



Welcome to Nottinghamshire



International Medical Graduate Handbook

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Introduction

Welcome to Primary Care in the NHS

Congratulations on joining the Primary Care workforce within the National Health Service (NHS)! As an International Medical Graduate (IMG), you bring a wealth of diverse experiences, perspectives, and skills that are invaluable to the healthcare system.

We look forward to the positive impact you will make in our community and the enriching experiences you will bring to our healthcare system. .

Purpose of this Handbook

The journey of transitioning into a new healthcare system can be both exciting and challenging. This handbook aims to provide comprehensive guidance and support to help you navigate your new role in Primary Care within the NHS. Whether you're looking for information on professional registration, clinical practice, cultural competency, or professional development, this handbook serves as your go-to resource.

Getting Started

We encourage you to read through this handbook thoroughly and use it as a reference throughout your time in the NHS. Familiarize yourself with the various sections and do not hesitate to reach out to the contacts listed for any additional support or clarification.



The Phoenix Programme

The Phoenix Programme is the local workforce support organisation for GPs and their teams in Nottinghamshire. We provide career advice and development opportunities for colleagues at any stage, ranging from GP training into retirement.

We understand the complexities involved in transitioning to a new healthcare system and are dedicated to providing you with the necessary tools, resources, and support you need to thrive in your role.

As you begin your journey with the Phoenix Programme, we encourage you to fully engage with the resources and support offered. Take advantage of the programme's various components, seek guidance when needed, and connect with your peers and mentors.

We are excited to have you on board and look forward to supporting you in your journey towards becoming an integral part of the NHS. Together, we will uphold the highest standards of patient care and contribute to the health and wellbeing of our community.

We are accessible through e-mail, face to face contact and telephone call. Further information is available on our website:

<https://www.phoenixprogramme.co.uk>

As with all information, it can rapidly go out of date so please double check and let us know if you think that is the case by emailing:

info@phoenixprogramme.co.uk

The Phoenix Team



Helen Shuker - Chief Operating Officer

Helen is Chief Operating Officer for Plexus Support Services. Her role involves overseeing the strategic development and day to day operations of the services offered through Plexus including the Phoenix Programme and GP-S. Helen previously held other roles within Plexus (Director of Services and Head of Operations).



Dr Gemma Wilkinson - Medical Director

Dr Gemma Wilkinson trained at the University of Nottingham and has been a local GP for almost 20 years. Gemma has a longstanding interest in medical education and has always valued a portfolio career. She has been involved with undergraduate and postgraduate education for doctors, nurses and other health professionals. She is enthusiastic about supporting colleagues to have fulfilling and sustainable careers. She firmly believes that Nottingham is a fantastic place to live and work as a health care professional, as evidenced by the fact that she arrived in 1992 and has worked here ever since.



Dr Errum Mumtaz - Health & Wellbeing and International Medical Graduate support schemes

Errum qualified as a GP from the Nottingham VTS program in 2019 and currently practices in Ilkeston. She leads our Health & Wellbeing and International Medical Graduate support schemes and co-leads the Phoenix Programme's Non-Clinical Workforce stream.

Additionally, she serves as the Educator and EDI Lead at the Nottinghamshire Alliance Training Hub, where she co-manages several work streams. Errum understands the importance of supporting colleagues in reaching their full potential, both in clinical and non-clinical roles. She is dedicated to making Primary Care in Nottinghamshire the best place to work.

Errum values the importance of a portfolio career, which allows her to engage in a variety of interests outside of work, including traveling, socializing with friends, and spending quality time with her toddler twins.

The Phoenix Team



Dr Clare Veltman - Mid and Senior Careers Scheme Lead

As well as working in General Practice, Clare is also a GP Appraiser, GP Peer Mentor and Mentor Lead and is enjoying the variety of work these roles offer. She is passionate about supporting all GPs to get the most out of both their career and life itself and is particularly keen that mid and senior career GPs also have opportunities to develop new interests and are supported in trying new things. She firmly believes that it is never too late to undertake new challenges and that Fellowships can be beneficial for any GP.



Dr Daniel Crowfoot - Early GP Career Development Lead

Dr. Daniel Crowfoot holds a portfolio career in undergraduate medical student education and clinical work as a GP. Daniel would like both GP Trainees' and post-CCT GPs alike to realise the variety, support and potential that post-CCT Fellowships can offer in enhancing careers in primary care.

Nottinghamshire

Nottinghamshire is a county in the heart of England renowned for its rich history, vibrant culture, and stunning natural landscapes. Whether you're here to work, live, or explore, Nottinghamshire offers a unique blend of historical charm and modern amenities, making it an ideal place for both professional and personal growth.

GP training within Nottingham and Nottinghamshire are linked to **3 main VTS schemes:**

- Nottingham
- Mansfield:
- Doncaster and Bassetlaw.

The Local **NHS trusts** include:

- Nottingham University Hospitals Foundation Trust
- Sherwood Forest Hospitals Foundation Trust
- Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust
- East Midlands Ambulance NHS Trust
- Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Nottinghamshire is divided into four **Place Based Partnerships (PBPs)**

- Bassetlaw
- Mid Nottinghamshire
- Nottingham City
- South Nottinghamshire

These are further divided into 23 **Primary Care Networks(PCNs)**

Please find more information on:

<https://healthandcarenotts.co.uk>



Settling into the UK

Moving from one city to the next can be difficult but moving from a different country has its own challenges. Here are a few key logistical issues you should be aware of:

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) provides criminal record clearance. You should apply for it online through a link provided by your lead employer. Be prepared with a record of your living addresses for the past three years, as well as your current address in the UK. **This should be one of your top priorities upon arriving in the UK and before starting your job.**

Once you receive your DBS certificate, consider registering with the DBS online update service. This service will keep your DBS record active, allowing future employers to access your criminal record status, which will be beneficial if you change jobs in the future.

Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)

Your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) serves as your visa permit to stay in the UK. Upon receiving your Tier 2 or Health Worker visa, you should have received a letter indicating the post office where your BRP will be sent.

You must collect your BRP before the vignette sticker in your travel document expires or within 10 days of arriving in the UK, whichever is sooner. Additionally, you will need the BRP to re-enter the UK if you travel abroad.

Link to BRP page: <https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits>

To report a delay in BRP, use the government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits/getting-your-brp-if-you-applied-fromoutside-the-uk>

Settling into the UK

Opening a Bank Account

Open a bank account as soon as possible, as your salary will be deposited there, and it can also be used for setting up direct debits for recurring expenses.

Most high street banks require the information outlined in the accompanying document. However, some new online banks do not require proof of address and can be used for receiving your salary.

Please check the websites of various banks for specific requirements; some examples include:

Please note that irrespective of which bank you choose to open your account with, you will need the following documents before applying for a bank account:



Employment Contract

Obtained from your employer's Human Resources department.



Original Passport



Evidence of Address

Obtained from your employer or Tenancy Agreement (if renting) Providing an address is important because the bank will be posting your debit (and credit card if you opt to have one) through regular mail.



Photographic Identification



Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) with National Insurance (NI) number



Medical care, Education,
and lifestyle

Dial

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for emergencies



Registering at a GP surgery

Register you and your family with a GP at a local practice to where you live. This is in case you have any health needs or if you become ill. Many GP surgeries allow the registration to be completed online or via post. You only need to provide your personal information to register. You do not need to provide any IDs or documents if you are a UK resident. Further information can be found at:

Find a GP - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

Occupational Health

Ask the Practice Manager at your work practice about the local Occupational Health Department as you may need to arrange an appointment to check your vaccination history and any necessary blood tests

Medical care, Education, and lifestyle



Accommodation and Renting

When renting, look for areas that are safe and have convenient commuting options to and from your workplace. Websites such as Rightmove, Zoopla, and SpareRoom list available properties. Shared accommodations, where you rent a room in a shared house or apartment, are another option. It is always advisable to view properties in person rather than relying solely on virtual tours. Renting a property takes time, so familiarize yourself with the process and what to expect. More information is available at [How to rent: the checklist for renting in England - GOV.UK](#).

Medical care, Education, and lifestyle

Schools

You can assess the quality of schools in your area and read feedback from students' families on www.schoolguide.co.uk Note that you can only apply to a specific school if you reside within its catchment area. School applications are submitted through the council's website, and you will need proof of address to begin the application process. If you are moving from abroad, it is advisable to speak with school managers, as your children may need additional support during their transition to a new education system in a new country.

Groceries and Amenities

One of the major changes you will encounter when settling in the UK is the variety of supermarket chain brands. Shops have varying opening times, so it's important to plan your grocery shopping in advance. Many large branches are open from 7 am to 11 pm, except on Sundays when they operate from 10 am to 4 pm.

These stores often have sections catering to various dietary requirements, including Halal meats, gluten-free, sugar-free, and vegan options. Smaller branches at petrol stations are open 24 hours but offer a limited range of products.

Most supermarkets also provide online grocery shopping services, which is convenient if you have a busy schedule or do not drive. Supermarkets vary in price, but there is often little difference in quality.

Additionally, there are numerous Asian and Halal shops in the region.

Transport

Although the UK boasts one of the best transport networks in the world, we strongly recommend having your own car. This will allow you to easily commute to and from work, conduct house visits, and respond to emergency calls as necessary.

Driving

If you have arrived in the UK with an International Driving Permit, it remains valid for one year from your date of arrival. If you hold a driving licence issued in the UAE, Ukraine, Taiwan, or Republic of North Macedonia, you can exchange it for a British driving licence without needing to take a driving test. Otherwise, you will need to apply for a provisional driving licence via the DVLA website, pass a theory test, and enlist an instructor to help you prepare for the practical test.

Local bus service

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire are served by a comprehensive bus service that provides essential transportation across urban and rural areas alike. Nottingham City Transport (NCT) operates the majority of bus routes within the city, renowned for its frequent and reliable service. Outside Nottingham city, Trent Barton and other operators extend services across Nottinghamshire, ensuring connectivity to towns, villages, and rural communities.

Taxi

Numerous local taxi firms operate throughout Nottinghamshire, offering on demand and pre-booked services. Some of the most common used taxi firm in Nottinghamshire include:

- DG Cars
- My Cars Nottingham
- Southside Cars
- Ali baba Cabs
- Notts Cars
- Yellow Cars

Uber may be available as an alternative option for on-demand transportation.

Transport

Tram

Using the tram in Nottingham is a convenient and efficient way to navigate the city, with frequent services connecting key destinations. Tickets can be purchased at tram stops or via mobile apps, ensuring easy access for all passengers. The tram system is well-integrated with other public transport, providing seamless travel options across Nottingham.



Railway

The railway network is a primary mode of transportation across the UK, offering affordable rates. For purchasing tickets and viewing connections, Trainline is the most widely used website.

You can also find local service providers such as East Midlands Railway for regional travel needs.

Coach

The most widely used coach service in the UK is National Express, which operates nationwide and provides connections to various airports. Visit their website to access their timetable and plan your journeys efficiently.

Airports

East Midlands airport is our nearest airport with limited mainly European flights. Birmingham is reasonably close with a larger selection of destinations but the two most commonly used international airports are the two London based airports - Heathrow International Airport and Gatwick International Airport

Culture and Language differences

The UK is celebrated for its cultural diversity, a characteristic reflected within the NHS workforce. Equality and diversity are foundational principles guiding our practices. As healthcare professionals, you will care for patients from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, necessitating awareness of cultural nuances and language differences that can influence our consultations and interactions.

You will encounter new colloquial expressions, words, and phrases, which may require some adjustment. Don't hesitate to ask patients and colleagues to clarify unfamiliar terms, as this fosters effective communication in your daily practice and future interactions. For instance, a simple language difference exists with the phrase "feeling/being sick," which typically means feeling unwell in most places but denotes nausea or vomiting in the UK.

In medical practice, understanding cultural differences is crucial. For example, some cultures may expect doctors to assume a dominant role in consultations and care decisions ("service provider dominance"). However, according to GMC guidelines, patient autonomy and choice should prevail. Your role is to offer guidance and support, empowering patients to make informed decisions about their health and treatment. It's important to respect patients' autonomy, even if their choices may not align with what you consider optimal, provided they are mentally competent.

Navigating these cultural and linguistic variations enhances patient care and strengthens the bond of trust between healthcare providers and patients within our diverse society.

Pensions Tax and National Insurance

Pension

You will be automatically enrolled in the NHS pension plan unless you choose to opt out. This ensures you receive payments upon reaching the state retirement age. The NHS pension is highly regarded as one of the best in the public sector.

While you have the option to select a different private pension plan, you would need to arrange this independently.

Tax

Your employer will submit the Full Payment Submission (FPS) to HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) to report your earnings. HMRC will then issue your tax code accordingly. Please be aware that in your first month of employment, you may be placed on emergency tax, which typically deducts around 40% of your pay. Any overpaid tax will be refunded to you in the subsequent month.

National Insurance (NI)

National Insurance (NI) is a tax on earnings and self-employed profits, used to fund social security benefits, the UK state pension, and partly the NHS. Alongside income tax, NI forms one of the UK's income taxes. NI contributions (NICs) ensure entitlement to various state benefits for workers and their families.

It's important to check if you need to apply for a National Insurance (NI) number; if you have a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP), this number will be printed on it. Your NI number enables you and your employer to accurately pay taxes and contributions from your salary. If you do not have an NI number, your employer will apply 'emergency' tax deductions until you obtain it, but any excess tax will be refunded once you provide your NI number.

Medical Indemnity

Apply for medical indemnity through reputable organizations such as the MDU, MPS, or MDDUS. While the NHS offers indemnity coverage limited to clinical negligence, membership with these organizations ensures ongoing medico-legal support. This includes assistance with claims, complaints, and disciplinary procedures. Membership fees vary based on your grade and role.

If you engage in private work or perform cosmetic procedures, you may want to consider additional insurance tailored to your specific needs. This ensures comprehensive coverage beyond the NHS indemnity for any potential liabilities arising from such activities.



MDU





**SUPPORT IN YOUR
CAREER**

Support in your career

British Medical Association (BMA)

The BMA serves as the UK's leading professional trade union for doctors, advocating for doctors' interests in employment matters at both national and local levels. They actively strive to enhance working conditions for all doctors. Membership fees vary based on your grade and role.

Key benefits of BMA membership include:

- Representation and support in employment disputes with your employer.
- Reviewing your employment contracts and schedules for accuracy and compliance.
- Providing guidance to understand and navigate your employment contract effectively.
- Supporting the development of your professional career.
- Subscription to the British Medical Journal (BMJ) and other valuable benefits.

Joining the BMA ensures that doctors have access to comprehensive support and resources tailored to their professional needs and career advancement.

Join your professional college (RCGP)

You can join your professional College to gain access to your professional portfolio, where you will compile evidence of your ongoing professional development. This is not necessary but is recommended and may help in advancing in your career. It is typically associated with membership costs.



Royal College of
General Practitioners



Support in your career

Shadowing

Consider arranging a period of job shadowing with a colleague who holds the same role as you. Job shadowing involves observing your colleague during their typical working day. It's advisable to discuss this with your Practice Manager either before you start or on your first day. Job shadowing can help you acclimate to your new position before assuming full responsibilities.

Before your first day at work, familiarize yourself with the route to your workplace, whether by road or bus. Arriving late on your first day can create a negative impression, so planning your journey in advance is important.





Discover mentoring

Strongly consider arranging a period of ‘shadowing’ a colleague in your same role. This means spending some time directly observing a colleague and what they do on a normal working day. Speak to your Practice Manager before you start or on your first day to arrange this. This will help ease you into the job before you take on your role fully.

Before coming to your workplace on your first day consider getting to know how to get there (i.e. what road or bus to take and when). Being late on your first day is not a good impression you want to make!

Mentoring is a form of development that takes place over a series of conversations between a trained mentor and a client. These conversations are designed to support you in creating learning, self-development, and improved performance in a way that benefits you. The mentor is trained to help you stretch your thinking, to support you in looking at things in new ways, and to assist you in finding solutions and answers to questions you might be posing yourself. The mentor believes that you are an expert in yourself, and within you is a deep well of knowledge, resources, and understanding that will allow you to develop and grow and find the best path through a situation or learning that will suit you.