

## NHS England East Midlands

### Primary Care Newsletter

October 2024

#### **Celebrating Colleagues at The Nigerian Lincolnshire Awards**

*Val Irons and Avis Staff-GP Training Programme Managers*

Val Irons shared her thoughts:

“I feel very honoured to receive this award from our trainees. It was totally unexpected and a lovely surprise. I know our trainees appreciate the work I do but to have it recognised in this way is truly special and something to be remembered, definitely a highlight of my working life. It is so rewarding to know that my efforts make a difference.

My first priority is always to our trainees - they are what my role is all about - and I will always do my best to help and support them. They are our future medical workforce, and I feel privileged to be playing a part in their training and development.

I am fortunate to have a job I enjoy and the main reason for that is our doctors – they make the job what it is and they are a pleasure to work with.

When all the bureaucracy of the job is driving me mad, all I need to do now is look at my award and it will make me smile!

It was an honour to be invited to the Nigerian Lincolnshire Awards, it was a wonderful event and I thoroughly enjoyed it. “

Val Irons

GP Training Programme Manager

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**And her colleague Avis Staff, also added**

“I don’t think I am aware of the contributions and impact I may be making in the course of a normal working week. It is always lovely to receive good feedback and thanks for a job well done and recognition that you’ve made a difference to someone. Often making a big difference with little effort required, just listening and helping.

We have a large IMT cohort arriving every year and they are all extremely brave – many arriving in the UK having never been here before and definitely not aware of the workings of the NHS. I would say take deep breaths, a day at a time and ask any questions you want to ask – it doesn’t matter what the question is – I am sure we can get things sorted out for you. Sometimes you may not get the outcome you hoped for, but it will always be fair and considered. Don’t put 3yrs of pressure on yourself – it is a 3yr programme but if you face challenges such as sickness/personal or family problems, you will be supported, and your training may take a little longer.

The element of my job that keeps us here, is taking care of my doctors in training. Bureaucracy and directives from those I answer to can get in the way sometimes, but ultimately the trainees are my priority. I may get a little overwhelmed with workload, but I do try to set that aside when a trainee comes to my door with a problem, they need my help with. Pastoral care is rewarding and enriching – another example of making a difference.

I am not all work and no play. I socialise with friends quite a lot! Probably more than my bank balance is happy with! I like to read, knit and I am just learning to sew – with an actual sewing machine (that’s a work in progress).

Boston is a typical town and no different to any other town in the UK. It remains one of the better ones in the country. Embrace the rural side of Lincolnshire – cultural and entertainment / great walks / river activities / cycling.

I left home at 18 to live and work in another part of the UK and moved about until I arrived in Boston in 1998. I worked in Saudi Arabia for 8yrs and – just as our IMTs – I went there cold and found my feet. You will too.

Good luck.”

Mrs Avis Staff  
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My personal experience working closely with Val Irons was that she was excellent, resourceful, diligent and dedicated. Certainly, a great asset to the Lincolnshire training programme and my colleagues from Boston had exactly the same report about Avis. Over the years, I have since completed training and worked in various capacities as a GP in Lincolnshire including sitting on the Lincolnshire Local Medical Committee (LMC) and as a Fellow with the Lincolnshire training Hub as well as my current role as a clinical supervisor and a GP partner. I have continued to receive correspondence and useful information from both Val and Avis. I note that not a single trainee has had course to complain about either of them (to my knowledge). This is indeed remarkable.

Speaking in my capacity as the Chairperson of the Nigerian Doctors in Lincolnshire, the awards were developed to recognise people who, through their daily function, have demonstrated irrefutable excellence in their duties which has made a positive impact on the Nigerian community in Lincolnshire. Nominees and eventual awardees were drawn from various disciplines including students, Doctors, Clergy, Sports persons and Administrators. The common factor was the demonstrable positive impact through individual excellence. These were the criteria for nomination and both Val and Avis received amazing endorsement to receive the awards.

Once again, I say Congratulations to Val Irons and Avis Staff. This was well deserved. Keep up the good work.

Dr Philip Omogbai

[Chairperson Nigerian Doctors in Lincolnshire](#)  
[GP Partner and Safeguarding Lead](#)  
[Richmond Medical Centre, North Hykeham. LN6 9AY](#)

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## **RCGP Message on SCA**

Candidates will have more examination opportunities, with the examination taking place in at least nine months of the year. To enable this to happen there will be a new examination reservation process so candidates are able to plan up to twelve months in advance.

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## **New short video resources for sharing - AKT focus.**

Please find below the links to three videos recorded using Covid recovery money.

Revision Planning NHS: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLkcovvhMb4>  
(5.5 mins)

Study Techniques NHS: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwZQxOt-I1A>  
(6 mins)

Exam Day Preparation NHS: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Te6gfMzycsw>  
(7.5 mins)

## **AKT Support Sessions**

This programme has been specifically designed to help those who have struggled at previous AKT attempts with their exam preparation.

Eligible PGDiTs are those who have failed 2 or more previous AKT attempts.

The programme will include hourly teaching sessions on Tuesdays 7-8pm and Thursdays 7-8pm per week (and on two Wednesdays) for a total of 11 weeks. High yield AKT topics, practice questions and reading plans for the topics will be covered.

The course will run on a 3 monthly basis throughout the year.

There will be subsequent sessions for PGDiTs planning to resit the AKT in January 2025.

PGDiTs, eligible for this support, will be contacted directly by the Primary Care and Community Care (Faculty Support) team.

If you are eligible for this support and are yet to be contacted, please email [england.pccschools.midlands@nhs.net](mailto:england.pccschools.midlands@nhs.net)

**Dr Henry Akintunde**  
**Associate Postgraduate Dean**  
**Workforce, Training & Education Directorate**  
**NHSE East Midlands**

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**On behalf of all of us in the East Midlands GP School**

**GP Registrar Forum Update**

Hi all

We are the GP registrar forum for NHS England East Midlands. We are a group of GP registrars who are focused on improving our training opportunities and experiences by identifying common issues and liaising with the School Board and our senior educators to challenge these issues and develop solutions.

We attended the latest School Board meeting where some important points were raised. **We would like to remind registrars to keep absences up to date on their portfolio for purposes of ARCP and to inform Lead Employer.**

An issue we have been addressing for a long time is the study leave budget and inconsistencies across the region, and in comparison, to other regions in the UK our cohort of registrars face multiple barriers to accessing the study leave budget. We have raised this issue once again with the School Board and **they would like to hear of examples of where registrars have struggled with applying for or having approval given for the study budget.**

If you are interested to know more about the GP registrar forum and would possibly be interested to join the forum as a member, please contact [gpreistrarforum@gmail.com](mailto:gpreistrarforum@gmail.com)

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Please email any ideas for future content to [christine.johnson@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:christine.johnson@nottingham.ac.uk)