

# Pre-registration Pharmacist Recruitment Newsletter

Welcome to the December National Recruitment Scheme Newsletter! We are at the end of another successful round of recruitment; in this issue we'll look back at a strange year for us all, and forward to the placement of many thousands of applicants into training posts.



Welcome to our Dec 2020 Newsletter which provides the latest news on the National Pre-registration Pharmacist Scheme.

## Inside this issue:

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## Queries: Who to contact

If you are an applicant and have an enquiry, you should go to the enquiries portal at: [HEE London and South East Support Portal](#). On the portal you will see a list of Frequently Asked Questions. If these do not answer your query, you can submit a question. This will be responded to within 48 working hours.

If you are an employer or University, please contact your local Pharmacy or Recruitment Lead if it is a local query e.g. about your Oriel entry. If it is a national query, please contact the Pharmacy National email inbox on [preregpharmacyrecruitment@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:preregpharmacyrecruitment@hee.nhs.uk). Applicant queries will not be answered via this route.



## Adapting to the Covid-19 Challenge

A certain virus has wreaked havoc with every aspect of our lives, and highlighted how important our frontline teams are in supporting the population during the most testing of times. For the National Recruitment Scheme this meant that our panels of interviewers, drawn exclusively from our partner employers, were necessarily engaged in helping their patients and organisations and so a contingency plan to utilise SJTs and cancel the MMIs for 2020 recruitment was implemented.

It is a testament to the spirit of co-operation between all stakeholders that this plan was consulted upon, constructively challenged and ratified with the minimum of fuss and in rapid time, to allow us to lay the foundations for another successful round of recruitment in the midst of a pandemic. We would again wish to thank our employers and representatives, the British Pharmaceutical Students' Association (BPSA), the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and the Pharmacy Schools Council for their support and guidance.

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## Welcoming Scotland

During this difficult period NHS Education for Scotland (NES) elected to join us and share our assessment platforms and processes, meaning that for the first time applicants could sit the same assessments and apply to vacancies across England, Wales and Scotland. We have very much enjoyed working with our colleagues north of the border and look forward to our next collaboration!



## Supporting our applicants

Appreciating the need for clarity during these changes, we launched and regularly updated the [Student Zone page](#) to provide information and updates for applicants and in partnership with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, Health Education and Improvement Wales, NES and the BPSA, provided a series of webinars and FAQs to answer the majority of the queries we were receiving from employers and applicants. All resources are free to access and can be found here. In addition the NRS support portal was a well-used option for many of our applicants, with the NRS team fielding over 500 queries during the last few months.



## The Final Numbers...

At the time of publishing this newsletter a total of 3966 places were advertised via the NRS this year, continuing the trend of an increasing number of employers wishing to advertise their places via the NRS. The expansion this year has been particularly large, and once again the bulk of this growth has come from the community pharmacy sector; hospital places showed a small increase of approximately 6.5%, with community pharmacy places increasing by a huge 30.5%.

This demand for trainees continues to exceed supply. 2248 applicants completed all stages of the recruitment process and thus were eligible to be considered for a place within Oriel. After minimum threshold criteria were set and applied to this cohort, the final numbers are as below (with the last two years' numbers for reference):

Cohort Year	2020	2019	2018
Number of successful applicants	2215	2026	1943
Total number of places within the recruitment scheme	3966	3189	2881
Hospital places	873	820	789
Community places	3093	2369	2092
Offers accepted	2005	1878	1687
Unallocated applicants (no training place matched to applicant)	20	33	130

Now in its third year, Enhanced Preferencing allows applicants to re-preference their choices as often as they wish up until the final iteration of the allocation process. This means that applicants could maximise their chances of obtaining a place from amongst the thousands available, especially if they were unsuccessful after the first round of offers were released.

After the final offers process was run, the NRS had made an offer to 99% of successful applicants and 91% accepted their offer. Only 20 trainees were unable to find a suitable training place within the scheme.

## Fill Rates and Regional Variation

Once again there were significantly more places within the scheme than applicants (3966 versus 2248):

- the maximum fill rate achievable had all appointable trainees within the scheme been allocated places was 55.8%.
- The actual fill rate achieved through this process was 50.8%

Geographic location remains a significant factor in applicant preferencing. The table below shows fill rates per HEE geography. Excellent training places exist in all locations, and as per every year we urge applicants to consider opportunities beyond popular locations to increase their chances of obtaining a training environment most suited to their wishes.

Region	Places	Accepted	Declined	Expired	Fill Rate
Health Education England East Midlands	290	138	2	4	47.59%
Health Education England East of England	356	174	6	8	48.88%
Health Education England Kent, Surrey and Sussex	292	123	3	1	42.12%
Health Education England London	817	542	6	11	66.34%
Health Education England North East	199	104	7	3	52.26%
Health Education England North West	474	228	10	9	48.10%
Health Education England South West	348	100	16	24	28.74%
Health Education England Thames Valley	137	78	3	5	56.93%
Health Education England Wessex	194	69	2	5	35.57%
Health Education England West Midlands	380	192	4	5	50.53%
Health Education England Yorkshire and the Humber	318	133	5	6	41.82%
Wales	161	124	0	3	77.02%

# Innovative Placements

The popularity of training programmes that span multiple practice areas continues.

## Placements in General Practice

Year three of a major HEE-backed initiative to allow pharmacy trainees a significant amount of exposure to General Practice saw a massive 533 places being advertised via the NRS, the only route through which these placements could be obtained. With trainees spending between three to six months in the GP setting, the process aims to continue the strengthening of closer multi-professional links across multiple practice areas. Recruitment to these posts was unsurprisingly hugely successful, with a fill rate of 82%.

More information on this can be found [here](#) or by contacting [GPPreregPharm@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:GPPreregPharm@hee.nhs.uk)

## Wales Integrated Training

The new and evolving integrated programme of training in Wales, allowing all trainees to undertake significant placements in the three practice areas of hospital, community and general practice was also very popular, garnering a fill rate of almost 77%.



## Evaluation

As per every round of recruitment, a full analysis of the process is now underway and we will publish our findings in due course. The extraordinary circumstances placed on all our stakeholders this year mean that we have temporarily paused our longitudinal evaluation, and will return to it with a new focus once a semblance of normalcy returns to our workplaces.

Historic evaluations can be found via the [Evaluation tab on the National Recruitment page](#) hosted by LaSE Pharmacy, which we will populate with our findings as they are released.

## And Finally...

Well, it's been a weird kind of year, memorable for mostly the wrong reasons. One thing that has been memorable for all the right reasons is the resilience, adaptability and get-it-done attitude that has pervaded all our engagements with our multitude of stakeholders. It's said every year (and also earlier in this newsletter!), but especially this year a huge thanks of gratitude to the national recruitment team, our regional pharmacy leads and associated HEE teams, employers, schools of pharmacy, professional and representative bodies, evaluation teams and pharmacy students across three nations.

As ever, please continue to feed your comments back to us. Work has already begun on planning for next year, and as the immediate future is still far from certain we will count on your support again as we look to build on our successes and learn from aspects which could have gone better. Season's Greetings to you all; see you in 2021!