

# Implementing a Peer Support Scheme for International Medical Graduates in an NHS Hospital Teaching Trust

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## Background

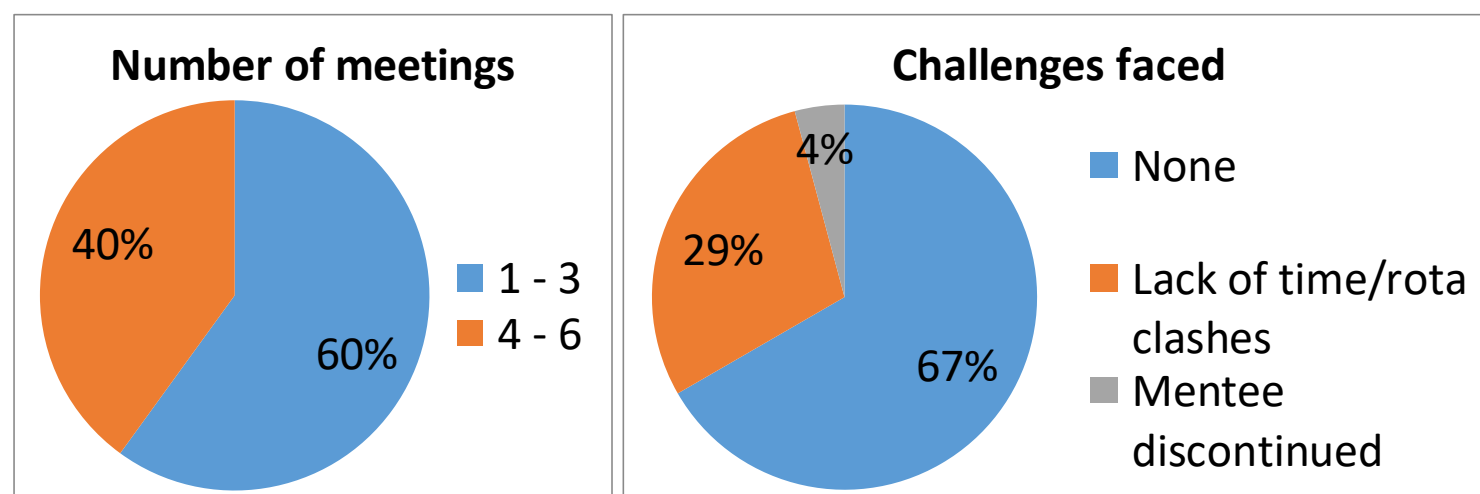
International Medical Graduates (IMGs) represent a significant proportion of junior doctors in the NHS. They face unique challenges, including: cultural and language adjustments, NHS working practices, forming support networks, and settling in the UK (1). The General Medical Council highlights the importance of enhanced induction, mentoring and peer support tailored for IMGs (2).

## Summary of Work

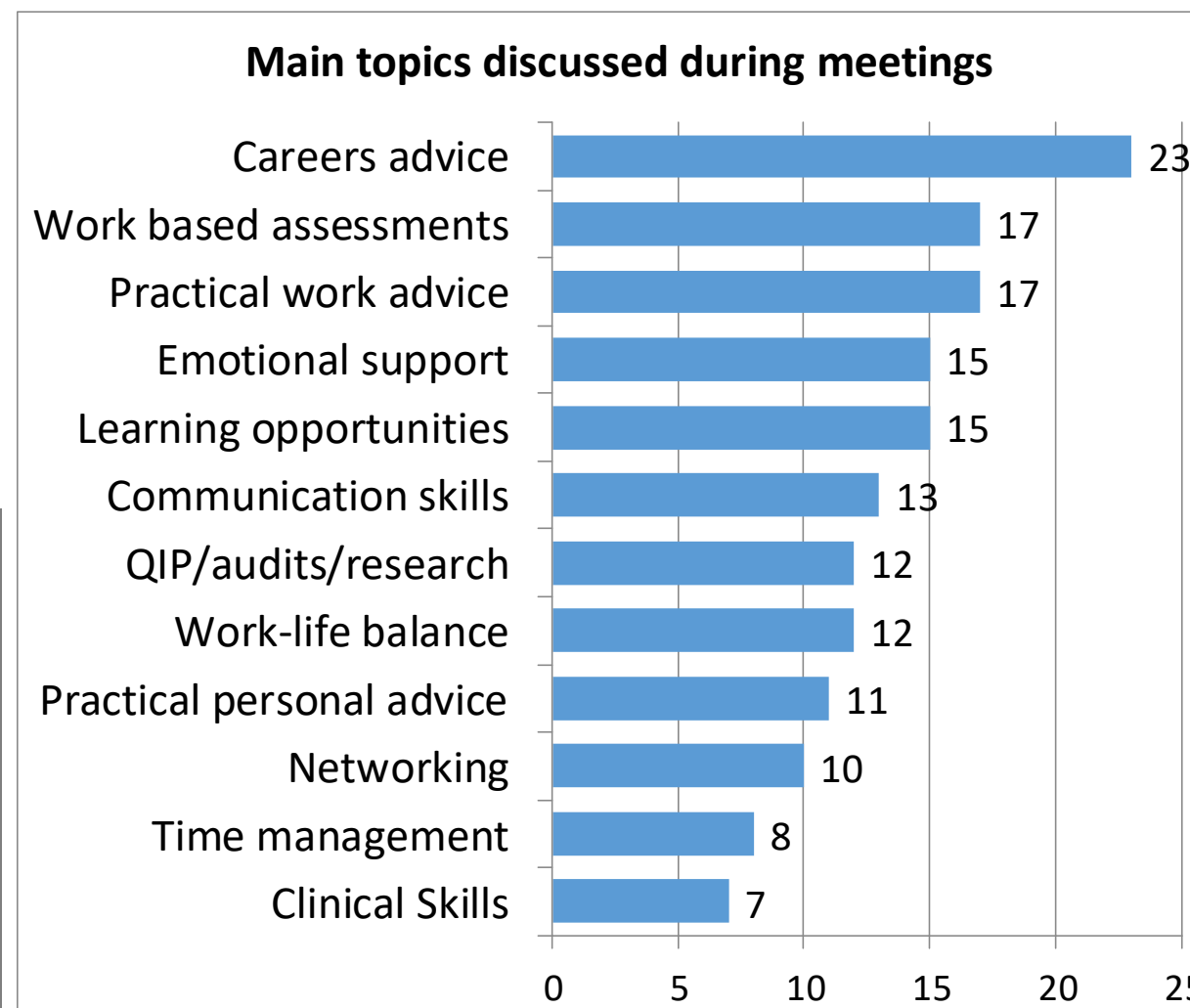
A peer support scheme was implemented in November 2021 across a large acute NHS Trust with a focus on Locally Employed Doctors (LEDs), particularly IMGs. LEDs new to the NHS are matched with a more experienced LED peer, preferably within the same specialty and hospital site, and with enrolment on a continuous basis. Final feedback was obtained in June 2022, which are presented here.

## Summary of Results

29 pairs of mentees and mentors were formed from the 80 IMGs who signed up. Four mentees left the scheme due to unsuitable matching, leaving 18 mentors unmatched. 17 mentors (58.6%, n = 29) and 8 mentees (27.6%, n = 29) completed the final feedback form, all of whom managed to get in contact with their mentee/mentor.



Statements regarding overall experience	% of participants who agreed/strongly agreed
Peer mentoring has been useful	96
This scheme has been enjoyable	96
Peer mentoring has made me a better colleague	84
As a mentee, my morale improved	50
As a mentee, my self-confidence improved	75



### Suggested improvements:

- Allocating time in the work schedule of LED/IMGs.
- Allocating mentors when the doctor is appointed, even before they move to the UK. Many need advice whilst moving/before starting work.

### Qualitative feedback:

- "Really helpful...when I opened up to my mentor, I found out that everyone goes through the same."
- "Good experience that needs to be a regular practice to look after new colleagues."
- "Friendly initiative as I felt confident as a mentor and felt good about helping my colleagues who go through the same queries that I went through when I was new."

## Conclusion & Take Home Messages

Implementing a formal peer support scheme tailored for LEDs/IMGs facilitates pastoral support and networking with senior peers, helpful in promoting wellbeing and professional development. The enrolment and matching process was continuous due to the nature of LED recruitment by the NHS Trust, requiring increased administrative input from co-ordinators. Although there was high interest in the scheme initially, engagement was limited due to high clinical commitments and lack of time. A suggested improvement to help with this includes embedding the scheme with dedicated time as part of the Trust's enhanced induction for IMGs and teaching timetable.

## References

1. Bogle R, Lasoye T, Winn S, Ebdon C, Shah D, Quadry R, et al. Supporting International Medical Graduates in the NHS: Experiences from the pre-COVID and COVID environment. The Physician. 2020;6(2).
2. General Medical Council. Understanding the Nature and Scale of the Issues Associated with Doctors' Induction (including those Returning to Practice). 2020.