

DEEP END SUMMARY 28

GP recruitment and retention in deprived areas

Three focus groups were held with 60 GP trainees and early career (First5) GPs to get their views on issues related to recruitment and retention of General Practitioners in severely deprived areas. These took place in October and November 2015.

- Recruitment and retention of general practitioners are becoming crisis issues, as a result of pressures on and within practices, the perceived unattractiveness of GP careers, the age and gender profile of general practitioners and increasing numbers taking early retirement.
- GP trainee exposure to practice in very deprived areas is highly variable, depending on the location of their training practice. At present, there are proportionately more training practices in more affluent areas compared with practices in more deprived areas.
- Very few trainees are considering partnership straight after their training, with most planning to locum to gain experience in different practices. The additional workload, stress and responsibility of partnership are off-putting.
- General practice in very deprived areas is not in itself off-putting for younger GPs. More important issues in determining whether a practice is attractive or not are whether it is well organised, with strong nurse support and a good working atmosphere. Relationships are key.
- Trainees identified particular features of general practice in deprived areas that might generate stress and lead to burnout, but offered a number of strategies that could reduce the likelihood of burnout.
- The next generation of GPs is “up for the challenge” of general practice in the Deep End, but needs to be adequately resourced and supported in the leadership roles they will be taking on.

“General Practitioners at the Deep End” work in 100 general practices, serving the most socio-economically deprived populations in Scotland. The activities of the group are supported by the Scottish Government Health Department, the Royal College of General Practitioners, and General Practice and Primary Care at the University of Glasgow.

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