
Supporting Mentors Scheme Guidance for 2020/21

Making primary care a great place to work

This guidance supports Integrated Care Systems and Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships, Primary Care Networks, practices, training hubs and other local partners to understand the operationalisation of this GP Contract commitment

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Programme summary



What is the scheme?

- The Supporting Mentors Scheme is a commitment made in the 'Update to the GP Contract Agreement 2020/21 - 2023/24'
- It is a scheme supported by national funding, delivered by ICSs/STPs, aimed at supporting GPs through creating an opportunity to develop mentoring skills, and to work in a different way
- The overarching aim is to retain experienced GPs working in primary care through creating this portfolio working opportunity, while supporting less experienced GPs through high quality mentoring
- The scheme should be delivered to link directly to the General Practice Fellowship programme, with mentors providing mentorship to fellows participating in the programme

Who is it for?

- The scheme supports GPs who currently deliver - or agree to deliver - a minimum of three clinical sessions (4 hours 10 minutes each) per week, and are looking to conduct an additional weekly session of mentoring
- GPs who have experience in leadership roles, medical education, or are currently a GP partner are particularly encouraged to participate
- GPs who want to give back but are not looking to retire yet

How is it delivered?

- ICSs/STPs are responsible for ensuring there is a scheme running across their footprint

- The delivery of the scheme involves the onboarding and training of mentor GPs, connecting them to mentees, and reimbursing mentors for their mentorship sessions

What do participants receive?

Participants are able to access two aspects of this scheme:

- a) mentorship training which results in an industry recognised qualification
- b) A financial payment of £289 ('mentoring supplement') for the weekly session utilised for delivery of mentorship activities

How do GPs join the scheme?

- The onboarding process is led locally by the respective ICS/STP. It is expected interested GPs will complete an application template and provide supplementary evidence, such as a statement outlining their motivation for becoming mentors. An example application form can be found on FutureNHS

Funding

- National funding was allocated to NHSEI regions in August 2020
- ICSs/STPs will need to engage with their respective NHSEI regional colleagues to agree receipt of the funding supplied nationally

Going forward

- The scheme is expected to run for two to three years, and is subject to ongoing consideration and review

This guidance launches the new Supporting Mentors Scheme, which is a national initiative being implemented so systems can support their more experienced GPs to mentor newly-qualified GPs. The document outlines the ask of ICSs/STPs in their delivery of the initiative, along with details of the resources available to support their implementation.

Delivery of this scheme will enable systems and their PCNs to provide experienced GPs with a portfolio working opportunity and associated training. In turn, this will enable these GP mentors to connect with newly-qualified doctors to embed into the local general practice environment and become an integral part of the local primary care team.

By supporting experienced GPs through engaging them into this scheme, systems and practices will be able to access a cohort of locally based and highly experienced doctors to support their own more junior doctors. In joining the scheme, GP mentors can use and share their experience to support GPs who are joining the workforce and beginning their career in general practice. Systems should use this new initiative to deliver the 'GP Mentorship' aspect of the Fellowship Framework, which states fellows should expect to receive one hour of mentorship every four weeks, as well as to provide additional mentorship opportunities, where capacity allows.

A diverse range of Mentor GPs supported through this scheme will benefit from funded training, leading to a recognised mentoring qualification, which will equip them with the necessary skills to mentor and 'give back' to their GP colleagues. Supplementary to the funded training, GP mentors will be entitled to financial reimbursement of £289 per session for the mentoring activity they conduct each week. This scheme is available to all GPs working in general practice who currently work at least three clinical sessions per week, are looking to undertake one additional session for such mentorship, and have the necessary skills, motivation and experience to be effective mentors. This is therefore a great opportunity for GPs seeking a partial step down before retirement. NHSEI have established the national principles for the scheme via this guidance, and local areas should utilise this initiative to build on current local good practice that may already be in play. Nationally, it is hoped this initiative will train and fund around 450 GPs per year, which in turn could support around 3,000 newly-qualified GPs.

Subject to year on year financial planning outcomes, systems should expect to have access to a budget for delivery of this scheme next year and beyond. The scheme will be under ongoing review and so your suggestions and experiences of it are welcomed.

Scheme delivery



This scheme comprises four main aspects of delivery for ICSs/STPs to take forward, which are summarised in the table below. Further detail on each of these can be found in the subsequent slides. In some systems, delivery will make sense at the place rather than the system level.

Aspect of the scheme	Summary
1 GP mentor recruitment	Systems will need to identify and onboard local GPs to their scheme. Systems are encouraged to provide local clinical leadership to promote the scheme to experienced GPs in their area to drive implementation
2 Training of GP mentors	Systems should procure the delivery of training to ensure GP mentors have the necessary skills and tools to mentor and support other GPs
3 Connecting to GP mentees	Local leads should develop a process by which GP mentors are connected with GP mentees, in particular those on the fellowship scheme
4 Reimbursement	Each GP mentor engaged through this scheme should be reimbursed one session each week to provide time to conduct mentoring

Whilst considering the design and delivery of the local scheme, systems should:

- Consider their implementation intentions with NHSEI regional colleagues in order to access funding for the establishment and delivery of the scheme
- Align this initiative with delivery of the General Practice Fellowships scheme, in order to utilise these mentors to deliver an aspect of the Fellowship Framework
- Implement a process to monitor and evaluate the local scheme in an ongoing way, both in terms of numbers of GPs supported on the scheme, number of GPs trained, number of mentor-mentee matches, as well as understanding GPs' experiences of the scheme. Systems will be asked to share information against these metrics with NHSEI

1 GP mentor recruitment

ICs/STPs are responsible for having a local scheme in place. Systems and/or constituent places should work together with local partners in promoting the scheme to experienced GPs in their area, driving uptake.

Systems need to implement and oversee a local application process to onboard GPs interested in joining the scheme as mentors. They will need to ensure GPs applying to the scheme meet all the eligibility criteria outlined in this guidance and that these GPs are of good character and have the potential to be effective mentors. Nationally the scheme is seeking to support 450 GPs to become mentors through this initiative, and so there will be a limit to the number of GPs each system can support, in accordance with their population size and allocated budget.

Where an STP cannot support an application, they should provide feedback to the individual GP outlining the decision with information on how to reapply, where appropriate.

Systems should consider accepting GP mentors with a mix of specialist focus areas e.g. leadership, career progression, career planning, which they should use to form a register of mentor profiles. Consideration should also be paid to diversity, seeking a good mix across all of the associated characteristics.

Systems may build on a local mentor scheme that is already ongoing in their respective areas, considering how this programme can support broader recruitment and retention initiatives. This means where good practice activity is already in place which supports delivery of this programme it should continue. Your local training hub is a good point of contact and support in delivering any of your local GP workforce schemes.

An example application form for GPs looking to become mentors via this scheme can be found on [FutureNHS](#), and can be adapted for your local scheme.

2 Training of GP mentors

Systems should ensure that all GP mentors participating in the scheme have mentorship training funded through this initiative. The training should deliver a recognised, accredited mentorship qualification such as ILM5. Through investing in upskilling experienced GPs to become mentors, we build mentoring capability to support resilience and strengthen the GP workforce and help doctors, especially those entering primary care, feel more supported and less isolated.

Where a GP already holds a mentorship qualification there is no need for them to undertake any additional training in order they can deliver mentorship sessions through this scheme.

Systems may elect to administer the training function themselves in-house, or perhaps invite a local partner to coordinate on their behalf such as the training hub or a federation.

In consideration of value for money, systems should seek to ensure that mentor GPs are able to remain on the scheme for a minimum period of one year, except for in unexpected circumstances, for example absence or retirement due to ill health. Systems may consider recovering the cost of any training GP mentors have undertaken if they do not remain on the scheme for the minimum period and an exemption is not granted.

Mentor training should be recognised by a professional body and equip mentors to:

- Assess their own skills, knowledge and behaviours as a mentor
- Plan, deliver and review their mentoring
- Understand how to manage the mentoring process within an organisational context
- Deepen their understanding of how the organisational context can affect mentoring
- Plan, deliver and review their mentoring, for example through utilising the 'GROW model' or similar to help shape objectives of the person they are mentoring
- Plan their future development in mentoring

3 Connecting with GP mentees



Systems should establish a mechanism to connect GP mentors on this scheme with newly qualified-GPs who are participating in the GP Fellowship programme. There are a number of methodologies which could be used to activate this, including organising 'speed meeting' events to introduce GPs and support them in establishing mentorship relationships. Alternatively, systems may elect to deliver this aspect through taking advantage of technology such as an online platform to support the matching process. An additional benefit of this is such systems can also aid mentors and mentees with the administration needs of their mentorship relationship.

NHSEI are interested in hearing about what works well in making such vital and lasting connections. You are encouraged to share your thinking and suggestions with other local leaders implementing these schemes, as well as NHSEI in order to help us unlock this learning. Sharing can be done through FutureNHS (details on final page) in order a wider range of standard approaches can be defined and made more easily achievable. Your good practice is hugely valuable to others.

4 Reimbursement



ICSSs/STPs should utilise the CCG payment function in order to reimburse GP mentors directly on a monthly basis for their sessions undertaken through this scheme. GP mentors participating in this scheme are entitled to receive **one session every week to the value of £289 in order to undertake mentoring activities.**

In exchange, mentors will be expected to support between four to six mentees and provide direction and an objective view on how their mentee/GP fellow can develop and progress in their clinical environment. The mentee to mentor ratio may be increased while maintain the quality of the mentoring relationships, especially if mentoring sessions are conducted virtually and no travel time is therefore required.

Mentors should agree with the local mentorship scheme how they will use the time available to them, and if they are able to carry out mentoring in less than the time allocated, should identify other suitable GP retention activities to participate in.

- The reimbursement will cover time mentors spend on meeting preparation and follow up administration, travel time to any face to face mentorship sessions, and the mentoring session itself
- GP mentors will not be entitled to any other reimbursement outside of this including expenses, such as the cost of travelling
- The £289 GP mentors receive is inclusive of any on-cost including employer contributions

All GPs engaged with the scheme should:

- Hold full registration and a licence to practise with the General Medical Council (GMC)
- Meet the requirements for remaining on the NHS England GP Performers List and report to NHS England any concerns that might affect their status on the National Medical Performers List
- Not be subject to interim suspension under section 41A of the Medical Act 1983
- Currently be working at least three clinical sessions per week and intending to conduct one additional session of mentoring per week

The scheme should particularly welcome applications from GPs from a wide range of diverse backgrounds, and who have experience in leadership roles, medical education, or are currently a GP partner.

Experienced GPs who are considering retirement may wish to use their experience to mentor new entrants to the profession, perhaps utilising this as a 'step-down' opportunity

Funding for 2020/21



Financial allocations for the implementation and ongoing delivery of this scheme will be made available to ICSs/STPs via the respective NHSEI regional team. Funding covers three aspects of delivery:

- 1. Establishment and ongoing administration of scheme.** Money for the design, administration and evaluation reporting of this and other GP workforce schemes.
- 2. Procurement of mentor training.** Funding to train an agreed number of GPs with a recognised mentorship qualification. To ensure value for money, systems are encouraged to explore expanding existing training opportunities that are hosted by local authorities and/or local NHS Leadership Academies.
- 3. Quarterly reimbursement of the CPD supplement.** The ICS/STP should pay the qualifying GP mentors their £289 per session of mentoring on a monthly basis, and gain for this on a quarterly basis from their NHSEI regional colleagues. Given the scheme launches in August 2020, each GP mentor engaged through this initiative will be reimbursed with a maximum of £10,115 for mentoring in 2020/21 (c35 weeks x £289 per week)

Activity	Who pays
ICS/ STP establishment of the scheme, including mentor training	The NHSEI regional team holds a scheme budget and will release to ICSs/STPs once implementation plans are agreed
Salary to GP mentors for clinical sessions undertaken while engaged through the scheme	The individual employing practice
Reimbursing GP mentors for their mentoring session	The ICS/STP delivering the scheme pays the GP through a lead CCG The NHSEI regional team reimburses the ICS/STP
Delivery of peer networking and CPD activities	ICSs/STPs electing to deliver this aspect through another provider – such as training hub or LMC - should build the cost into their training costs from the NHSEI regional team

Programme evaluation



NHSEI will require management information on all primary care workforce schemes in order to understand impact and return on investment, and to inform the ongoing review of the support offer to the workforce. The detail of the specific reporting requirements and associated mechanism will be communicated through NHSE/I regional colleagues in due course. This slide outlines the potential metrics which updates will be sought against, in order ICSs/STPs and their delivery partner(s) can start to capture this information from the outset as they implement their schemes.

- Number of mentors appointed and trained
- Number of mentees supported
- Number of mentor sessions claimed/ reimbursed
- Number of clinical sessions delivered by mentors
- In-year spend to date
- Profiled spend to end of year
- Participants' experience of the scheme

Where to go for support



FutureNHS

- This [website](#) from the primary care workforce team in NHS England and NHS Improvement offers further resources including workforce modelling tools and retention guidance and support. There is also a community of others leading this programme locally and a number of resources to support implementation, so you can use the forum to ask questions, share thinking, and learn from other areas



National Policy Team

- The team devising the Supporting Mentors Scheme can be contacted at: england.primarycareworkforce@nhs.net



Regional Support

- You can gain support from your local NHS England and NHS Improvement regional colleagues. Additionally, they are your point of contact for the release of funding for the implementation and ongoing delivery of your scheme
- You should also consider your local training hub, who holds skills and expertise that can support implementation