

Minutes of the meeting of the Foundation Programme Board held on 6th March 2025

Present: Duncan Henderson (DH) [Chair], Helen Adamson (HA), Lisa Black (LB), Fiona Cameron (FC), Brian Conway (BC), Alan Denison (AD), Fiona Drimmie (FD), Hilary Duffy (HD), Vicky Hayter (VH), Toby McDonald (TMcD), Shona McLellan (SMcL), Wesley McLoughlin (WMcL), Alistair Milne (AM), Matthew Murtagh (MM), Yatin Patel (YP), Jemma Pringle (JP), Christine Rea (CR), Joeseeph Sarvesvaran (JS), Elaine Rowan (ER) & Ellen Skelly (EK),

Apologies: Simon Barker (SB), Edgar Brincat (EB), Jennifer Duncan (JD), Margaret Grant (MG), Olive Herlihy (OH), Alison Hodge (AH), Christine Heron (CH), Alison Hodge (AH), Izhar Khan (IK), David Kluth (DK), Hannah MacDonald (HMD), Malcolm McLeod (AMcL), Jen Mackenzie (JMack), Crawford McGuffie (CMcG), Joanna Stephen (JSe) & Caroline Whitton (CW)

In attendance: Rachel Brand-Smith

Item No	Item	Comment	Action
1.	Welcome & Apologies	<p>The chair welcomed the following new members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Wesley McLoughlin – Foundation Doctor Rep, East Region • Dr Ellen Skelly – Foundation Doctor Rep, West Region 	
2.	Notes of the previous meeting 15/11/2024	The notes of the meeting held on 15/11/2025 were accepted by the members	
3.	Matters Arising		
3.1.1	F1 Allocation August 2025 – General Update	<p>Various issues regarding the 2025 F1 Allocation were discussed including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Update: DH confirmed that 84% of candidates got their first choice this year and the number of candidates getting one of their top five preferences rose to 95%. In addition to this, the number of candidates who got their last choice has fallen from eighteen individuals to three out of a total >11,000. Finally, all posts in Scotland have been filled with candidates who preferenced Scotland as their first choice. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Allocation Process: DH noted that there has been a significant increase in candidates using the pre-allocation process. YP suggested that pre-allocation may stop non-pre-allocation candidates from getting their first choice. In addition to this, TMcD highlighted that candidates are aware of how to strategically place their preferences. DH confirmed that these issues, and others, will be reviewed by UKFPO. • Candidates who failed to receive a post in Scotland: FD asked if data was available on the number of candidates who preferenced Scotland but failed to get a Scottish post. DH stated that this data was not available at present however he noted that Scotland has had around a one-to-one application ratio for more than a decade. • Breakdown of Scottish Data: DH confirmed that, when available, Scottish data will be broken down to indicate which applicants came from which universities etc. • Preferencing Webinar: FC confirmed that she and CR ran a preferencing webinar for candidates who had received their posts this year. 	
3.1.2	F1 Allocation August 2025 – Placeholder System	<p>Various issues relating to Placeholder candidates were discussed including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placeholder System: DH confirmed that there will be an increase in the number of candidates on the UK Placeholder list this year. This is due to a higher number of eligible applicants regardless of the increase in funded Scottish posts. TMcD asked how many placeholder candidates there were compared to last year. DH and CR confirmed that the information was currently embargoed by the UKFPO. • Communication to Placeholder Candidates: CR confirmed that she would be sending out confirmation e-mails to group stage candidates on 20/03/2025. The main allocations will be confirmed in April. 	
3.2	SFP Process - August 2025	BC gave the members an update regarding the SFP process including:	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change to SFP Application Process: BC confirmed that applicants to SFP were asked to fill in three white space questions as part of their application process this year. Responses will be marked by 10/03/2025. DH thanked the SFP programme team for all their effort regarding this new process and the very tight timescale in which they have had to complete the process. • Allocation Process: BC confirmed that the candidates with the highest score are allocated to their first regional choice. Candidates with lower scores are allocated to their second or third regional choices. Posts in each region are then allocated through the PIA process. • Issues with Regional Preferences: FC highlighted that if candidates are offered posts not in their preferred region and they turn that post down, they will be removed from the Foundation Programme for that year. • Candidates who fail to get a SFP Post: FC and AD noted that candidates who fail to gain SFP posts should be directed to take up other opportunities within the Foundation Programme. 	
3.3	NES Foundation Programme Review	<p>AD gave the members an update regarding the Foundation Review including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NES Foundation Programme Review: AD confirmed that there are ongoing discussions regarding the re-structuring of the NES Foundation School. AD noted that there have been significant changes in the programme over time, and this is an appropriate time for a review. • Review Output: LB asked when the finished review will be published. AD stated that he hoped that the result would be released by the next STB meeting. 	
3.4	Foundation Expansion 2024 - 2027	DH gave the members an update on issues related to Expansion posts including:	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Overview: DH confirmed that the Foundation Programme will be expanded by 23%. Ninety-nine posts will be added to the total number of posts in August and a further 72 posts will be added to the programme in 2026. • Impact of Expansion: DH highlighted that this expansion requires additional FPDs, training infrastructure and an agreed plan for the appropriate distribution of posts across Scotland. 	
4	Standing items of Business		
4.1	Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no items to discuss 	
4.1.1	Improving Foundation Programme Initiative	<p>FC gave the members the following update regarding the Improving Foundation Programme Initiative including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Overview: FC confirmed that there is ongoing work to identify areas of improvement which are not covered by the Quality group. FC noted that the aim is to provide support and guidance not assessment. FC noted that this project is working well in the West Region but is more piecemeal across the rest of the country. • Satisfaction Scores: FC confirmed that FPOG will looking at overall satisfaction scores as an indicator for improvement. • Eight Month Posts: FC also confirmed that the initial pilot project to deliver eight month posts will have a formal assessment process to assess the project and results will be reported back through FPOG. 	
4.1.2	Foundation Programme Development Day 2025	Various issues regarding the Foundation Programme Development Day were discussed including:	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Event: FC confirmed that this will be held at Dundee Dental Education Centre and thanked CR for arranging a face-to-face meeting. CR confirmed that approximately 60 Foundation team members will attend in person or online. • Access on the Day: FC asked if a link could be sent to all FPDs for anyone who would like to join on the day. CR confirmed that she would look into this. 	
4.1.3	SMEC 2025 - 24 & 25 th April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DH confirmed that the SMEC days will be held on 24th and 25th April. 	
4.2	Training Management		
4.2.1	TPM Update	<p>Various issues were discussed relating to Training Programme Management including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of Programme Process: HD confirmed that the Out of Programme application process has been available on TURAS for four months and has had positive feedback. • Less than Full Time Process: HD confirmed that the next process to be automated will be the Less than Full Time application process. HD confirmed that work will start in April. 	
4.2.2	Digital Update	<p>CR gave the members an update regarding digital services including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundation Portfolio: CR confirmed that the Foundation Programme portfolio declarations sections will be updated in August. This will be in time for the start of Shadowing Week. • Outcome 8: CR confirmed that Outcome 8 will be added to the portfolio Outcome list. FC noted that Outcome 8 relates to doctors requesting Out of Programme and means that Foundation now follows Gold Guide procedures. DH noted that the GMC had requested this change to aid tracking and reporting. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future Developments: CR confirmed that there are plans to develop a new reporting system related to Foundation doctor's links in their portfolios. In addition to this, there will be changes to how SLEs are recorded in the portfolio. 	
4.3	Quality Management	<p>FD gave the members an update regarding quality issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Re-structure: FD confirmed that the Quality Workstream now consists of three quality workstreams: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team 1 – Surgical, Medical & Emergency Medicine • Team 2 – Diagnostics, O&G & Paediatrics • Team 3 – General Practice & Mental Health • FD confirmed that she and a representative from the Foundation Programme will have to attend all three groups, and this will be a significant challenge in terms of co-ordination. • Quality Review Meetings: FD confirmed that there are three Quality Review groups, and a Foundation rep sits on each group. FD noted that these meeting often have many associated papers and asked members to review them before attending the meeting. In addition to this, the new system will require FD to have advance notice of issues so that she can make contact with the appropriate regional APGD. • Quality Tracker: FD highlighted the use of a Quality Tracker which indicates where each site stands in terms of quality assessment. • Quality Contacts: FD advised the members that she or Jennifer Duncan are the main contacts for the Foundation Programme. • Regional Specialty Committees: FC noted that FPOG will be collating the minutes from all the Regional Specialty Committees to identify any quality or improvement issues. 	

4.4	Post Graduate Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Item 4.5 	
4.5.1	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Update – General Update	<p>AD gave the members an update regarding ED&I including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AEME Group: AD confirmed that a new NES ED&I strategy is being drafted at present. In addition to this, a new Anti-Racism, Sexual Harassment and Workplace Relationships policy has been developed. IMG Support Programmes: AD confirmed that several pre-Induction webinars have been developed for IMGs. In addition to this, the group have also developed some Simulation Induction workshops. WINS Programme: AD stated that the WINS (Welcoming IMGs New to Scotland) programme is being held at various locations across Scotland. These workshops also include information related to disability access with contributions from the territorial health boards. ED&I Information Sharing: AD confirmed that there are ongoing discussions regarding the development of short video updates regarding ED&I information. Differential Attainment Data: BC asked how data regarding differential attainment should be collected. AD and DH both confirmed that this was a complex issue and required more information than data from universities etc. 	
4.5.2	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Update – Impact of Foundation Expansion	<p>Various issue related to the impact of the Foundation Programme expansion were discussed including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ED&I Overview: JS noted that there have been some negative statements made by some resident doctors about the increase in Foundation posts, IMG doctor intake and the overall impact on the availability of higher training posts. Members Response: AD noted that the Scottish Government endeavours to guarantee Scottish based graduate posts within higher training. In addition to this, 	

		<p>he noted that the GMC have estimated that there will be a reliance on IMGs until the 2030s. AD noted that there is a requirement to work closely with Workforce to identify changes in workforce numbers as accurately as possible. DH noted that UK medical school places had increased, with a parallel increase in Foundation places to ensure employment and further training. The aim was ultimately to provide appropriate staffing levels for the NHS and address the current significant issue of consultant and GP vacancies. DH noted that it is not clear how the increased output from Foundation compares to the expansion of specialty and GP training places.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of Issues: DH and AD both indicated that it is important to discuss resident doctor's valid concerns around the number of training places available after Foundation. AD noted that trainers are supportive of resident doctor's concerns. 	
4.6	Foundation Programme Groups		
4.6.1	Foundation Academic Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BC confirmed that the SFP presentation event will be held in Dundee in July. DH thanked BC for his excellent input to the event. 	
4.6.2	Foundation Curriculum & Assessment Implementation Group (FCAIG)	<p>AM gave the members an update regarding FCAIG activities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching Repository: AM confirmed that there is ongoing work regarding the Teaching Repository. So far, a quarter to one third of doctors are using the resources provided. AM noted that guidance for speakers will be updated and some walk through guides for the Portfolio will be added. DH congratulated the team for their input. • Access to Teaching Repository: FC noted that Foundation doctors can only access the teaching repository with their work nhs.scot e-mail address. Access is not possible with personal email addresses and trainees should update their email address on TURAS. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FY2 STEP Forms: AM confirmed that CR has been working on revising the STEP forms. • Induction Materials: AM confirmed that the Induction slides for FY1 and FY2 will be revised. 	
4.6.3	Foundation Programme Operational Group (FPOG)	<p>FC gave the members the following update regarding FPOG including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name Change: FC confirmed that the name of this group will be changed as part of the Scottish Foundation review. FC said she would update the members when this has been done. • Foundation Programme Organisational Diagram: DH confirmed that he will share the new Foundation Programme organisational diagram (organogram). This indicates how Foundation Programme groups are linked to each other and the hierarchy of reporting. • PSA Exam: FC confirmed that there are still some doctors who will be sitting the PSA exam this year. FC noted that FPOG will be providing support for this. • Referrals to TDWS: FC noted that Foundation doctors can now be referred to TDWS if they have any issues related to communication skills etc. FC noted that the numbers who may require such referrals are very low. 	DH to share new Foundation Programme organogram with members
4.6.4	Foundation Programme Simulation Steering Group – General Update	<p>JP gave the members an update regarding the Simulation Programme including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APDG Funding: JP confirmed that all contracts for the APGD Simulation posts are ending as the additional Covid funding has now finished. There are ongoing discussions on how the Simulation Programme will progress. • Programme Feedback: JP stated that the feedback data is now being collated by NES and JS will lead on how this data is collected for the next training year. JP confirmed that she has completed the feedback reports for 2024. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI Project: JP confirmed that she will be working on a project with NHS Lothian and the University of Edinburgh assessing the use of AI support for improving communication skills with a view to publication. DH suggested JP meet separately to discuss this project with AD and FC. 	JP and AD to organise discussion regarding AI and communications skills project.
4.6.5	Foundation Programme - Pharmacy Simulation Steering Group - Pharmacy Simulation Project	<p>Various issues related to the Pharmacy Simulation Project were discussed including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pharmacy Simulation Project: JP confirmed that she is working on a pilot with Foundation Pharmacy graduates who are due to graduate in 2026. This will look at complex prescribing, communication skills and human factors. • Identification of doctors with Communication Issues: FC asked how Foundation doctors who require communication skills training are identified. JP confirmed that this was mainly through FPDs. AD suggested further discussion offline. • Time off to attend Project: JP confirmed that this course would require two half days to and would be targeted at FY2s. FC asked if Foundation doctors would be granted time to attend this project. FC noted that this project may not qualify for Study Leave at present however the project would be an ideal Study Leave course when fully developed. • Project Funding: JP confirmed that this project technically has no up-front costs. The project will use Kirkland's Hospital as a no cost venue. 	JP and AD to organise meeting to discuss Pharmacy Simulation Project
5.	Board Member Updates		
5.1	DME Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DH stated that he had discussed various DME issues with Olive Herlihy who has reported that there are still significant funding pressures impacting workforce etc. 	
5.2	Medical School Update	AD confirmed the following items had been discussed at the most recent LUMES meeting including:	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PIA System: AD confirmed the group discussed issues relating to applicants not being allocated a place in Scotland after preferencing Scotland as a first choice in the PIA system. • Prescribing Safety Assessment: AD confirmed that there have been discussions on whether this course will be continued. AD noted that clarification is required from the PSA board. • Postgraduate Tracking: AD confirmed that there are on-going discussions regarding the tracking of post-graduate resident doctors who have progressed through programmes such as Scot Gem, HCP Med etc. The aim of such tracking would be to identify outcomes such as final employment. • Afghan Doctors: AD confirmed that the female doctors from Afghanistan are progressing well at Glasgow University. • AI in Clinical Assessments: AD stated that there have been discussions regarding the use of AI in clinical settings. AD suggested he and JP organise a meeting to discuss this. 	See Action Point 4.6.4
5.3	Foundation Doctor Update	<p>WMcL gave the members the following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundation Doctors Forum: WMcL confirmed that the Foundation Doctors Forum has been re-established. This will be co-chaired by WMcL and Heather McAdam. • ARCP Webinar: WMcL confirmed that an ARCP webinar is being developed with the help of CR. FC noted that the webinar is UK wide and available on YouTube. • UKFPO: FC noted that the Foundation Doctor reps also sit on the UKFPO Foundation Doctor's Advisory Board. 	
5.4	BMA Update	Various issues related to the BMA were discussed including:	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching Repository: ES stated that the Teaching Repository was excellent and should be actively promoted to Foundation doctors. • Support for Foundation Doctors moving to Higher Training: ES noted that there is a general anxiety amongst Foundation doctors about availability of specialty and GP training posts after Foundation. There are reports of significant competition for these posts. YP noted there are fewer Clinical Fellow posts available as there have been in the past, possibly related to the current financial position. FC highlighted that there are efforts in some specialties, e.g. Anaesthesia, to match higher trainees to Foundation doctors so that they can provide advice and support. • Competition Ratios for Higher Training Posts: MM noted that there are increasing competition ratios for higher posts. FC stated that it is well understood within different specialties and noted that it was difficult to provide Foundation doctors with specialty specific training within the Foundation programme. FC stated that the Foundation programme does provide taster attachments if a specialty isn't part of a doctor's two year programme. In addition to this, FC noted that specialties are increasing candidate requirements for Higher Training. • Foundation Doctors Training Development: FC noted that there are on-going efforts by Foundation Doctor UKFPO Fellows to develop additional training that can be carried out in Foundation doctor's self-development time. This training includes both curriculum and non-curriculum subjects. • Move to Whole Time Equivalent: DH noted that NES is aiming to move to the Whole Time Equivalent model for specialty and GP, which will help maintain training and assist with rotas. It will also hopefully assist in addressing the vacancy rate in consultant and GP posts. 	
5.5	Lay Representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HA confirmed there were not items to discuss 	
6.	AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no additional business items 	

7.	Date of Next Meeting	Date of the next meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30/05/2025 (09:30 – 12:00) 14/11/2025 (09:30 – 12:00) 	
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