

## Development and Evaluation of a National Selection Centre for selection of junior doctors into General Practice Specialty Training 2015

### Brief

Work Psychology Group (WPG) were commissioned by the National Steering Group for GP Recruitment to design and evaluate a national Selection Centre (SC) to be used in the selection of junior doctors into General Practice (GP) speciality training. It is vitally important that the selection mechanisms used in this context are robust, valid, fair/transparent and feasible as typically over 6,000 doctors apply to GP training programmes each year. The GP national selection system consists of eligibility checking (Stage 1), machine-marked shortlisting tests (Stage 2; Situational Judgement Test & Clinical Problem Solving Test) and an SC (Stage 3) comprising of 3 role play simulations and a Written Exercise. The SC forms the final stage of the GP selection process.

### WPG's Approach

Based on our previous findings from a robust job analysis of the GP role, four core competencies were identified as being important for success in the role of a GP trainee: Empathy & Sensitivity; Communication Skills; Conceptual Thinking & Problem Solving and Professional Integrity. To develop the GP Stage 3 SC, WPG took a five phase approach:

- First, we conducted Critical Incident Technique (CIT) interviews with people who were familiar with the role. We interviewed Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) including GPs and GP trainers to identify situations that were relevant to the four core competencies and based on examples of situations that it would be realistic for the GP applicants to have encountered.
- Secondly, WPG used the information obtained from SMEs to produce 15 role play scripts centring on interactions with either a patient, the relative of a patient or a colleague (five of each type), as well as five written prioritisation exercises.
- The next step was for us to hold a review workshop consisting of clinicians and medical simulators in order to review the content, realism and fairness of the role play cases and the extent to which each exercise allowed for the demonstration of the relevant competencies. To highlight this, medical simulators conducted the role plays so that we could review how they worked in practice.
- After further amendments were made to the scripts (based on feedback from simulators/clinicians), the cases and written exercises were piloted under SC conditions with first year GP trainees to enable observation of the exercises in practice, pitched at the target level.
- Following the pilot, we made some minor changes to the exercises and finalised these as appropriate. Three of each case type and three written exercises were used in two live recruitment rounds in January and May 2015.

### Outcomes

Ongoing evaluation of the GP Stage 3 SC, consistently demonstrates that the SC and selection system as a whole is reliable, valid, fair and viewed positively by candidates. Further long-term predictive validity studies have shown that all elements of the GP national selection process, including the SC, effectively predict performance both during and at the end of GP training based on supervisor ratings and performance in licensing examinations. We will continue to work in collaboration with the GP National Recruitment Office and local postgraduate deaneries to ensure the continued effectiveness and efficiency of the selection process.

*"The contribution of Work Psychology Group to the development of a national selection process for entry to GP training in the UK cannot be underestimated. Their robust and impartial approach has helped to forge a partnership with the postgraduate GP training bodies which has delivered a system that is admired, adopted and adapted by many of the other UK medical specialties."*

***Dr Roger Price, Convenor Stage 3 Selection for General Practice***