

RCGP Survey of ST3 AiT Members: Snapshot into GP jobs and visa issues

Overview:

A rapid UK-wide member survey of selected Associate in Training (AiT) GP ST3s, was conducted from 25 July 2024 to 8 August 2024. Responses came from a pre-selected sample of 1381 AiTs at GP ST3 level who had been recommended for CCT and had a training completion date between 25 July and 25 September 2024, across the UK using an online survey platform (Alchemer).

A total of 493 responses were received, of which 381 were complete and 112 were partial, giving a completion rate of 77.3% and a total response rate 27.6% of the 1381 invited to participate. The majority of core questions received 424 responses, with relevant response rates and calculations set out for each result shown below, rounded to the nearest whole number. Partial responses are retained in the analysis.

Key messages:

This survey found significant concerns amongst this cohort relating to GP employment post-qualification, highlighting challenges with finding appropriate roles across the country, including significant difficulties relating to visa sponsorship.

- **56%** (239 of 424) of respondents reported that they were an International Medical Graduate (IMG).
 - Compared to 53% of RCGP trainee members (2024) and 28% of doctors [joining the GP Register in 2022](#) (GMC).
- **Only 47%** (198 out of 424) of respondents **had secured an NHS GP job in the UK**. Of these:
 - **41%** said that the process of securing work as a GP in the UK has been moderately or very difficult.
 - **54%** have secured a role at the practice they worked for during training.
 - **23%** of all those who have secured a role said they needed their new employer to sponsor their visa so they could work as a GP in the UK.
- **49%** (208 out of 424) of respondents were **currently applying for/considering work** as a GP in the UK. Of these:
 - **86%** (149) had struggled to find an appropriate role.
 - i. **85%** (127) of these respondents had struggled to find roles in the areas they want to work in, and **15%** (23) had struggled to find a GP role anywhere in the UK.
 - ii. **29%** (44) of these respondents reported struggling to secure a role because they couldn't find a practice that could sponsor them for a visa.
 - iii. **34%** (51) of these respondents reported struggling to secure a role that was flexible enough to meet their needs.
 - iv. **31%** (47) of these respondents reported struggling to secure a role that offered enough sessions.

- v. **27%** (41) of these respondents reported struggling to secure a role that would pay sufficiently.
 - o **93%** were looking for a salaried GP role, **57%** were looking for a Locum role, **12%** were looking for a GP Partner role, and **5%** said 'other' (respondents could select more than one role).
- **4%** (18 out of 424) of respondents were **not seeking work as a GP** in the UK. Of these:
 - o **56%** (10) plan to leave the UK to work as a GP elsewhere, and **39%** (7) plan to work in the UK but not as a GP.

Number of applications to ICBs per trainee struggling to find a role:

Our survey insights show the areas where people are struggling most to find an appropriate role, with the 10 ICBs where the highest number of respondents reported looking for work displayed in the table below.

Of those respondents who said they have struggled to find an appropriate role	n=168
Where have you been looking?	(respondents could select multiple options)
Greater Manchester	36
Birmingham and Solihull	29
Coventry and Warwickshire	22
Cheshire and Merseyside	21
Black Country	19
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	17
North Central London	16
Nottingham and Nottinghamshire	16
South Yorkshire	16
Lancashire and South Cumbria	15

Open text responses:

Respondent's comments also highlight the impact of the GP employment pressures and wider issues on trainees' mental health and wellbeing:

- *"I feel completely broken and demoralised after my GPST3... The crisis is very real."*
- *"Training as a GP is regrettable considering current circumstances of job market."*
- *"This is a real source of stress and anxiety and is pushing me to consider leaving GP in the UK altogether."*
- *"This period has been the worse experience of my life."*
- *"It has been an incredibly sad journey filled with tears."*

Notes:

- GP ST3 refers to those in their third and final year (although some may also have been in an extension to training) of General Practice Specialty Training.
- For the purposes of this survey, GP roles/work in the UK refers to working clinically as a GP within NHS general practice only.
- The survey was launched, and many responses were received, prior to the Government's announcement of additional ARRS funding for GP roles.
- Analysis of geographical distribution is limited by the sample size and no adjustment has been made for population size.