FY1s and FY2s will still be closely supervised by a senior GP but can make independent management plans and prescribe medications after agreement by the senior GP.

- **GP Training:** After FY2, a junior doctor will decide whether they want to undergo further specialist training to become a GP or hospital consultant. It is not uncommon for junior doctors to change career paths – I, for example, began training in paediatrics but after 4 years switched to general practice training. Currently GP training lasts for 3 years, with 2 of those years spent in a GP practice. Once in the GP training program, a junior doctor can call themselves a “**GP Registrar**” but may also choose to simply introduce themselves as a “**GP Trainee**”. GP registrars are initially closely supervised by a senior GP and have a dedicated supervisor, but as they become more confident in their practice, they become more and more independent. Towards the end of training, they may only seek advice from seniors for particularly complex patients. As part of training, GP registrars have weekly group teaching sessions from local specialty consultants across the region. This helps ensure we are up to date with best practice across all specialities. A number of assessments are needed during GP training, some of which require the help of patients:
 - **Recorded Consultations:** Currently the final exam for GP trainees involves the submission of audio/video recordings of patient consultations. This is always done with prior consent from the patient.
 - **Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire:** As a patient you may be asked to submit a feedback questionnaire for the GP registrar. This is assessed along with feedback forms from the GP registrar’s colleagues.
 - **Observed consultations:** During training a GP trainee will need to obtain a number of observed consultations which are assessed by their supervisor. This may include assessment of procedural skills and certain medical examinations.

I hope that the above information helps to give a clearer understanding of the GP training pathway. As a patient at Stockbridge, you therefore may be spoken to by doctors at various stages of training, from a medical student (maybe taking a history from a patient for the very first time!) to a GP registrar who is about to start working as fully fledged GP.

As a result of the continued patience and kindness of the patients at Stockbridge surgery, not taking issue with having a consultation with a registrar, consenting to recordings and completing feedback questionnaires, I have recently successfully completed my training. I start working as a qualified GP in March at a local Hampshire surgery and would like to extend a big thank you for your help as patients in helping to train the next generation of GPs!

Dr Nico Rosser

GP (no longer a registrar!)