

2024 F2 Career Destinations Survey Report

Executive summary

The UK Foundation Programme Office (UKFPO) previously ran an annual F2 Career Destination Survey (CDS), which was discontinued at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic (2020). A new, shorter web-based version of the survey was re-instated for 2024 as a pilot, looking at the self-reported career destinations of F2 doctors who completed their foundation training in August 2024.

F2 doctors from all 18 UK foundation schools completed the survey with a total of 1637 responses received (18% of all UK F2 doctors in June 2024).

Over half of respondents (n=896; 54.7%) reported a change in their intended career path during foundation training, compared to what they had intended to do on starting their Foundation programme.

On completion of the Foundation Programme, 1323 (80.8%) of respondents had confirmed medical employment for the next period, compared to 71.7% in 2019, with 136 (9.1%) still seeking work in the UK, and 113 (6.9%) were taking a career break which is less than in 2019, when 13.6% took a career break. The majority of respondents (1305; 79.7%) had a confirmed training or service post in the UK, or were actively looking for such a post, which is higher than in 2019, when 73.0% of respondents remained in the UK to work.

Of the 1305 doctors who were continuing to work in the NHS after FP, 483 (37.0%) had been appointed to training posts and 535 (41.0%) to service posts. When compared to the 2019 data, the proportion of Foundation doctors remaining in the UK getting training posts is lower (47.8% in 2019).

219 (13.4%) FP doctors went abroad after FP (into training, service posts, or still seeking a post), which is a higher proportion compared to 2019 (9.2%).

Of the 774 respondents (47.3% of all respondents) who applied for core or specialty training*, 483 (62.4%) were successful in their applications and took up a training post; 13 (1.7%) were offered a core/specialty training post but declined the offer; 194 (25.1%) were appointable but were not offered a post; and 84 (10.9%) were unsuccessful in their application for a core or specialty training post. When considering where these Foundation doctors had graduated, 604 UK graduates (90.5% of applicants) were considered to be appointable, compared to 86 (80.4%) IMGs, with 445 UK graduates (65.7% of UK graduates who applied for CT/ST) being offered a post, compared to 51 IMGs (47.7%), as some applicants to CT/ST recruitment are appointable but are not offered a post, often because recruitment to the specialty is very competitive.

This survey gives evidence of post-F2 career destinations for UK foundation doctors, although the low response rate must be acknowledged. Further analysis of these data may help workforce planning to ensure that Foundation doctors are successfully appointed to specialty training should they choose to apply. In addition, the survey's findings highlight substantial shifts in career intentions, underscoring the need for adaptable career planning and robust support systems.

* References to core or specialty training include general practice (GP) training

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1. Introduction

The UKFPO ran an annual F2 Career Destinations Survey (CDS) between 2010 and 2019 with full reports published on UKFPO website. The survey was discontinued at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic (2020), but in 2024, NHS Education for Scotland proposed re-instating the CDS at a local level to help inform workforce planning in that nation. After discussion with UKFPO and other stakeholders, it was agreed to widen the survey to include F2 doctors from all four UK nations.

A new, shorter version of the survey was re-instated for the training year ending in summer 2024 and distributed to F2 doctors in all four nations of the UK. This report describes the self-reported career destinations of F2 doctors who completed their foundation training in August 2024. Throughout the report, references to specialty training include general practice (GP) training.

1.1 Method

The 2024 CDS was re-instated as a pilot web-based survey and completion was optional. UKFPO and UK foundation school teams encouraged all F2 doctors in the Foundation Programme in June 2024 to complete the survey and completion numbers per foundation school were tracked against the number of F2s training in each school. The survey was open from 27 June 2024 until 31 August 2024.

The contents of the survey, including the statement of consent and the questions asked, are in [Appendix 1](#). Survey responses not focussed on in this report are reported in subsequent appendices: UK country in which specialty posts were obtained ([Appendix 2](#)), respondent demographics ([Appendix 3](#)), and medical school of graduation and foundation school ([Appendix 4](#)).

Data contained within this report is based on foundation doctors' self-reported career intentions or declared appointments. This has not been compared with the final actual appointment/next career destination for individual doctors.

Results were initially viewed and presented to key stakeholders using the survey platform's in-built chart tool. The data analysis was subsequently conducted using Excel functionality, including pivot tables. Qualitative responses were manually reviewed and systematically categorised to convert them into quantifiable data. Subjective decisions were occasionally required, and data cleansing was performed to rectify inadvertent inconsistencies.

Where similar data was obtained, comparison was made with the results of the 2019 UKFPO CDS (available at https://foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2024/04/F2%20CDS_2019.pdf) using Chi-squared tests.

1.2 Responses

1637 responses were received, from F2 doctors from all 18 foundation schools. This represents 18% of all F2 doctors training in the UK as of June 2024. Due to the nature of the survey – a new, optional, pilot initiative – this low response rate was expected. The results of the survey cannot necessarily be taken as representative of the whole

population of UK doctors who completed the Foundation Programme in August 2024 and any data should be used with this caution in mind.

As the initiative was started by NHS Education for Scotland, who put additional resources towards encouraging completion of the survey, a greater proportion of respondents were from that country compared to the other UK nations (Table 1).

Table 1 – CDS completion rate by UK nation

UK nation	Number of F2 doctors	Number of survey respondents	Completion rate
England	7439	1016	14%
Northern Ireland	240	73	30%
Scotland	941	489	52%
Wales	354	59	17%

91.7% (1501) of respondents had completed a standard Foundation Programme (FP/FPP). The remaining 8.3% (136) of respondents had completed a Specialised Foundation Programme (SFP).

89.4% (1463) of respondents had graduated from a UK medical school (UKGs); the remaining 10.6% (174) of respondents had graduated from a medical school outside the UK (international medical graduates (IMGs)). Table 2 shows the breakdown of FP type and UKG/IMG.

Table 2 – FP type by medical school of graduation

FP type	UKGs	IMGs	Total
Standard FP	1333 (91.1% of UKGs)	168 (96.6% of IMGs)	1501 (91.7% of respondents)
SFP	130 (8.9 of UKGs%)	6 (3.4% of IMGs)	136 (8.3% of respondents)
Total	1463 (89.4% of respondents)	174 (10.6% of respondents)	1637 (100% of respondents)

2. Destinations of F2 doctors

2.1 Intended career path at the start of the Foundation Programme

The majority (47.1%) of respondents had intended to immediately progress into core or specialty training in the UK when they first started their foundation training. 19.2% were undecided, 12.2% intended to undertake a service post in the UK and 8% intended to take a career break. The remaining 18.9% had a variety of other intentions. Table 3 shows the intended career paths of UKGs and IMGs separately.

Table 3 – Intended career path by medical school of graduation

Intended career path	UKGs	IMGs	Total
To immediately progress into core or specialty training in the UK	638 (43.6% of UKGs)	133 (76.4% of IMGs)	771 (47.1% of respondents)
Undecided	300 (20.5% of UKGs)	15 (8.6% of IMGs)	315 (19.2% of respondents)
Service post in the UK	185 (12.6% of UKGs)	14 (8.0% of IMGs)	199 (12.2% of respondents)
Take a career break	130 (8.9% of UKGs)	1 (0.6% of IMGs)	131 (8.0% of respondents)
Other (eg military, further study)	210 (14.4% of UKGs)	11 (6.3% of IMGs)	221 (13.5% of respondents)
Total	1463	174	1637

54.7% (896) of respondents reported that their intended career path changed as they progressed through foundation training (55.4% of UKGs and 48.9% of IMGs).

2.2 Next career destination

• Overall career destinations

On completion of the Foundation Programme, 1323 (80.8%) of respondents had confirmed medical employment for the next period, compared to 71.7% in 2019 ($p<0.0001$); 136 (9.1%) were still seeking work in the UK, which is similar to 2019 (8.0%; $p=0.723$). After the Foundation Programme, 113 (6.9%) were taking a career break which is less than in 2019, when 13.6% took a career break ($p<0.0001$).

The majority of respondents (1305; 79.7%) had a confirmed training or service post in the UK, or were actively looking for such a post, which is higher than in 2019, when 73.0% of respondents remained in the UK to work ($p<0.0001$). Of the 1305 doctors who were continuing to work in the NHS after FP, 483 (37.0%) had been appointed to training posts and 535 (41.0%) to service posts. When compared to the 2019 data, the proportion of Foundation doctors remaining in the UK getting training posts is lower (47.8% in 2019; $p<0.0001$).

219 (13.4%) FP doctors went abroad after FP (into training, service posts, or still seeking a post), which is a higher proportion compared to 2019 (9.2%; $p<0.0001$).

Table 4 shows career destination based on where respondents had graduated.

Table 4 – Career destination after foundation by medical school of graduation

Career destination	UKGs	IMGs	Total
Appointed to a Core/ST post in the UK	434 (29.7% of UKGs)	49 (28.2% of IMGs)	483 (29.5% of respondents)
Appointed to a Core/ST post OUTSIDE UK	2 (0.1% of UKGs)	2 (1.1% of IMGs)	4 (0.2% of respondents)
Appointed to a service post in the UK	476 (32.5% of UKGs)	59 (33.9% of IMGs)	535 (32.7% of respondents)
Appointed to a service post OUTSIDE UK	145 (9.9% of UKGs)	5 (2.9% of IMGs)	150 (9.2% of respondents)
Still seeking employment as a doctor IN THE UK	112 (7.7% of UKGs)	24 (13.8% of IMGs)	136 (8.3% of respondents)
Still seeking employment as a doctor OUTSIDE THE UK	60 (4.1% of UKGs)	5 (2.9% of IMGs)	65 (4.0% of respondents)
Career break	110 (7.5% of UKGs)	3 (1.7% of IMGs)	113 (6.9% of respondents)
Other (military posting/further study, left medicine, etc)	124 (8.5% of UKGs)	27 (15.5% of IMGs)	151 (9.2% of respondents)
Total	1463	174	1637

• Applications for core or specialty training

Of the 774 (47.3%) respondents who applied for core or specialty training, 496 (64.1%) were offered a post, which is less than in 2019 when 78.3% were offered a post ($p<0.0001$). Of these, 483 (62.4% of those who applied) took up a training post, with 13 (1.7%) declining the offer of a post having been successful in their application. Of those who were not offered a post, 194 (25.1%) were appointable but did not receive an offer and 84 (10.9%) were unsuccessful in their application.

When considering where these Foundation doctors had graduated, 445 UK graduates (65.7% of UK graduates who applied for CT/ST) were offered a post, compared to 51 IMGs (47.7%; $p<0.0001$). Some applicants to CT/ST recruitment are appointable but are not offered a post, often because recruitment to the specialty is very competitive; 604 UK graduates (90.5% of applicants) were considered to be appointable, compared to 86 (80.4%; $p=0.001$) IMGs.

Table 5 – Outcome of applications for CT/ST by medical school of graduation

ST/CT application outcome	UKGs	IMGs	Total
Appointable but not appointed	159 (23.8% of UKG applicants)	35 (32.7% of IMG applicants)	194 (25.1% of applicants)
Appointed	433 (64.9% of UKG applicants)	50 (46.7% of IMG applicants)	483 (62.4% of applicants)
Offered post but declined the offer	12 (1.8% of UKG applicants)	1 (0.9% of IMG applicants)	13 (1.7% of applicants)
Unsuccessful application	63 (9.4% of UKG applicants)	21 (19.6% of IMG applicants)	84 (10.9% of applicants)
Total	667 (86.2% of applicants)	107 (12.5% of applicants)	774 (100% of applicants)

2.3 Type of appointment

Of those who obtained a specialty training post, the type of posts are shown in table 6.

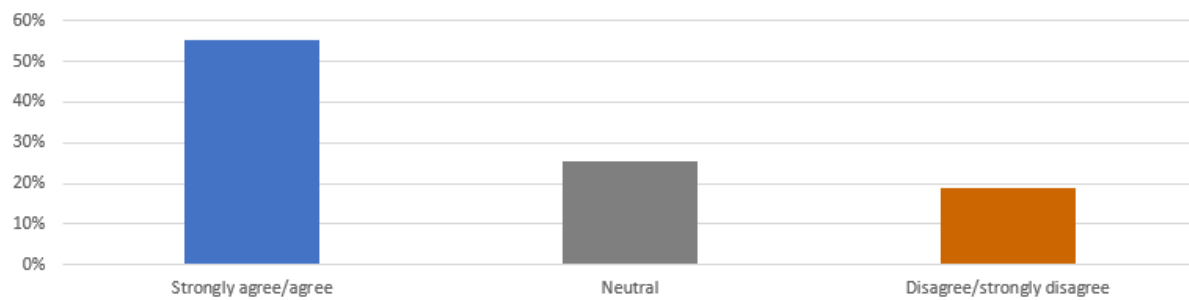
Table 6 – Type of training post obtained by medical school of graduation

Type of training post	UKGs	IMGs	Total
Academic training programme (e.g. ACF)	18 (4.2% of UKGs)	1 (2.0% of IMGs)	19 (3.9% of CT/ST appointments)
Core training programme (CT1)	177 (40.9% of UKGs)	16 (32.0% of IMGs)	193 (40.0% of CT/ST appointments)
Locum appointment for training (LAT)	3 (0.7% of UKGs)	1 (2.0% of IMGs)	4 (0.8% of CT/ST appointments)
Other (eg military or fixed term post)	10 (2.3% of UKGs)	2 (4.0% of IMGs)	12 (2.5% of CT/ST appointments)
Run-through (inc. GP) training programme (ST)	225 (52.0% of UKGs)	30 (60.0% of IMGs)	255 (52.8% of respondents)
Total	433 (89.6% of CT/ST appointments)	50 (10.4% of CT/ST appointments)	483 (100% of CT/ST appointments)

2.4 Ways of working

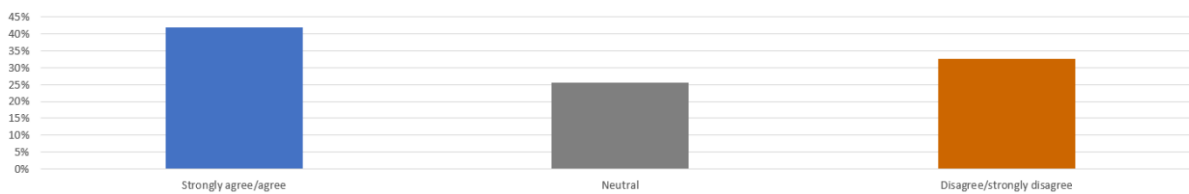
All respondents were asked to indicate whether they would like to work less than full time – whatever their next career step was. The results are shown in figure 1.

Figure 1 – Would you like to work less than full time?



They were also asked to indicate whether living and working close to where they studied was important to them, the results of this are shown in figure 2.

Figure 2 – Is living and working close to where you went to school/university important to you?



3. Analysis and next steps

This is the first nationwide survey of the career intentions and destinations of foundation doctors since 2019. The low response rate and the different response rates in each of the 4 UK nations was expected as this was a pilot, but nonetheless, this data provides important insights into how foundation doctors see their future careers, as well as motivation to continue with and build on the accuracy and reach of the survey in future training years.

Our data shows that:

Career intentions

- When they started their Foundation Programme, approximately half of respondents wanted to go straight into UK core/specialty/GP training, which is slightly higher compared to the 2019 data.
- More than half of respondents changed their intended career path whilst in the Foundation Programme.

Career destinations

- On completion of the Foundation Programme, most respondents had confirmed medical employment for the next period, with around 10% still seeking work in the UK.
- Compared to the 2019 data, the proportion of respondents taking a career break had reduced by over 50%.
- Of respondents with a confirmed training or service post in the UK, or who were actively looking for such a post, the proportion of doctors appointed to training posts fell by approximately 20% compared to the 2019 data.
- More FP doctors went abroad after FP (into training, service posts, or still seeking a post) compared to 2019.

Core/specialty applications

- Approximately half of respondents applied for UK core/specialty training with about 2/3 securing a training post.
- However, a quarter of respondents who applied were appointable but not appointed, with this being more common for international medical graduates than UK medical school graduates.
- Overall, 11% of Foundation doctors who applied for core/specialty training were considered as not being suitable for appointment – this was nearly twice as likely to be the case for international medical graduates compared to UK medical graduates.

Future working

- Over half of respondents reported that they would like to work less than full time as their career progresses, with over 40% expressing the view that it would be important in future to be close to where they went to university/school.

The survey structure and methods of distribution will be refined based on lessons learned and will be run again for the F2 cohort due to complete the Foundation Programme in August 2025. Further analysis of these data may help workforce planning to ensure that Foundation doctors are successfully appointed to specialty

training should they choose to apply. In addition, the survey's findings highlight substantial shifts in career intentions, underscoring the need for adaptable career planning and robust support systems.

4. Acknowledgements

The 2024 Career Destination Survey was instigated, designed and run by Christine Rea, Foundation School Manager at the Scottish Foundation School, and the NHS Education for Scotland (NES) team, including Dr Fiona Cameron, Scottish Foundation School Director.

Publicity was managed by the UK Foundation Programme Office (UKFPO) team and all UK foundation school teams took part in promoting participation.

The reporting of response rate and response data was undertaken by Christine Rea. The 2024 Career Destination Survey Report was written and edited by Kata Várnai, UKFPO Education and Support Senior Manager, and Dr Mike Masding, UKFPO National Clinical Director.

**UK Foundation Programme Office
May 2025**

5. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Survey contents

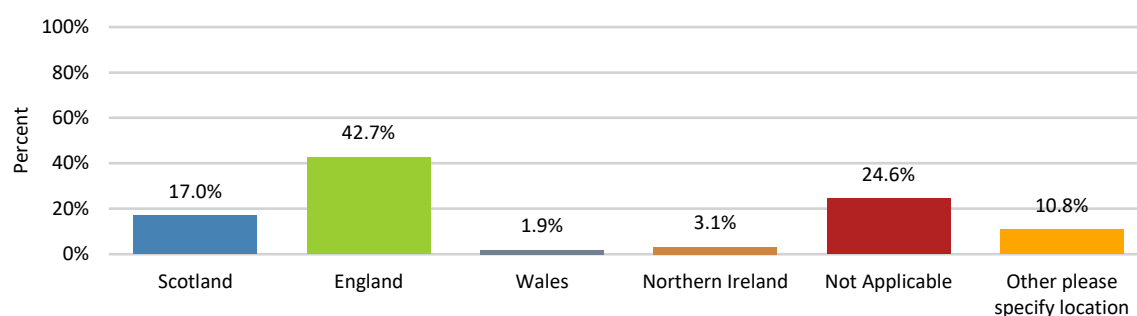
The survey included a statement of informed consent to participants, including the length of time it would take to complete the survey, the purpose of the data collection and how the data would be used. Participants were asked for their name and GMC number and reassured that this was to ensure only unique responses were counted. This information would not be used as part of the analysis of the responses.

The survey was created and administered by the Scottish Foundation School team, using the QuestBack online survey system. All questions were reviewed and agreed by the UKFPO and the four-nation foundation leads.

The following questions were asked:

- 1) * GMC Number
- 2) * First Name
- 3) * Surname
- 4) * Please tell us your Graduating Medical School?
- 5) * Please select your Foundation School?
- 6) * What year did you commence your Foundation Training (e.g. 2020)
- 7) * What type of Foundation Programme have you completed?
- 8) * At the start of your training, what was your intended career path AFTER completing foundation training?
- 9) * If intended Core/ ST which clinical programme did you wish to do?
- 10) * Has your intended career path changed as you progressed through foundation training?
- 11) * Did you apply for core or specialty training and what was the outcome?
- 12) * What is your next Career Destination?
- 13) * What type of post have you obtained?
- 14) * Where have you been appointed
- 15) * Would you like to work less than full time?
- 16) Based on your answer, please include any additional comments
- 17) * Living and working close to where I went to school/ university is important to me?
- 18) Based on your answer, please include any additional comments
- 19) This next section is optional where you can provide your personal and demographics data. Do you wish to complete this section?
- 20) What is your gender?
- 21) What is your sexual orientation?
- 22) What is your ethnic group?
- 23) What is your religion?
- 24) What age range are you in?
- 25) Do you consider yourself to have a disability? (Within the meaning/definition of the Equality Act 2010)
- 26) Do you consider yourself to be neurodiverse?
- 27) If yes, based on your answer, please indicate which of the following conditions you identify with

Appendix 2 – Location of training posts obtained

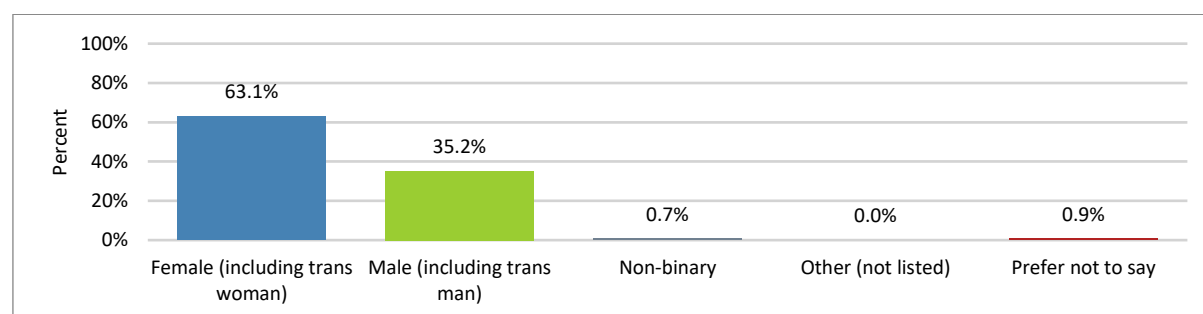


Appendix 3 – Demographics

66.6% (1090) of respondents provided demographic information.

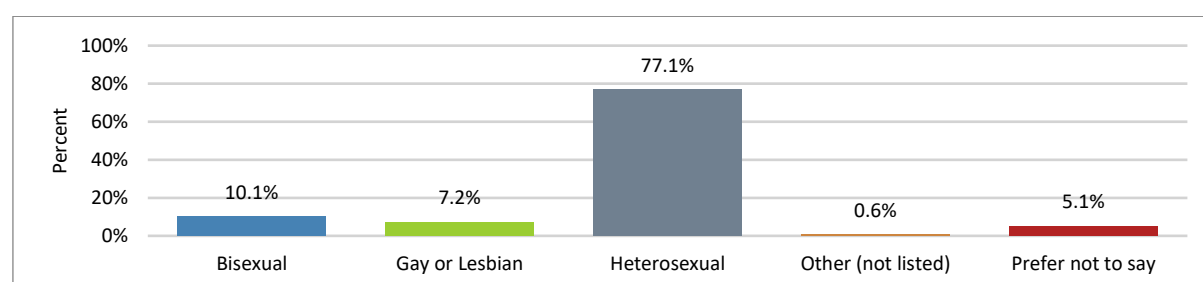
Gender

What is your gender?



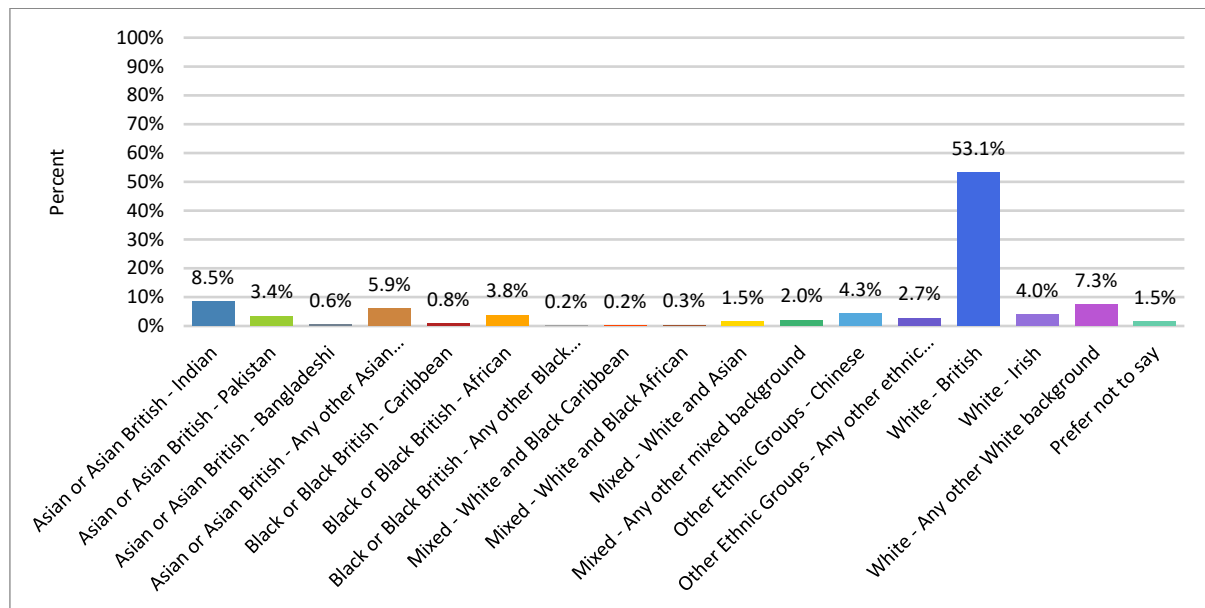
Sexual orientation

What is your sexual orientation?



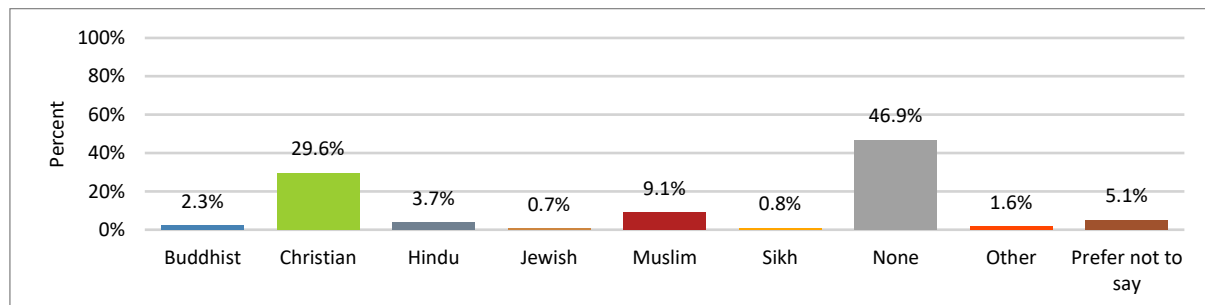
Ethnicity

What is your ethnic group?



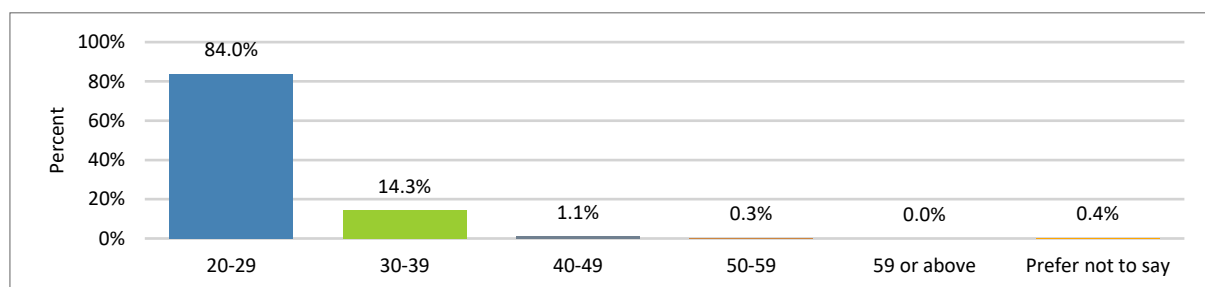
Religion

What is your religion?



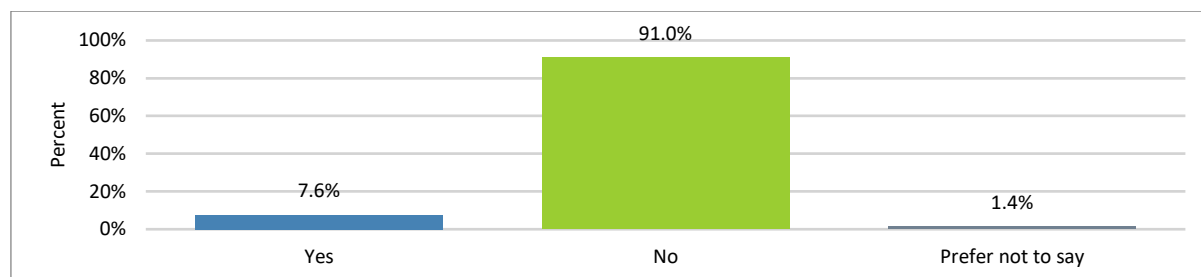
Age

What age range are you in?



Disability

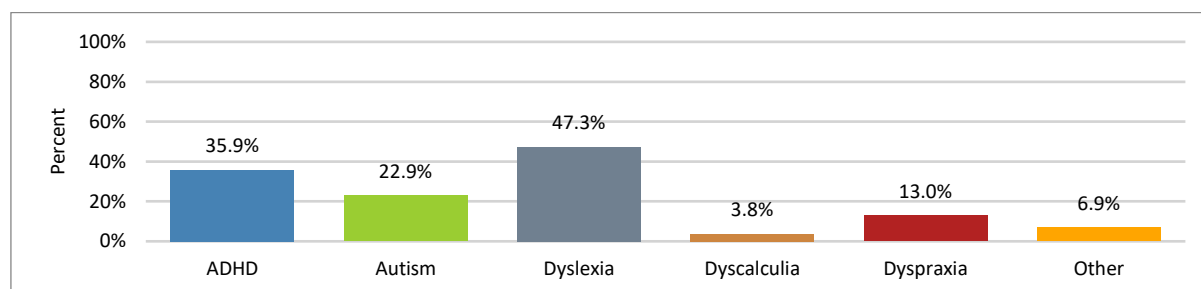
Do you consider yourself to have a disability? (Within the meaning/definition of the Equality Act 2010)



Neurodiversity

10.3% (111) of respondents said they considered themselves to be neurodiverse. 86.5% (935) said they did not and 3.2% (35) preferred not to answer the question.

If yes, based on your answer, please indicate which of the following conditions you identify with



Appendix 4 – Foundation school and graduating medical school

CDS completion rate by foundation school

Foundation School	Number of F2 doctors	Number of completions	Completion rate
East of England	824	33	4%
Kent, Surrey, and Sussex (KSS)	602	118	20%
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, and Rutland (LNR)	226	42	19%
London	1104	142	13%
North West	1000	104	10%
Northern	499	83	17%
Northern Ireland	240	73	30%
Oxford	304	36	12%
Peninsula	254	48	19%
Scotland	941	489	52%
Severn	365	80	22%
Trent	387	73	19%
Wales	354	59	17%
Wessex	399	48	12%
West Midlands Central	265	48	18%
West Midlands North	301	61	20%
West Midlands South	213	45	21%
Yorkshire and Humber	696	55	8%
Total	8974	1637	18%

CDS completion rate by graduating medical school

Name	Count
Aberdeen (University of), School of Medicine	74
Anglia Ruskin University School of Medicine	1
Aston University Medical School	5
Birmingham (University of), School of Medicine	67
Brighton and Sussex Medical School	32
Bristol (University of), Faculty of Medicine	28
Cambridge (University of), School of Clinical Medicine	42
Cardiff University, School of Medicine	48
Dundee (University of), Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing	82
Edge Hill University Medical School	1
Edinburgh (The University of), College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine	84
Exeter (University of), Medical School	20
Glasgow (University of), College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences	101
Hull York Medical School	13

Name	Count
Imperial College School of Medicine, London	37
Keele University, School of Medicine	31
Kent and Medway Medical School	0
King's College London School of Medicine (at Guy's, King's College and St Thomas' Hospital)	42
Lancaster University, Faculty of Health & Medicine	11
Leeds (University of), School of Medicine	24
Leicester (University of), Leicester Medical School	39
Lincoln Medical School	0
Liverpool (University of), Faculty of Health and Life Sciences	42
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (Postgraduate Medical School)	0
Manchester (University of), Faculty of Medical and Human Sciences	69
Newcastle University Medical School	69
Newcastle University Medicine Malaysia (NUMED)	7
Newcastle University Medicine Malaysia (NUMED)	4
Nottingham (The University of), Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences	67
Oxford (University of), Medical Sciences Division	35
Plymouth University Peninsula Schools of Medicine and Dentistry	20
Queen Mary, University of London	45
Queen Mary, University of London, Malta	2
Queen's University Belfast, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences	72
ScotGEM (University of St Andrew's and University of Dundee)	22
Sheffield (The University of), School of Medicine	36
Southampton (University of), School of Medicine	42
St Andrews (University of), Faculty of Medical Sciences	1
St George's, University of London	35
St George's, University of London, Cyprus	6
Sunderland (University of), School of Medicine	0
Swansea University, School of Medicine	9
The Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry (PCMD)	3
Ulster University School of Medicine	0
University College London, University College Medical School	37
University of Buckingham	9
University of Central Lancashire	9
Warwick (The University of), Warwick Medical School	31
Other please specify [that is, non-UK medical school]	183
N	1637