

What is HEFT?

The NHS England Health Equity Focused Training for GP Trainees is a specialised and enhanced training initiative designed to equip General Practice (GP) trainees with the knowledge, skills, and experience needed to address health inequalities within primary care. This program aligns with NHS England's broader commitment to tackling disparities in healthcare access, outcomes, and experiences, particularly for underserved and marginalised populations. You will develop a deeper understanding of health inequity and the needs of these communities which include, the homeless, migrants groups, those in contact with the justice system, sex workers, travelling communities and those living in poverty.

Practising in these areas is challenging, but incredibly rewarding. A HEFT placement will give you a deep understanding of health inequity and the broader needs of communities, and equip you to be leaders of the future.

How do these differ from normal GP training posts?

HEFT trainees will complete three years of GP training, meeting all the standard curriculum requirements, alongside colleagues who are not undertaking HEFT.

Alongside this:

- GP trainees in this programme are placed in practices serving communities with significant health inequalities, including inner-city areas, rural populations, and regions with high deprivation levels. These placements provide first-hand experience of the challenges faced by patients affected by social determinants of health, such as poverty, housing instability, and barriers to healthcare access.
- Training includes specialised teaching on health inequalities, social determinants of health, and strategies for delivering equitable patient care. Trainees learn about inclusive healthcare practices, trauma-informed care, and culturally competent communication to better serve diverse patient populations.
- There may be opportunities to work with public health teams, social prescribers, community organisations, and local authorities to address wider social and economic factors affecting health. Trainees may also use their self directed learning time to expand their knowledge and become involved in community outreach projects, supporting initiatives such as food banks, housing support, and mental health services.
- There are networking opportunities with other healthcare professionals working in primary care, public health, and social justice sectors as well as peer support from other HEFT trainees.
- Trainees will also be encouraged to design their Quality Improvement Activity around a HEFT topic

As there is no longer a national HEFT programme, each region offers its own training and teaching programme. Trainees are expected to use self-directed learning time when in primary care placements. When in hospital rotations, they can do these sessions in place of half day release if their rota allows, or they can use study leave.

Please note - there are NO additional examination/assessment on these topics. HEFT trainees undergo the same assessments/examination as all other GP trainees.

What are the benefits of the programme for Trainees?

This NHS England training initiative provides a unique, impactful career pathway for GP trainees who want to play an active role in reducing health disparities. Specifically trainees benefit from:

- Hands-on experience in addressing health disparities in real-world primary care settings.
- Development of specialist skills in managing complex social and medical needs.
- Preparation for leadership roles in health policy, medical education, and community health.
- Enhanced ability to advocate for systemic change and equitable healthcare delivery.

By gaining experience in underserved communities, working collaboratively with community organisations, and developing leadership skills, participants are equipped to be advocates for health equity in primary care.

Useful Professional Resources:

The following resources are suitable for healthcare professionals across a variety of disciplines, including GP trainees, doctors, nurses, allied health professionals and public health workers. They offer a blend of theoretical knowledge and practical strategies to enhance understanding and action towards reducing health inequities:

A Practical Guide to Reducing Health Inequalities in Primary Care

An online course by Fairhealth, offering practical strategies for healthcare professionals to tackle health inequalities in general practice.

 Fairhealth – Health Inequalities Guide <https://www.fairhealth.org.uk/course/reduce-hi-primary-care>

Tackling Inequalities Through Health and Social Care Design

A 4-week course by the University of Dundee on FutureLearn, exploring the causes of health inequalities and strategies to reduce them through service design.

 FutureLearn – Tackling Inequalities <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/tackling-inequalities>

Health Inequalities CPD Module

Offered by the Royal College of Psychiatrists, this 150-minute module covers concepts like health equity, trauma-informed care, and intersectionality.

 RCPsych – Health Inequalities https://elearninghub.rcpsych.ac.uk/products/Health_inequalities

Royal College of General Practitioners

Health Inequalities Hub containing e-learning modules/interviews/podcasts <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/representing-you/policy-areas/health-inequalities>

Secure Environments Group supports clinical standards and training for GPs in prisons

 <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/about/communities-groups/secure-environments>

Core25Plus5

A national NHS England approach to inform action to reduce health inequalities  <https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/equality-hub/national-healthcare-inequalities-improvement-programme/core20plus5/>

NHS England

Links to resources to empower healthcare learners and professionals around health equity, including podcasts links and newsletters  <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/population-health/our-resources-hub/health-inequalities>

The Scottish Deep End Project

GP's at the Deep End work in 100 general practices serving the most socio-economically deprived populations in Scotland  <https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/healthwellbeing/research/generalpractice/deepend/>

The institute of Health Equity

Lead by Prof Sir Michael Marmot, work with a range of organisations across the UK and around the world to tackle health inequalities  <https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/>

Kings Fund

Independent charitable organisation working to improve health and care in England  <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/what-are-health-inequalities>

GOV.UK

Latest updates from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities  <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-for-health-improvement-and-disparities>

British Medical Association

A toolkit for those working within general practice aimed at addressing health inequalities

 <https://www.bma.org.uk/what-we-do/population-health/addressing-social-determinants-that-influence-health/reducing-health-inequalities-in-your-local-area-a-toolkit-for-clinicians>

Health Equity Assessment Tool (HEAT)

Used to assess the equity impacts of local policies and services  <https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/health-equity-assessment-tool-heat/>  <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-equity-assessment-tool-heat>

World Health Organization

Refugee and Migrant Health Toolkit developed by WHO's Health and Migration Programme 
<https://www.who.int/tools/refugee-and-migrant-health-toolkit>

Doctors of the World

Safe Surgeries guide and toolkit  <https://www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/>

National Academy for Social Prescribing

Organisation dedicated to advancing social prescribing and working closely with the NHS 
<https://socialprescribingacademy.org.uk>

Useful Patient Resources

There are several resources available for individuals suffering from health inequity in the Thames Valley region, including emergency shelters, food banks, housing support services, and healthcare assistance. These services are provided by local councils, charities, and community organisations.

Homelessness:

Emergency Accommodation & Housing Support

- West Berkshire Council Homeless Support – ☎ 01635 503 365 |  westberks.gov.uk/homelessness
- Oxfordshire Homeless Pathway (Connection Support) –  connectionsupport.org.uk
- Julian House (Thames Valley) –  julianhouse.org.uk
- Wycombe Homeless Connection – ☎ 01494 447699 |  wyhoc.org.uk
- Trinity Homeless Projects (Slough & Uxbridge) – ☎ 020 8797 9500 |  wearetrinity.org.uk

Food & Essentials

- West Berkshire Foodbank –  <https://westberks.foodbank.org.uk>
- Oxford Food Hub –  <https://oxfordfoodhub.org>
- Milton Keynes Food Bank –  mkfoodbank.org.uk
- Newbury Soup Kitchen –  facebook.com/NewburySoupKitchen

Healthcare & Mental Health Support

- NHS Homeless Health Services –  nhs.uk/service-search
- Turning Point (Addiction & Mental Health Support) –  <https://www.turning-point.co.uk>

- Crisis Skylight Oxford (Health & Wellbeing Services) – crisis.org.uk/oxford

Employment & Financial Support

- Citizens Advice Thames Valley – ☎ 03444 111 444 | citizensadvice.org.uk
- Jobcentre Plus (Employment & Benefits Support) – gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus

Key Helplines

- StreetLink (Report Rough Sleepers) – ☎ 0300 500 0914 | streetlink.org.uk
- Shelter Housing Advice – ☎ 0808 800 4444 | shelter.org.uk
- Samaritans (Mental Health Support) – ☎ 116 123 | samaritans.org

Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

Accommodation & Housing Support

- West Berkshire Council Housing Support – ☎ 01635 503 365 | westberks.gov.uk/housing
- Oxfordshire Refugee & Asylum Support – oxfordshire.gov.uk/refugee-support
- Milton Keynes Refugee Resettlement Scheme – ☎ 01908 254 100 | milton-keynes.gov.uk

Legal & Immigration Advice

- Refugee Council (Legal & Asylum Support) – ☎ 020 7346 6777 | refugeecouncil.org.uk
- Citizens Advice (Immigration & Asylum Guidance) – ☎ 03444 111 444 | citizensadvice.org.uk

Language & Education

- Refugee Education UK (ESOL & Mentoring) – <https://www.reuk.org>
- ESOL Courses (Oxford, Reading, Milton Keynes Colleges) – Check local college websites

Employment & Integration Support

- Refugee Action (Employment & Work Rights Support) – <https://www.refugee-action.org.uk>
- Milton Keynes Refugee Employment Support – milton-keynes.gov.uk

Food & Basic Needs

- West Berkshire Foodbank – <https://westberks.foodbank.org.uk>
- Reading Refugee Support Group (Food & Essentials) – rrsg.org.uk

Healthcare & Mental Health

- NHS Migrant & Refugee Health Services – <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-entitlements-migrant-health-guide>
- Turning Point (Mental Health & Addiction Support) – <https://www.turning-point.co.uk>

Key Helplines

- Asylum Helpline (Migrant Help UK) – ☎ 0808 800 0630 | migranthelpuk.org
- Shelter (Housing & Homelessness Advice) – ☎ 0808 800 4444 | shelter.org.uk
- Samaritans (Mental Health Support) – ☎ 116 123 | samaritans.org

Sex workers

Health & Wellbeing

- NHS Sexual Health Clinics – Free STI testing, contraception & advice
nhs.uk/service-search/sexual-health
- Terrence Higgins Trust (Sexual Health & HIV Support) – ☎ 0808 802 1221 | tht.org.uk
- Turning Point (Mental Health & Addiction Support) – <https://www.turning-point.co.uk>

Safety & Legal Support

- National Ugly Mugs (Report Violence & Get Support) – <https://nationaluglymugs.org>
- Thames Valley Police (Crime Reporting & Safety Advice) – ☎ 101 (non-emergency) | ☎ 999 (emergency) <https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk>

Housing & Financial Help

- Citizens Advice (Housing, Benefits & Legal Support) – ☎ 03444 111 444 | citizensadvice.org.uk
- Shelter (Emergency Housing & Homelessness Support) – ☎ 0808 800 4444 | shelter.org.uk

Support & Advocacy

- Beyond the Streets (Support for Women in Sex Work) – ☎ 0800 133 7870 | beyondthestreets.org.uk
- Basis Sex Work Project (Advice & Outreach) – basisyorkshire.org.uk

Key Helplines

- Samaritans (Mental Health Support) – ☎ 116 123 | <https://www.samaritans.org>
- Rape Crisis England & Wales – ☎ 0808 802 9999 | rapecrisis.org.uk
- National Ugly Mugs Helpline – ☎ 0161 629 9861 | <https://nationaluglymugs.org/contact-us/>

Substance misusers

Drug & Addiction Support Services

- Turning Point (Drug & Alcohol Support) – Free confidential support & rehab services
☎ 01865 261 690 | 🔗 <https://www.turning-point.co.uk>
- Change Grow Live (CGL) – Drug & Alcohol Recovery – Support in Oxfordshire, Reading & Milton Keynes
☎ 0118 955 7333 | 🔗 <https://www.changegrowlive.org>
- SMART CJS (Substance Misuse Support in Oxford & Milton Keynes)
🔗 smartcjs.org.uk
- Cranstoun - resources to help rebuild lives - cranstoun.org/

Health & Harm Reduction

- NHS Substance Misuse Services – Detox, medication-assisted treatment & mental health care
🔗 <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/addiction-support/drug-addiction-getting-help/>
- Frank (Confidential Drug Advice & Support) – ☎ 0300 123 6600 | 🔗 talktofrank.com
- Needle Exchange Services – Available at local pharmacies & drug treatment centres
- Hepatitis C Trust 🔗 <https://www.hepctrust.org.uk/>
- Thames Valley Positive Support - LGBTQ+ & HIV support 🔗 <https://www.tvps.org.uk/>
- Shelter (Housing Support for People with Substance Issues) – ☎ 0808 800 4444 | 🔗 shelter.org.uk
- Citizens Advice (Benefits & Housing Help) – ☎ 03444 111 444 | 🔗 citizensadvice.org.uk

Support Groups & Peer Recovery

- Narcotics Anonymous (NA) Meetings in Thames Valley)– ☎ 0300 999 1212 | 🔗 ukna.org
- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) – Drug & Alcohol Recovery Meetings – ☎ 0800 9177 650 | 🔗 alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Key Helplines

- Samaritans (Mental Health & Emotional Support) – ☎ 116 123 | 🔗 samaritans.org
- Frank (Drug Advice Helpline) – ☎ 0300 123 6600 | <https://www.changegrowlive.org>
- CGL 24/7 Helpline (Local Addiction Support) – ☎ 0118 955 7333 | 🔗 <https://www.changegrowlive.org>

Gypsies and Travellers

Housing & Legal Support

- Friends, Families & Travellers (FFT) – Housing, legal & discrimination support
☎ 01273 234 777 | 🔗 gypsy-traveller.org

- Shelter (Housing & Homelessness Advice) – ☎ 0808 800 4444 | 🔗 shelter.org.uk
- Citizens Advice (Legal & Housing Help) – ☎ 03444 111 444 | 🔗 citizensadvice.org.uk

Healthcare & Wellbeing

- NHS Gypsy & Traveller Health Services – Find local GP & mental health support
🔗 <https://www.nhs.uk>
- Traveller Movement (Health & Social Care Support) – ☎ 020 7607 2002 | 🔗 travellermovement.org.uk

Education & Employment

- Traveller Education Support (Oxfordshire & Berkshire Councils) – Check local council websites
- ACERT (Advocacy & Education for Travellers) – 🔗 acert.org.uk

Advocacy & Discrimination Support

- The Traveller Movement (Legal & Rights Advocacy) – ☎ 020 7607 2002 | 🔗 travellermovement.org.uk
- Equality Advisory & Support Service (EASS) – Discrimination Advice – ☎ 0808 800 0082 | 🔗 <https://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com>
- The National Bargee Travellers Association - 🔗 <https://bargee-traveller.org.uk/>

Key Helplines

- Samaritans (Mental Health Support) – ☎ 116 123 | 🔗 samaritans.org
- Friends, Families & Travellers Helpline – ☎ 01273 234 777 | 🔗 gypsy-traveller.org

Poverty

Housing & Homelessness Support

- Shelter – Housing advice & homelessness support
☎ 0808 800 4444 | 🔗 shelter.org.uk
- Citizens Advice – Help with housing, benefits & debt
☎ 03444 111 444 | 🔗 <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk>
- Local Council Housing Support – Apply for housing assistance & benefits
🔗 gov.uk/find-local-council

Food Banks & Essentials

- Trussell Trust Food Banks – Emergency food parcels
🔗 trusselltrust.org
- West Berkshire Foodbank – 🔗 <https://westberks.foodbank.org.uk>

- Oxford Food Hub – oxfordfoodhub.org
- West Berkshire Baby Bank - <https://home-startwestberks.org.uk/baby-bank/>

Financial & Debt Advice

- StepChange – Free debt advice & budgeting support
☎ 0800 138 1111 | stepchange.org
- Turn2Us – Grants & benefits eligibility checker
<https://www.turn2us.org.uk/get-support/information-for-your-situation/debt>
- National Debtline – Free debt & money advice ☎ 0808 808 4000 | nationaldebtline.org

Healthcare & Mental Health Support

- NHS Low-Income Scheme – Help with prescriptions & healthcare costs
<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/help-with-health-costs/>
- Mind (Mental Health Support) – ☎ 0300 123 3393 | mind.org.uk

Education & Employment Support

- Jobcentre Plus – Employment & benefits support
gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus
- The Prince's Trust – Employment & skills training for young people
☎ 0800 842 842 | princes-trust.org.uk

Key Helplines

- Samaritans – ☎ 116 123 | <https://www.samaritans.org>
- Turn2Us Benefits Helpline – ☎ 0808 802 2000 | <https://www.turn2us.org.uk/get-support/information-for-your-situation/debt>

Prison Health

- NHS England Health & Justice - Coordinates health services in secure settings
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/health-just/>
- Revolving Doors - Works at the intersection of health and the criminal justice system. Research, policy, and advocacy for people with multiple disadvantages <https://revolving-doors.org.uk/>

