

Greener Practice Trainee Forum – the first GP trainee sustainability group



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The beginning...

We created a Greener Practice Trainee forum in October 2022. Prior to this forum there was no trainee-led space for GP trainees across the UK to communicate and collaborate.

The Greener Practice trainee forum aims to encourage and facilitate GP trainees to embed high quality sustainable healthcare in their training and as part of their clinical practice at an early stage in their GP careers.

Before we started, we spoke to GP Trainees about whether this would be of interest and had encouraging responses. We asked those who had signed up to help guide topics for discussion.

The group was advertised via existing Greener Practice Whatsapp groups, and newsletters from NHS England, the RCGP and Health Education England. Participants receive a welcome email with information and resources relevant to GP trainees.

What have we done so far?

- Hosted webinars on popular subjects including:
 - The role of GP trainees, sustainable quality improvement (QI), and climate activism.
 - How to teach peers on your training programme about sustainable healthcare
 - Deprescribing
 - Plant-based diets
 - Promoting physical activity as a GP.
- Run drop-in sessions for trainees to come and informally chat about ideas and challenges faced.
- Created a shared drive for QI and teaching materials for members to share and draw inspiration.
- Created a trainee page on the Greener Practice Website.
- Sent out a monthly newsletter to our members with upcoming events, petitions to sign, project ideas.

Our Reach:

Currently (as of September 2023) we have 185 members on our Whatsapp group & 370 Members on our mailing list across all four UK nations.

Building confidence and sharing learning:

Due to lack of data on the project outcomes of individual forum members, we cannot directly measure carbon savings or improved clinical outcomes attributable to the forum. However, a small survey conducted 6 months after creating the forum with 10 respondents, showed that 90% of trainees were starting or in the process of completing a healthcare project with a sustainable focus, and 100% would recommend the forum to others.

Comments from trainees demonstrated the positive impact of the forum on their confidence and motivation to undertake sustainable QI and to teach others about sustainable healthcare.

‘I met a few of the forum members at the drop in session on Wednesday this week, and felt very inspired afterwards to get planning for my QIP [Quality Improvement Project] and GP VTS [Vocational Training Scheme] teaching on greener prescribing for asthma care’

“ Love the ideas that come up on the group and sense of togetherness.. particularly if other colleagues/trainees locally aren’t that interested”

“An amazing way to connect with like-minded colleagues and build confidence!”

Challenges and the future:

One of our challenges is that we do not always know what our members want from the forum; our surveys have had a low response rate. We have tried to address this by asking for informal feedback at the end of our sessions. We have recently run polls in our whatsapp group which have been better utilised. Our last poll indicates that members have indicated interest in the webinars with a guest speaker and Q+A, and updates on happenings in the sustainability space, so we will continue with these activities.

Another challenge is making the organisation of the forum sustainable for the future, in the context of GP training lasting only 3 years. We have addressed this by continuing to recruit forum and organising group members at different stages of their GP training.