



## GP trainees recruited in England surpass target

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The number of doctors entering GP training in England this year has surpassed the target set by Health Education England (HEE) by more than 200.

HEE said that 3473 trainees were starting their GP training this year (beginning either in August 2018 or February 2019), compared with a recruitment target of 3250. Figures show that 3039 doctors entered GP training in England last year, so this year's figures represent a 14% increase.<sup>1</sup>

Speaking at the National Association of Primary Care conference on 18 October the health and social care secretary, Matt Hancock, said that too many GPs were retiring early or opting to work part time, "which makes the challenge of increasing the number of GPs even greater."

Discussing the government's target to recruit additional GPs by 2020, he said, "We have set a goal of getting 5000 more doctors into general practice . . . and we must reach it."

He added that a culture shift was needed in the way GPs were valued. "Being a general practitioner should have the same prestige as being a consultant or a surgeon," he said. "Because GPs are the bedrock of the NHS."

Krishna Kasaraneni, workforce lead for the BMA's GP committee, said it was encouraging that progress was being made on GP trainee numbers.

"At the same time, we know that more doctors are leaving the profession due to pressures in general practice, from unmanageable workload to increased bureaucracy and rising indemnity costs," he said. "While the health and social care secretary again promises an extra 5000 GPs in the workforce, the government continues to push the deadline for achieving this back as overall numbers dwindle."

Ian Cumming, HEE chief executive, said that the increase in GP trainees was a "real testament to the hard work of HEE staff who have worked tirelessly to increase the numbers recruited to GP training year on year."

Wendy Reid, director of education and quality and national medical director at HEE, said, "We will continue to develop initiatives such as our general practice marketing campaign, now in its third year, to help raise awareness of general practice as a career of choice and its unique selling points as a specialty."

1 Health Education England. General practice ST1 recruitment figures 2017 collated by the General Practice National Recruitment Office. <https://gprecruitment.hee.nhs.uk/Portals/8/Documents/Annual%20Reports/GP%20ST1%20Recruitment%20Figures%202017.pdf>.

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