

Tracking GPs in training into fully-qualified general practice roles - user guidance

Background

These formatted tables have been developed to track GPs in training into fully-qualified GP roles in the general practice workforce. Their aim is to gauge how many GPs who can be identified in General Practice Specialty Training placements subsequently take up fully-qualified GP roles in traditional high street practices, as well as the length of time it takes for them to do so.

Data sources and methodology

GPs included in the [General Practice Workforce](#) series of statistics form the cohort for this analysis. Specifically, it includes GPs in training, extracted each month from the Trainee Information System (TIS), and GPs holding fully-qualified roles recorded by practices in the National Workforce Reporting Service (NWRS), also extracted monthly. More information about these data sources can be found on the [Introduction to General Practice Workforce](#) page of each release. TIS and NWRS extracts for March, June, September and December for each year have been used for this analysis.

Only GPs in training in their final year specialty placement (ST3) are included from the TIS data. Their General Medical Council (GMC) registration number has been used to identify them in each extract, and the date of the quarterly extract in which they were last seen before disappearing from the TIS data is recorded. This date is represented by the 'Last seen ST3' rows of each table.

The TIS data has then been linked to each quarterly extract from NWRS using GPs' GMC numbers to attempt to find the same GPs in fully-qualified roles, with the date of the quarterly extract in which they were first seen in NWRS recorded. This date is represented by the 'First seen in fully-qualified role' columns of each table. The numbers in each cell represent the count of GPs last seen in an ST3 role and first seen in a fully-qualified role for each combination of quarterly extracts.

Also included in each table is the count of the ST3 GPs last seen for each quarter who have not yet been found in NWRS (the 'Not Yet Seen' column).

The analysis has been carried out for all GPs together without additional breakdowns, for males and females separately, and also split by the grouped country of primary medical qualification of each GP. For the first release of these tables, breakdowns by gender *and* country of qualification group have also been produced to gain a better understanding of differences seen between males and females, and country of qualification groups separately.

The time series begins from September 2018, which was when TIS became the data source for GPs in training for the [General Practice Workforce](#) analysis.

Exclusions

The fully-qualified GP roles included are GP Partner, Salaried GP, GP Retainer and Regular GP Locum (covering sickness, maternity/paternity, vacancies or other). From the NWRS data, ad-hoc locums (locum or sessional GPs who typically work briefly at practices to cover for short-term or unexpected absences) that are not also working in the four previously listed roles, are not included since information about them is captured in a different way to the rest of the workforce.

Context and interpretation of the results

The counts of GPs for each combination of dates can be used to measure the number of GPs transitioning into the fully-qualified workforce as recorded in NWRS, over different lengths of time (measured in quarters). The total number of these GPs for each row can be used in conjunction with the count of GPs not yet seen in NWRS to calculate a transition rate ('% of ST3 leavers seen in NWRS' in the published tables). It is important to be aware that from the results, it can be seen that GPs are still transitioning into the workforce after several years and so transition rates are likely to increase in future quarters, particularly for the more recent periods (the lower rows of each table).

It is also likely that a large proportion of the GPs counted as 'Not yet seen' in these tables are working as a GP, despite not appearing (or not being found) in NWRS.

Reasons for this could include, but are not limited to, the possibility that the GP is:

- Working *only* as an ad-hoc locum (not included in this analysis)
- Working in a regular locum or permanent GP role but not recorded by the practice (in each reporting period since September 2018, between 1-2% of practices in England have failed to record any GPs in NWRS)
- Working regularly in NHS general practice settings not captured by NWRS (examples include out of hours services, working for 111 as a GP, working in A&E streaming, or through an NHS-commissioned digital provider)
- Working privately
- Working in another country, either within the UK or overseas
- On maternity leave / career break / sick leave, after appearing briefly in NWRS but not being captured by this analysis since it only uses extracts for March, June, September and December each year
- Working in a practice and recorded in NWRS, but with incorrect GMC number in either TIS or NWRS, meaning the records were not matched

We carried out investigative analysis to attempt to find the GPs not yet seen in NWRS in other data sources that may indicate they are working as a GP in England. Using GMC number, we searched for these GPs on the GMC GP Register, the Medical Performers List and within the ad-hoc locum cohort of GPs captured separately in NWRS.

Among 2,387 GPs who were last seen in ST3 placements in TIS between September 2018 and September 2021 but had not yet appeared in NWRS by September 2023, 91% were found on the GMC GP Register as of October 2023, while 79% were on the Medical Performers List in October 2023.

Existence on the GMC GP Register does not necessarily mean these GPs are working or have worked as a GP in England but does indicate they completed their training and have a recognised GP qualification. Presence on the Medical Performers List is more likely to indicate these GPs are working or have worked in NHS primary care in England since completing their training placement role, as it is a list of those doctors who have met the criteria to be considered suitable to deliver NHS Primary Care. Furthermore, GPs are in theory removed from the list if they are not delivering Primary Medical Services, although removal can take up to a couple of years.

Of the 2,387 GPs 'not seen in NWRS' by September 2023, 31% were recorded as having worked as ad-hoc locums in general practice between September 2021 and September 2023.

Though the results of this investigative analysis cannot be used to calculate accurate transition rates of ST3 GPs into the fully-qualified workforce, they do indicate that the real transitions rates are likely to be much higher than the 'percentage of ST3 leavers seen in NWRS' presented in these tables.

We welcome feedback and questions about these tables. Email us at primarycareworkforce@nhs.net.