



# Fellow information pack

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National Medical Director's Clinical  
Fellow Scheme 2026/27

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# About the Scheme

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To shape an NHS that is resilient, inclusive, and future-ready, we must invest in clinical leadership that is both courageous and deeply connected to patient care.

The National Medical Director's Clinical Fellow Scheme offers a transformative experience for doctors in training who are ready to lead with purpose. It invites clinicians to step beyond the boundaries of traditional practice and into a space where their insights can shape national healthcare priorities; improving outcomes, reducing inequalities, and strengthening the voice of frontline care.

This is a scheme for those who see leadership not as a title, but as a responsibility. It welcomes applications from doctors across all specialties who have completed both years of foundation training by 1 September. Through a 12-month placement in a national healthcare organisation, fellows work alongside senior leaders, contributing to projects that matter, including patient safety, cancer care, prevention, emergency preparedness, and more.

The apprenticeship model ensures that fellows are not only supported but empowered. They develop skills in policy, strategy, communication, and collaboration. Skills that will serve them throughout their careers and ripple across the system.

Managed by the Faculty of Medical Leadership and Management (FMLM), the scheme brings together a diverse community of fellows from medicine, pharmacy, and dentistry. It is a collective committed to learning, growing, and leading with integrity.

If you believe in the power of clinical leadership to drive change, this is your moment. We look forward to seeing how you will shape the future.

Best wishes,

Dr Claire Fuller and Professor Meghana Pandit

National Medical Directors, NHS England.

# Eligibility and selection criteria

Candidates must meet the following **eligibility requirements** to apply for the scheme:

Qualifications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Applicants must hold an MBBS or equivalent primary medical qualification and a first degree (1st or 2:1).</li></ul>
Eligibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Applicants must hold full GMC registration and a license to practice, with a minimum of 12 months post registration experience including achievement of foundation competencies. They must be in training or eligible for training, have completed foundation training before the start date, not hold a CCT, and be eligible to work in the UK.</li><li>- Applicants must be substantively employed by an eligible NHS employer or GP practice.</li><li>- Must not have completed specialist training by the intended start date.</li></ul>
Language skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Applicants must demonstrate effective English communication skills appropriate for safe clinical practice and leadership responsibilities.</li></ul>

Knowledge and experience
<p><b>Essential:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Leadership and management experience with reflection on personal impact.</li><li>- Understanding of NHS structures, systems, and management processes.</li><li>- Evidence of effective teamwork and leadership.</li><li>- Knowledge of the UK healthcare system.</li><li>- Interest in safe and effective healthcare delivery.</li><li>- Commitment to continuing professional development.</li><li>- Clear leadership aspirations.</li><li>- Understanding QI, audit, evidence-based practice, and clinical risk.</li><li>- Evidence of involvement in QI activity.</li><li>- Teaching, coaching, or mentoring experience.</li><li>- Evidence of clinical excellence.</li></ul> <p><b>Desirable:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Additional qualifications such as BSc, Masters, MBA, or PhD.</li><li>- Achievement outside specialty.</li><li>- Leadership experience inside or outside medicine.</li><li>- Insight into challenges facing English healthcare.</li><li>- Understanding of population health.</li><li>- Experience applying QI tools.</li></ul>

- Experience supporting or organising teaching programmes.
- Experience in policy or guideline development.

### **Skills, values and behaviours**

#### **Essential:**

- Initiative, drive, and enthusiasm.
- Commitment to personal and professional development.
- Ability to seek and act on feedback.
- Integrity, openness, and valuing diversity.
- Reflective practice.
- Strong teamworking capability.
- Effective organisation and prioritisation.
- Resilience and ability to manage uncertainty.
- Accountability for professional actions.
- Adaptability and rapid learning.
- Excellent communication and influencing skills.
- Strong problem-solving and decision-making ability.
- Professionalism and probity.
- Competent IT skills.

#### **Desirable:**

- Reflects on past performance and applied learning to current practice.
- Seeks and acts on feedback regarding own effectiveness and areas for development.
- Writing or publication experience.
- Experience presenting complex information.
- Leadership experience.

## Recruitment timeline

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The recruitment timeline\* for the 2026/27 scheme is as follows:

Dates*	Stage
26 January 2026	Applications open.
22 February 2026	Applications close.
By 3 March 2026	Candidates notified of shortlisting outcomes.
4 March 2026	Virtual Host Session – <b>SAVE THE DATE.</b>
11 – 12 March 2026	Virtual interviews – <b>SAVE THE DATE.</b>
By 27 March 2026	Candidates notified of interview outcomes.
1 September 2026	Scheme commences.

*\*Dates may be subject to change.*

# Application Guidance

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## Application stage

Applications must be received online via an application form on the FMLM website by 9pm GMT on 22 February 2026. Applications received beyond this time will not be accepted.

## Drafting and submitting your application

Candidates will provide personal and professional information. Candidates should refer to the selection criteria in this document and the [FMLM's Leadership and Management Standards](#) when answering all questions.

- Successful candidates should be able to express important information concisely.
- Application form answers will be assessed against the selection criteria, and evidence will be sought to demonstrate this throughout applications, interviews and references.
- All criteria will be assessed appropriately against each candidate's career level.
- Shortlisting is conducted against rigorous criteria and is undertaken anonymously.
- Do not unsubscribe to bulk emails, as this will prevent us from contacting you regarding your application.
- We are committed to ensuring we facilitate equitable recruitment; please let us know if you have any issues with the accessibility of the process.
- Please ensure you keep a copy of your application form responses locally as we cannot be held responsible for any loss of data during the application completion process.

## Data protection

- The data we collect is held by the National Medical Director's England Clinical Fellow Scheme, a joint partnership between the Faculty of Medical Leadership and Management (FMLM) and NHS England.
- The information you provide, including relevant and sensitive personal data, will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679 and the UK Data Protection Act 2018. It will only be shared with individuals and organisations directly involved in the administration and operation of the scheme, where such sharing is lawful, necessary, and proportionate to the scheme's objectives. Appropriate safeguards will be in place to protect your data and ensure compliance with data protection principles.

## Shortlisting stage

Candidates will be notified of shortlisting outcomes by the 3 March 2026.

## Host Session

A virtual host session event will take place via Zoom for all shortlisted applicants to attend on 4 March 2026 11:00-12:00pm GMT. This is a helpful networking session for shortlisted prospective fellows to have the opportunity to talk to host organisations to understand more about each organisation and the type of work you might be involved in as part of your fellowship. You will meet in small groups with each host representative(s) to hear about the organisation and ask questions of the host and current clinical fellows. Job descriptions and event link will be released to shortlisted candidates before the host session.

## Being matched to a Host Organisation

- Some organisations have more than one site/office across the UK. You may be expected to travel between sites by your host organisation so ensure that you read the job descriptions thoroughly before submitting your preferences.
- Successful candidates will only be offered the post that is allocated; there is no option to change posts so preferences should be carefully considered.
- FMLM is unable to facilitate changing posts or movement between offices.

## Interview stage

Interviews will be held virtually on 11 - 12 March 2026.

Before the interview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Shortlisted candidates will be sent a link to select their interview timeslot; Availability is on a first come first served basis. Interviews will be held virtually for maximum accessibility; Therefore, alternative dates are not available.</li><li>- Shortlisted candidates will be asked to provide a copy of an up-to-date CV.</li><li>- Shortlisted candidates will be sent a link to the interview platform and will need to submit the following information <u>at least 72 hours before</u> the interview:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Photo ID</b> (a passport or driving licence) to confirm your identity.</li><li>2. Those IN a training programme: provide written support/consent of Out-of-Programme-Experience (OOPE) from your Training Programme Director, or equivalent.</li><li>3. Those NOT IN a training programme or without a successive training post (e.g. FY2): provide written support that a contract extension will be approved.</li></ol></li></ul> <p>Non-UK/EU applicants will be contacted separately with regards to confirming their right to work status.</p>
During the interview
<p>The interview is comprised of a scenario task (released one week before the interview) and a question and answer-based panel interview.</p>



### After the interview

All candidates will be notified of the outcome within one week of interviews.

#### Successful candidates

- Successful candidates will be sent guidance on next steps.
- FMLM will use the references provided in the candidate's application form, though FMLM may be subject to ask for this again as needed. Appointment is subject to satisfactory receipt of a reference.
- Successful candidates will not receive feedback from the interview; this is due to capacity and the high volume of candidates.

#### Unsuccessful candidates

- Unsuccessful candidates will be sent feedback on their interview within six weeks of interview.

# Appointment conditions

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## Salary arrangements

- Clinical fellows will be paid according to the appropriate NHS graded base pay scale in place as at 1 September 2026 at the next training grade that they would have progressed to in their successive training post.
- For secondments, successful candidates retain their current employment contract and terms. The employing organisation will continue to pay all salary and associated on-costs (NI, pension, etc.) and will be reimbursed by the host organisation by prior mutual arrangement.
- For candidates with pay protection: salary is capped at the top nodal point of the NHS base pay scale for doctors in training.
- Posts wherein the clinical fellow lives and works in London attract London weighting. N.B.: If the host is London-based and the clinical fellow works remotely from elsewhere, this does not apply.
- Once in post, agreed work-related travel expenses should be negotiated between the clinical fellow and the host organisation. Relocation and daily commuting fees are not covered. Secondment contracts vary so, if successful, individuals will need to consider their contract and discuss expenses with their substantive employer and host organisation.

## Out of programme arrangements

### For candidates in training programmes:

- Applicants in training programmes must inform their respective LETB or Deanery and employers of a possible out-of-programme experience **on application** to allow timely conversations regarding arrangements for secondment.
- Candidates will need to declare that they have discussed support for possible out-of-programme experience with the relevant Training Programme Director, or equivalent, on the application form.
- Applicants invited to interview are required to submit written approval/support of OOPE.
- Successful candidates must contact their nominated HR and finance leads to notify them of appointment at the very earliest opportunity and will need to arrange a secondment contract. Full guidance will be provided to successful candidates upon appointment.
- For GP trainees with an expected CCT completion date around or before 1 September 2026, an appointment to the scheme would extend training at the grade they have reached to ensure completion of the scheme within the shorter training window. This should be discussed with the relevant training supervisor upon application.

### For candidates NOT in training programmes/completed foundation training (FY2) without a successive training place:

- Successful candidates who are not currently in training programmes and will not require OOPE.
- For those without a successive training programme or contracted role, please see 'Contractual arrangements' overleaf.

**Important note:** Early discussions with the relevant training supervisors, HR partners and finance leads are required. Failure to do so may result in requests for OOPPE and secondment contracts being rejected locally, and a fellowship post being delayed or withdrawn.

### Contractual arrangements

- FMLM will confirm posts in writing and provide successful candidates with full guidance of the next steps in arranging contracts.
- Shortlisted candidates should confirm the name and contact details of the nominated employee HR partner and finance lead as you will need to contact them on immediate appointment, if successful, to commence secondment arrangements. You will also need to provide these details to your host organisation's HR and finance departments on appointment.

#### **For candidates IN training programmes or with successive training posts:**

- Successful applicants will be appointed to the scheme by way of a secondment arrangement from existing employers. It is the responsibility of the appointed successful candidate to arrange contractual arrangements between employers and the host organisation.

#### **For candidates between training programmes/completed foundation training (FY2) without a successive training post:**

- The fellowship is facilitated as a secondment from an employing organisation.
- Trainees who will not be in a training programme as of 1 September 2026 (e.g. FY2) must still be employed by an NHS trust, Lead Employer, or organisation for the purpose of participating in the scheme.
- Candidates should contact their Training Programme Director/educational supervisor and local HR contact or partner immediately upon application to seek support in principle for gaining a contract extension for one year to facilitate a place on the scheme for the entire secondment period, in lieu of a successive employer.
- Written support will be sought at invitation to interview stage.

**Important note:** FMLM does not participate in the arrangement of out-of-programme experience or secondment contracts. Candidates are expected to facilitate this directly with their LETB/Deaneries, employers, and host organisations.

# Working Arrangements

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A full list of 2026/27 host organisations will be made available to shortlisted candidates. The scheme makes every effort to identify posts outside of London.

Shortlisted candidates are invited to an online host evening, where they will have the opportunity to meet with senior leaders and clinical fellows from each host organisation to find out more about the organisation and opportunities available.

## **Less than full time posts**

- Some posts will be available as less than full time (LTFT) or flexible. This will be detailed in the job descriptions for each host organisation.
- Due to the intensive nature of the scheme and the window being limited to 12 months, LTFT posts are usually offered as 0.8 FTE.
- All requests for LTFT or flexible working will be considered by host organisations on a post-by-post basis and the decision as to whether this can be accommodated will reside with them.
- A schedule for the development programme will be made available in summer 2026. Full attendance is required, regardless of LTFT post status.

# Insights from Clinical Fellows



TESTIMONIAL

This fellowship has been an unparalleled opportunity to gain a system-wide perspective on healthcare, bridging policy, operations, and frontline delivery. Working across NHS England and the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges has offered unique insights into leadership at the highest levels, while also grounding me in the realities of implementation. Observing and engaging with brilliant leaders has been both inspiring and invaluable, shaping a deeper understanding of how change happens in the NHS.



Abid Ali Khan, National Medical Director's Clinical Fellow 24/25



TESTIMONIAL

This fellowship has been an invaluable experience for starting to understand how the plethora of NHS organisations, arms-length bodies and the wider health ecosystem interact. The opportunity to meet with and work alongside senior staff has provided unparalleled exposure to how they navigate complexity, make strategic trade-offs and demonstrate leadership. Whilst alongside the other fellows you are part of a learning clinical leadership community.

As a GP registrar interested in health inequalities and population health, this fellowship may well have changed my career trajectory. But also, I feel that through my clinical expertise and academic experience I have been able to make a meaningful contribution to health policy that improves patient care.



Adam Harvey-Sullivan, National Medical Director's Clinical Fellow 24/25, Primary Care at NHS England



TESTIMONIAL

The FMLM NMD CFS scheme has been invaluable. It offers a rare opportunity for early-career clinicians like myself to connect with inspiring leaders and develop crucial leadership and management skills. The chance to work alongside senior healthcare figures is unparalleled, providing invaluable insight into influencing and driving positive change within the NHS. I highly recommend this fellowship to any driven clinician eager to make a difference.



Dr. Raykal Sim, National Medical Director's Clinical Fellow 24/25, Deloitte





#### TESTIMONIAL

The NMD's clinical fellowship has been an incredible opportunity out of clinical medicine and into civil service and corporate work experience in healthcare leadership and management. It's a dedicated year to develop skills in leadership and team-working, policy and research at a national level. In my secondment at the Care Quality Commission, I've led projects on AI regulation in healthcare, influenced primary and secondary care policy and been a medical advisor inspecting hospitals and GPs across the country. The fellowship has provided unparalleled access to networks of healthcare leaders and is a platform for your views to make impactful population-level changes in this space. I look forward to using the skills from this fellowship as a platform for my career, to combine with my clinical practice.

Dr. Tafsir Ahmed, National Medical Director's Clinical Fellow to Care Quality Commission 2024/25 and GP Registrar



#### TESTIMONIAL

The FMLM scheme has been a unique opportunity to take time in a focussed year outside of training to better understand the landscape of healthcare we as doctors work within. Learning how large organisations such as the GMC work, how to work effectively within them, and how they interrelate to each other has given me valuable experience I will develop further in my future consultant career. It has been a fantastic opportunity for me and I wish all applicants the best of luck.

Dr. Alan Abraham, National Medical Director's Clinical Fellow 24/25



#### TESTIMONIAL

My fellowship experience has been incredibly rewarding, offering valuable insights into national policy implementation and opportunities to provide my clinical perspective. It has deepened my understanding of the structure of the NHSE organisation, how teams collaborate, and how national teams interact with local systems.

Dr. Emily Phillips, National Medical Director's Clinical Fellow 24/25



#### TESTIMONIAL

As a National Medical Director's Clinical Fellow at NICE, I have received outstanding guidance from senior medical leaders. This role has provided dedicated time to explore my interests while offering valuable insight into the workings of a large, independent organisation and its engagement with stakeholders. It has also given me the opportunity to collaborate across multidisciplinary clinical and non-clinical teams, broadening my skills beyond the operating theatre and deepening my understanding of how major healthcare decisions are made.

Jarin Noronha, National Medical Director's Clinical Fellow 24/25

# Frequently Asked Questions

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## Eligibility

**1. I am approaching or just past my CCT date. Am I still eligible to apply?**

You are eligible to apply provided you will not gain CCT before 1 September 2026.

For GP trainees, if successful, an appointment to the scheme would extend training at the grade they have reached to ensure completion of the scheme within the shorter training window.

Candidates who have completed training by 1 September 2026, regardless of the number of years of training they have undergone, are not eligible for this scheme. You must clearly state your expected CCT date on your application.

**2. I am a Foundation Year 1 doctor. Can I apply?**

Unfortunately, you are not yet eligible to apply, as you will not have gained your Foundation competencies (certificate FACD 5.2) before 1 September 2026. Please consider applying for the scheme in future years.

**3. I do not have a medical degree. Can I apply?**

This scheme is only open to doctors in training with a primary medical qualification, with full GMC registration or public health specialty trainees from a background other than medicine that meet eligibility requirements.

FMLM runs equivalent clinical fellows' schemes that are open to other professions. For further details, visit the FMLM website.

**4. I am an SAS doctor. Can I apply?**

This scheme is specifically designed to the needs of doctors in training, therefore you are not eligible to apply. Please stay in contact with FMLM, as we are continually developing new bespoke schemes and resources to meet the needs of various groups of clinicians.

**5. I am a doctor but am currently not in a training programme. Am I eligible?**

The scheme is open to all doctors on a UK recognised training scheme who have completed both years of foundation training or equivalent by 1 September 2026 across all specialties. This can include candidates currently out-of-programme, e.g. pursuing a higher degree.

Candidates are eligible providing they have a primary medical qualification, full GMC registration and do not expect to gain CCT on or before 1 September 2026.

If successful, trainees outside of a programme are required to be employed by an organisation in order to facilitate a secondment contract for the purpose of taking up the scheme.

**6. I am a past National Medical Director's Clinical Fellow. Can I reapply?**

Doctors that have been through the scheme are not permitted to reapply for the scheme.

## Training

**7. I am currently applying for a training post that starts in August. What should I do?**

You should continue with that application in parallel to this one. If you are successfully appointed as a clinical fellow, you may find yourself in the difficult position of having to give up the training post. You will then need to contact your deanery to discuss either resigning from your clinical post, or deferring it, if possible. If you are successfully appointed to the scheme, and you choose to give up a training post, you will have to re-apply the following year.

**8. I have a clinical training post. Would I have to give this up?**

This depends on your stage of training and your deanery regulations. The [Gold Guide](#) stipulates: “The start of training for both core and specialty training may normally only be deferred on statutory grounds (e.g. maternity/paternity/adoption leave, ill health)” (section 3.38) and that time out-of-programme “will not normally be agreed until a trainee has been in a training programme for at least one year of training (unless at the time of appointment, deferral of the start of the programme has been agreed for leave on statutory grounds)” (section 3.162).

Hence trainees entering the first year of core or specialty training may not be permitted to defer their clinical post by their deanery. For successful candidates, this may mean giving up your clinical training post and reapplying in the next round. Those entering higher training posts (e.g. ST3+) may also not be permitted to defer their clinical post by their deanery.

For other grades, depending on your training arrangements, you should arrange to come to this role as an out-of-programme experience (OOPE, or equivalent). Given that most deaneries stipulate six months’ notice for OOPE placements, you must start this conversation with your deanery early (i.e. on submitting your application form).

**9. During the year, can I combine participation on the scheme with my clinical training?**

Where less than full time posts are available, a job description pack will be released to shortlisted candidates, which will specify these posts. Based on the intensive nature of the clinical fellow experience and feedback from alumni, you would be encouraged to carefully consider workloads and capacity alongside personal and other professional commitments.

**10. Can I count this role towards my training?**

The scheme is a valuable out-of-programme developmental experience; it does not count towards training but does count towards CPD.

**11. Can international or EEA doctors apply?**

The scheme is open to all doctors in training, across all specialties who have full GMC registration, are in training and are eligible to work in the UK or participate in this scheme according to visa and immigration requirements.

Some host organisations may have specific visa restrictions relevant to their area of work. This will be made clear in the job description.

If you are uncertain whether your visa entitles you to work in the UK and participate in this scheme, please seek further information from the UK Visas and Immigration website at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration). Please note that participating organisations, including FMLM, NHS England and NHS Improvement or host organisations are unable to provide sponsorship to international candidates.



## Application

### **12. Can I defer entry to the scheme?**

We are unable to accept applications for deferred entry to the scheme. All posts will commence in September 2026.

Successful approval for Out-of-Programme Experience is required for participation, across specialties and training grades. Therefore, if you are interested in the scheme you are encouraged to discuss this with your training programme director, educational supervisor or equivalent, and apply this year and defer your current training post.

Please keep in mind that if you are a Foundation Year 2 Doctor, and depending on your deanery, you must be willing to give up your training post and re-apply in the next round.

### **13. Can I speak to any of the current clinical fellows in person or over the telephone?**

Given the number of applicants for this scheme, we are unable to provide contact details for current clinical fellows. If shortlisted, you will have the opportunity to meet current fellows during a Host Evening to hear about their fellowship experiences and to ask questions.

If directly contacted via other channels, current clinical fellows will not discuss any specifics or provide additional details around the selection process.

### **14. What sorts of things should I be considering in deciding to apply for the scheme?**

When considering applying, be sure to have a conversation with your employer and escalate the request to your executive team, as their support is essential and written proof will be required should you progress through the recruitment process. Being successfully appointed to the scheme is a brilliant opportunity and is accordingly a significant commitment. Given the intensity of the scheme and its 12-month duration, conversations with family and/or support networks are also recommended, to ensure the commitment required is understood and supported, should you be successful.

# Contact us

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For further information or queries, please contact:

✉ [clinicalfellowscheme@fmlm.ac.uk](mailto:clinicalfellowscheme@fmlm.ac.uk)

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