

A guide to pursuing psychiatry in the south west of England



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Introduction

Welcome to the south west.

I've worked across the country and in New Zealand – so what was it that drew me to the region and kept me here for 20 years?

There's a variety of activities within easy reach. Within two hours, I could be walking the Cotswold Way, on a beach in Devon or enjoying the Bristol night scene.

While everything you need is local, there are also great air, rail and road networks.

Workwise, the 3 Medical Schools (Bristol, Exeter and Peninsula) ensure that it never

Dr Martin Ansell, Choose Psychiatry Co-Lead for South West Severn Network

feels like a backwater and there are opportunities for research.

Clinically, the region offers all specialties of psychiatric practice (NHS, private and military) and the College is active and supportive with educational and social events.

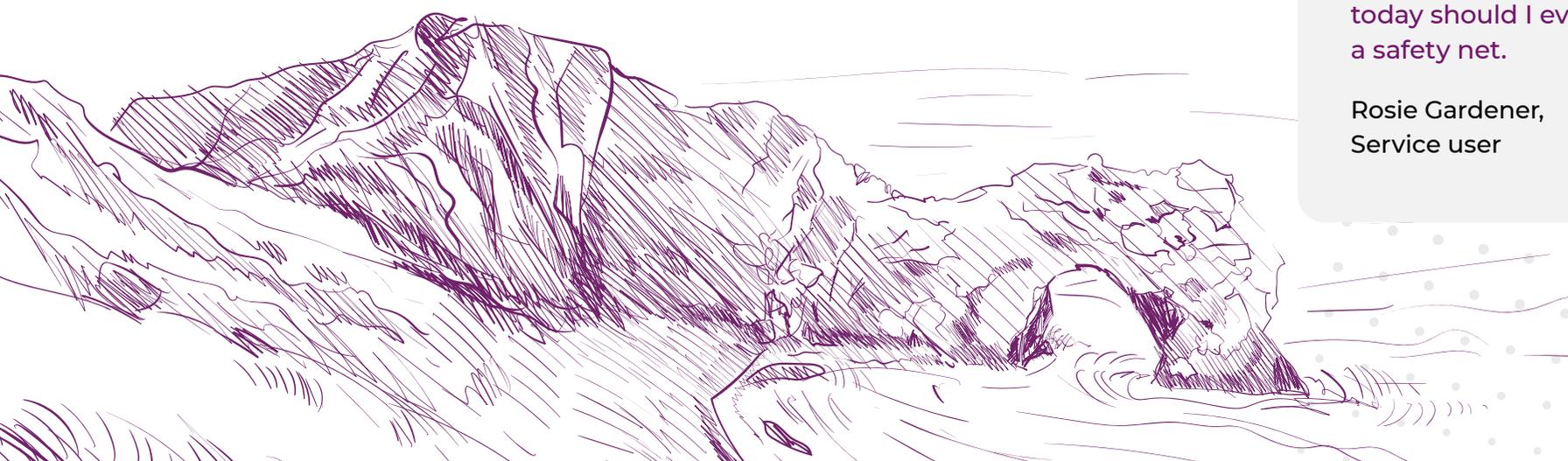
We are a big enough division to matter, yet small enough to get to know your peers.

I highly recommend a visit to the south west.

At a time when I felt that my life was at its most lowest ebb, my GP referred me urgently to see a psychiatric nurse. At first, I felt very negative about this, but was reassured by the nurse that I had been through a lot of trauma and that it was going to take time to bring me back.

My situation has since changed and I can now enjoy life. I still get flashbacks but am learning to cope. The nurses are only a short way away should I need them. It is good to have a network of help today should I ever get down, like a safety net.

Rosie Gardener,
Service user



Careers in psychiatry

As a psychiatrist, you will have a real opportunity to change people's lives for the better. You will be at the forefront of treating people's mental health, drawing on a combination of your scientific knowledge, medical expertise and interpersonal skills.

Psychiatry offers flexibility, career progression and the ability to shape a career pathway around a wide variety of other interests. You can work anywhere in the world in a range of settings, from hospitals to people's homes. Psychiatrists face new and interesting challenges every day, but are well supported by their medical colleagues and mental health teams.

There are many different routes into careers in psychiatry in the south west. Some people choose to go straight from medical school into training, others may start their training in a different specialty and then change to psychiatry. The south west region welcomes international doctors who wish to train or enhance their careers in a different country.



Which specialty?

Psychiatry also offers a range of subspecialties to consider:

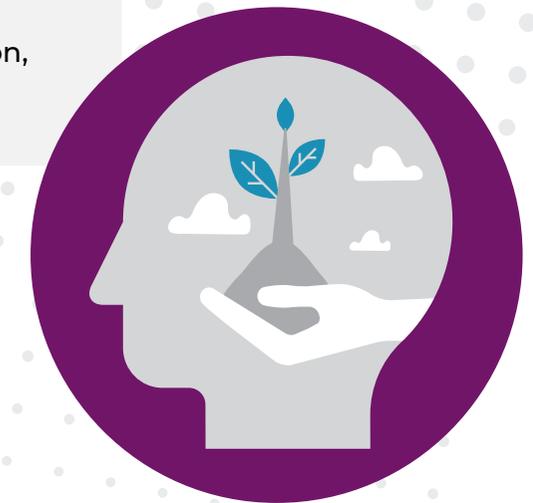
- + Addiction
- + Rehabilitation
- + Child and adolescent
- + Forensic
- + General adult
- + Intellectual disability
- + Liaison
- + Medical psychotherapy
- + Old age
- + Perinatal
- + Eating disorders
- + Neuropsychiatry

Old age psychiatry has gone by a number of titles in years gone by such as ‘psychogeriatrics’ through to ‘the psychiatry of later life’. Whatever the terminology, at its heart, it deals with mental health conditions associated with advancing age and increasing frailty.

Old age psychiatrists often deal with organic mental disorders such as dementia and other neurological conditions, whose symptoms can be a complex mix of personality, life experience and physical health factors.

With an ageing population and associated demographic changes, the field of old age psychiatry and the challenges for services in meeting their ever-increasing needs cannot be underestimated.

Dr Joe Stratford,
Consultant Psychiatrist and Director of Medical Education,
Gloucestershire Health & Care NHS Foundation Trust



Working in the south west of England

The south west of England is geographically the largest of the nine regions of England covering 9,200 square miles but is the third-least populous, with approximately five million residents.

There are three medical schools in the region, Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth, and the area boasts excellence in healthcare and research.

There are 23 NHS trusts in the region covering the counties of Gloucestershire, Bristol, Somerset, Wiltshire, Dorset, Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly. We also cover the Channel Islands.



My training programme has been well organised and everyone I have worked with has been supportive. I have been able to train flexibly.

We are lucky to have such diverse towns, cities and countryside in this region, and there are lots of opportunities for different leisure activities.

Dr Rosemary King,
ST5 in CAMHS

Psychiatry in the south west can be practiced in a multitude of different settings; in cities, towns, villages and more rural settings. You'll have a great deal of choice in the kind of work and working life you want to pursue.

The south west is host to some of the most famous events and festivals in the world, for example Glastonbury Festival, the Bristol International Balloon Festival, the Royal International Air Tattoo and the cheese-rolling event in Gloucester!

Jersey is a great place to work, train as a foundation doctor or via the CESR route. It is a way to experience something different, be part of a small hospital community where mental and physical health are within the same organisation. You can train with the air transport service to accompany transfer patients to the UK.

Jersey supports 103,000 people via a broad psychiatry service with community mental health teams, inpatient services, primary mental health care, home treatment team, crisis and assessment team, child and adolescent mental health service and specialist services (including neurodiversity, perinatal, criminal justice, eating disorders, complex trauma and gender).

Several trainees have pursued careers in psychiatry and some come back for locum opportunities during training.

Dr Rachel Ruddy
Consultant Psychiatrist and Clinical Lead

Medical students

+ RCPsych Student Associate / Foundation Doctor Membership

Sign up for free to access to a range of membership benefits.

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/studentassociate

+ Attend your local psychiatry school

Gain an insight into psychiatry by hearing from trainees and consultants, including 'speed dating' with colleagues from all psychiatric subspecialties.

+ Join your university psychiatric society

PsychSocs are available in Bristol, Exeter and Truro or Plymouth.

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/psychsocs

+ Apply for the RCPsych Psych Star Scheme

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/become-a-psychiatrist/med-students/awards-prizes-and-bursaries

+ Check for local mentoring schemes

+ Attend conferences and events

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/events

There are many opportunities to apply for funding to support your psychiatry studies, through bursaries and award schemes run by the College.

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/awards-prizes-bursaries

The South West Division hosts numerous prizes linked to local events and offers up to 10 bursaries for south west medical students and foundation year doctors to present a poster at the Spring and Autumn Biannual Meetings.

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/members/england/south-west/prizes-and-bursaries



During your psychiatry attachment, you will have the opportunity to experience psychiatry in a variety of settings; acute inpatients, outpatients, as well as smaller sub-specialties such as learning disabilities, liaison, or forensic psychiatry.

You will have support from consultants and trainees in psychiatry, as well as specific support from undergraduate tutors alongside weekly tutorials. There is also the chance to practice your skills in managing emergencies in psychiatry in a simulated setting.

Dr Emily Rackley,
Associate Undergraduate Tutor,
Gloucestershire Health and Care



Foundation training

As a foundation doctor there are a number of ways you can gain experience in psychiatry and get involved with the Royal College of Psychiatrists:

+ Gain hands on experience

The best way to gain hands on experience in psychiatry is undertaking a 4-month psychiatry post during FY1 or FY2. Foundation programmes vary across the UK; you may be able to rank a programme which includes a psychiatry rotation or specifically request this from your training programme director.

If you are unable to secure a psychiatry foundation job you can still gain experience by arranging a taster week in psychiatry. You can contact your local psychiatry unit or liaison psychiatry department to arrange this.

+ Take a look at the RCPsych's website

This provides information for foundation doctors about getting involved in psychiatry, future careers and applying to be a foundation associate.

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/become-a-psychiatrist/foundation-drs

+ Make an application

Apply for a Psychiatry Foundation Fellowship post in the south west.

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/become-a-psychiatrist/med-students/awards-prizes-and-bursaries

A wide range of Foundation doctors training posts are available in psychiatry for both F1s and F2s. These jobs can be in a psychiatric inpatient setting, or in the community, in a prison or in a specialist setting such as hospital liaison, eating disorders, or perinatal psychiatry.

You will be welcomed to the team and be part of a multidisciplinary service delivering holistic and patient-centred care. You will have regular support day to day as well as a dedicated weekly hour-long supervision session with your clinical supervisor. You will be encouraged to explore the many different subspecialties within psychiatry through Taster Days. There are also regular teaching sessions specifically for foundation doctors, including simulation training.

Dr Charlotte Illingworth, Foundation Lead for Psychiatry Bristol South and Central
Dr Elizabeth Ewins, Associate Director of Medical Education for Foundation Doctors, Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership



Core psychiatry training in the south west

+ Core training

Takes place over 3 years in order to reach competencies to apply for Advanced / Higher Training

psychiatry.severndeanery.nhs.uk/about-us/core-training/

+ Alternative routes

Academic Training

psychiatry.severndeanery.nhs.uk/about-us/academic-training/

Training Less Than Full Time (LTFT)

psychiatry.severndeanery.nhs.uk/about-us/information-for-trainees/training-less-than-full-time-ltft/

+ Get involved

RCPsych Psychiatric Trainees Committee

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/training/your-training/psychiatric-trainees-committee-supporting-you

MYTH BUSTER

If I decide to do my training in the south west of England I won't get to choose where I live / work.

During the first two years of the rotation, the placements are designed to give trainees a broad experience of general adult psychiatry, old age psychiatry, and a developmental post. Trainees will mostly stay in the same geographical area during this time, with opportunities to move for the final year of placements.



”
I applied to study graduate medicine with the intention of becoming a psychiatrist. However, after completing medical school I started to consider a career in dermatology. The nagging voices of doubt never left me though and it was during my psychiatry rotation in FY2 that I realised my heart lies in psychiatry.

I completed foundation training and started CT1 in August and I know I have made the right decision. The thing that strikes me the most about core training compared to other training programmes is the amount of time dedicated to trainees not only for clinical work but for teaching, supervision, Balint, personal reflection, learning and research. Everyone is so supportive and trainee wellbeing is a high priority.

Dr Becki Davis, CT1

”
Psychiatry felt like the perfect mix of clinical knowledge and skills, new and exciting challenges, and a gentle move away from some of adrenaline-fuelled aspects of acute medicine.

I have two kids, and have chosen to work LTFT. I found the deanery to be supportive of this.

I am based in the south west, and find it a fabulous place to work – generally the teams are wonderful, and thus far, the jobs have been great.

Dr Grace Denton, CT1

Higher training in the south west

Higher Psychiatry Training (ST4–6) will reflect the subspecialty you have chosen. There will also be opportunities to work in other sub-specialities, such as addictions, neuroscience, perinatal, eating disorders and rehabilitation.

When you have completed your training, you will receive your CCT (Certificate of Completion of Training). Find out more about the application process:

+ National ST4 Psychiatry Training Recruitment

www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/st4_psy_train_rec_oview

+ Dual training

Dual training is available in a limited number of specialties.

psychiatry.severn deanery.nhs.uk/about-us/advanced-training/dual-training-in-psychiatry/

+ Out of training opportunities

Leadership and Management Fellow Scheme

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/lmfs

Academic Clinical Fellowships

academic.severn deanery.nhs.uk

psychiatry.severn deanery.nhs.uk/about-us/academic-training/

I enjoyed my FI job in older adult psychiatry, particularly the time spent with patients, and multidisciplinary teamwork approach to care.

As a clinical teaching fellow, I spent my clinical time working in hospital liaison and the community team, where I gained further appreciation for the specialty. This is something I would recommend to anyone considering a career in psychiatry. I worked in medicine for two further years prior to commencing core psychiatry training, which has been valuable for my subsequent work in psychiatry.

My experience of psychiatry is that it is a caring, rewarding and holistic speciality, where I work as part of a compassionate team to make a valuable impact on the lives and wellbeing of my patients.

Dr Catherine Trimble,
Specialty Doctor



Flexible training options

- + **Out of Programme Experience**
www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/time-out-programme
- + **Training Less Than Full Time (LTFT)**
www.rcpsych.ac.uk/training/your-training/training-less-than-full-time
- + **Working Less Than Full Time (LTFT)**
www.rcpsych.ac.uk/members/supporting-you/working-less-than-full-time/ltft
- + **Career break and returning to higher training**

Trainees take time out from training for different reasons and for varying lengths of time. This can be a difficult and stressful time for the trainee. For training breaks longer than 3 months, the SuppoRTT (Supported Return to Training) programme has been set up.

This flexible programme has been designed to include enhanced supervision, clinical simulation days, mentorship and coaching, resilience training, practical advice and sign posting.

- + **Be a Specialty or Associate Specialist (SAS) Doctor**

Increasing numbers of doctors are choosing to be SAS doctors where they are neither trainee nor consultant.

A diverse group of medics who possess a wide range of skills, experience and specialities.

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/members/support-for-specialty-doctors



I wanted to do psychiatry whilst at medical school, and having an Old Age Psychiatrist as my Educational Supervisor during F2 confirmed this. I started core training in Gloucestershire and experienced a range of specialties. I was redeployed to the psychiatric inpatient units during the Covid pandemic and then worked in psychiatric intensive care whilst applying for higher training.

I stayed in Gloucestershire for personal reasons and because I felt valued by the trust. I started higher training in Old Age Psychiatry with Liaison Psychiatry, whilst working as an Associate Undergraduate Tutor and completing the RCPsych Leadership and Management Fellowship. I have found the special interest time given to us very helpful with shaping my career.

Dr Emily Rackley, ST5



There is a UK wide RCPsych **Mentoring and Coaching Network**. Through this network, we are working to champion mentoring and coaching, support the setting up of mentoring schemes and develop mentor training.

Mentoring and coaching play a vital role in:

- + **Developing and supporting doctors**
– at all stages of their career, from medical students, foundation, core and speciality training, through to new consultant, developing and evolving your consultant role and then working towards retirement.
- + **Nurturing medical leaders**
- + **Helping a doctor achieve their full potential**

In dealing with the ever changing NHS, **mentoring** is one of the tools that can be used to build personal resilience and is very much in keeping with the College network's aims of **starting well, staying well and finishing well**.

Further information and resources about coaching and mentoring.

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/members/workforce-wellbeing-hub/mentoring-and-coaching



The College is committed to improving **wellbeing** in psychiatry as part of its **Workforce Strategy 2020–2023**.

It is increasingly recognised that wellbeing is crucial to optimal patient care as well as retention and recruitment of psychiatrists. RCPsych is leading work here, improving job descriptions (JDs) to reflect the importance of wellbeing and having supportive measures in place.

This is reflected in the JD approval process in England and the exemplar JDs.

+ Job description approval process

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/improving-care/workforce/job-description-approval-process

Exemplar JDs

+ Consultant

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/improving-care/workforce/job-description-approval-process---england/jd-exemplar-consultant-psychiatrist-rcpsych-oct-22.docx

+ Specialty doctor

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/improving-care/workforce/job-description-approval-process---england/jd-exemplar-specialty-doctor-psychiatry-rcpsych-oct-2022.docx

+ Specialist Grade Doctor

[www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/improving-care/workforce/job-description-approval-process---england/jd-exemplar-specialist-grade-doctor-\(senior-sas\)-psychiatry-rcpsych-aug-21.docx](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/improving-care/workforce/job-description-approval-process---england/jd-exemplar-specialist-grade-doctor-(senior-sas)-psychiatry-rcpsych-aug-21.docx)

RCPsych Workforce Strategy

Our workforce strategy gives clear direction on recruiting and retaining the psychiatric workforce.

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/improving-care/workforce/workforce-strategy

Doctors can find support in various ways, including:

+ Psychiatric Trainees Committee

A national community representing psychiatric trainees within the UK, providing support throughout training.

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/training/your-training/psychiatric-trainees-committee-supporting-you

+ Practitioner Health Programme

Practitioner health aims to improve clinical and mental health of workforce and support them remain in or return safely to work.

www.practitionerhealth.nhs.uk/accessing-the-service

+ Psychiatrists' Support Service (PSS)

PSS provides free, rapid, high quality peer support to psychiatrists of all grades who may be experiencing personal or work-related difficulties.

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/members/workforce-wellbeing-hub/psychiatrists-support-service



International doctors

The South West Division welcomes colleagues from across the globe and embraces the diversity of the psychiatry workforce.

Choosing the right place to live is just as important as choosing the right job. Many people who have moved from abroad to the south west have been attracted by the opportunity to enhance their quality of life. We care about you, your wellbeing and ensuring you have time during the working week to enjoy and experience life.

+ International medical graduates (IMGs)

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/training/international-medical-graduates

+ International members

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/members/international-members

What you need to know

EU nationals with some specialist training in another European member state can enter UK training at any level and have their previous training counted for the award of a CCT.

Doctors who qualified as specialists in countries other than EEA member states and meet the required criteria may be eligible to enter the Specialist Register by obtaining the Certificate of Eligibility for the Specialist Register (CESR) the equivalence route.

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/international/CESR

Professional registration

All doctors intending to practice medicine in the UK are required to be registered with the General Medical Council (GMC), follow the GMC's good medical practice guidance and be subject to the GMC Fitness to Practice actions.

www.gmc-uk.org/registration-and-licensing/join-the-register/registration-applications/application-guides/full-registration-for-international-medical-graduates

International recruitment

Comprehensive practical information for overseas doctors about working in the UK, the application process, Professional and Linguistics Assessment Board, Visas and Immigration can be found at:

+ NHS Information for overseas doctors

www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/information-overseas-doctors

+ International medical graduates: welcome guide

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/members/divisions/south-west/sw---international-medical-graduates-welcome-document---july-2022.pdf



Making connections

+ European psychiatry exchange programme (EFPT)

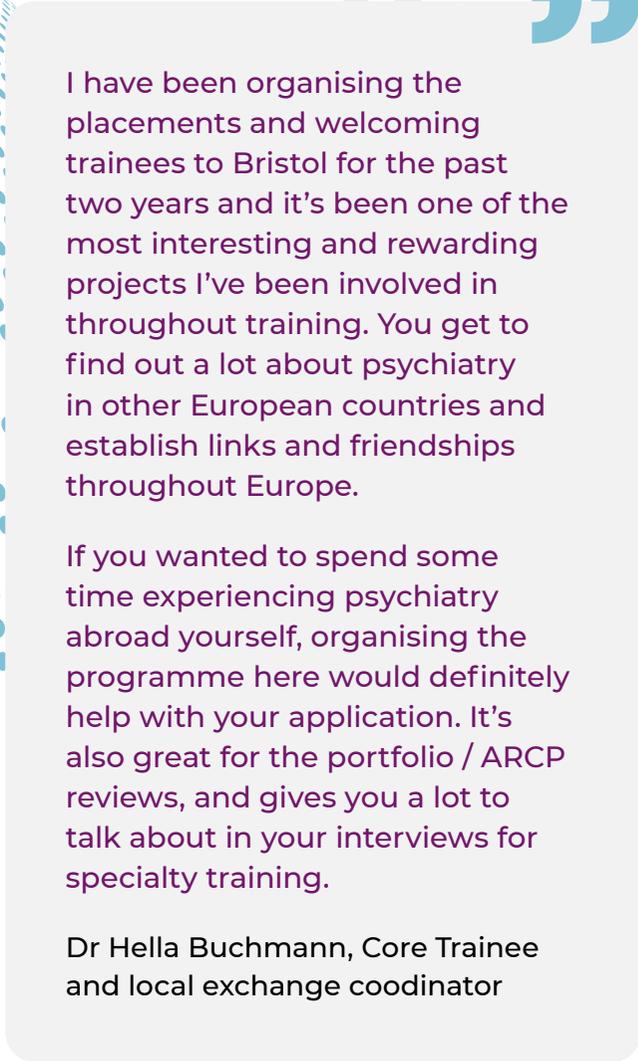
The EFPT exchange programme is a short-term observership program for psychiatric trainees offering placements in different fields of psychiatry across Europe.

Bristol welcomes trainees from all over Europe twice a year. They spend several weeks shadowing our teams and learning about psychiatry in the UK. You can be at any stage in your training to join.

+ South West Division Annual Dinner

Each year, the Executive Committee hosts a dinner that all members of the South West Division are welcome to attend. It is an enjoyable occasion to socialise and network with colleagues.

Free places are offered to new members to celebrate obtaining their MRCPsych, to new CTIs, and to new Fellows in recognition of this prestigious award.



I have been organising the placements and welcoming trainees to Bristol for the past two years and it's been one of the most interesting and rewarding projects I've been involved in throughout training. You get to find out a lot about psychiatry in other European countries and establish links and friendships throughout Europe.

If you wanted to spend some time experiencing psychiatry abroad yourself, organising the programme here would definitely help with your application. It's also great for the portfolio / ARCP reviews, and gives you a lot to talk about in your interviews for specialty training.

Dr Hella Buchmann, Core Trainee and local exchange coordinator

Teaching opportunities in the south west

The South West Division has excellent links with several established medical schools. University of Bristol, University of Plymouth and University of Exeter medical students all take part in placements across the south west. There are many opportunities to be involved in local teaching programmes, including simulation, tutorials and clinical teaching.

Recent projects in our local Medical Education departments include multidisciplinary training environments and using virtual reality to create simulation scenarios.

Balint groups for medical students scheme

An established project between University of Bristol and trainees in the south west creates the opportunity to run a Balint group for medical students with access to supervision and training.

There is also significant scope for development including working towards formal Balint leadership accreditation and getting involved in the management of the scheme, plus poster, research and presentation opportunities to name a few!

Our trainee-led Balint scheme for medical students is endorsed and supported by the Deanery, AWP Medical Education and Bristol University. It has been running since 2012, providing all medical students at Bristol University with an opportunity to experience Balint group participation.

We welcome new trainee leaders; those joining our scheme can enjoy working closely with medical students, running a student group with the support of regular supervision and training events. There is also the option to participate in an ethically approved research strategy, join the management team and even the chance to work towards leadership accreditation through the UK Balint society!

Ami Kothari, Scheme leader



Retiring psychiatrists

In the south west, we are aware that retiring doctors can feel isolated and bewildered by the prospect of revalidation.

There are lots of valuable and rewarding roles for senior psychiatrists who have built up a lifetime's experience and have great skill and knowledge in their field. The South West Division is keen to support tailored working packages for those working towards retirement or considering opportunities beyond.

The Division has developed a practical package for doctors who have retired, are at the point of retirement or are considering retirement. They usually host an annual continuing professional development event specifically to meet the needs of retired and resting psychiatrists.

Upcoming events and a link to our dedicated south west doctors retirement guidance can be found on the SW retired doctors page:

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/members/england/south-west/retired-and-resting-doctors



Research in the south west

+ Local research networks

Research in the south west area is supported by two very active National Institute for Health and Care Research local networks; West of England and South West Peninsula.

The local research leads in each trust welcome clinicians to make contact for opportunities to be involved. Through these projects, there are opportunities for leadership roles as sub investigators and certification as an associate Principal Investigator for commercial, academic, and other studies.

Research in the south west is rich, varied and vibrant. For example, there is a long history of dementia research with many active and upcoming clinical trials and studies. The area is also known for large epidemiological studies.

+ South West Division Biannual Meetings

High-quality scientific conferences are held in the spring and autumn each year, usually in Devon and Bristol, sharing local research and innovations.



Further information

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Choose Psychiatry

 www.rcpsych.ac.uk/choosepsychiatry

 careers@rcpsych.ac.uk

 [@Choose_Psych](https://twitter.com/Choose_Psych)

Become an RCPsych member

 www.rcpsych.ac.uk/members/membership

Online resources

- + RCPsych Guidance for Medical Schools
www.rcpsych.ac.uk/med-school-guidance
- + HEE Wessex Deanery
wessex.hee.nhs.uk
- + HEE Severn Deanery
www.severndeanery.nhs.uk
- + HEE Peninsula Deanery
www.peninsuladeanery.nhs.uk
- + HEE Severn PGME Foundation School
foundation.severndeanery.nhs.uk
- + HEE Peninsula PGME Foundation School
foundation.peninsuladeanery.nhs.uk
- + British Medical Association
www.bma.org.uk
- + General Medical Council
www.gmc-uk.org
- + Study Materials for Students
medschoolpsychiatry.com



Royal College of Psychiatrists | Choose Psychiatry in the South West Division | July 2023

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This document has been re-produced for the South West Division with the kind permission of RCPsych in Scotland and NHS Education for Scotland. You can access a copy of the original version at <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/members/divisions/scotland/cps-brochure-final.pdf>

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