**GP-Stay In Practice Scheme (GP-SIPS) Frequently Asked Questions**

How do I apply for the scheme?

You should complete an application form which can be downloaded from the GP-SIPS site on the Scotland Deanery website. You should contact the GP-SIPS administrator (contact details on website) for advice on additional supporting information. A supplementary CV detailing your experience is also essential.

At interview the Associate Adviser will explore your reasons for wishing to join the scheme and determine your eligibility.

Can I stay in my current practice?

You will usually be placed with another practice which has been approved by NES as being able to provide educational support. This will allow you to undertake this new position without any expectations that your new practice may have of your previous role. There may be occasions when remaining with your current practice is agreed with the Associate Adviser, but this would be the exception rather than the rule and will be assessed on an individual basis.

What kind of practices are available?

Available practices will either be Retainer scheme practices who have no retainer in post or training practices who have capacity. The Associate Adviser will have a list of suitable vacancies.

Who appoints me to a post?

The Associate Adviser will determine if you meet the eligibility criteria for the scheme and will then give you a list of suitable practices in your area. You should then approach these practices and discuss a possible placement with them. It is a mutual decision whether to offer/accept a post and there is no onus on either party to take the first applicant/post offered.

I am a mid-career GP with teenage children and an ill spouse. I am struggling at work and would like a period of limited GP work until life becomes less stressful. Would I be eligible for the scheme?

Yes. Eligibility for GP-SIPS can be for a variety of reasons e.g. short term caring responsibilities, adverse life events, considering premature retirement. If no alterations can be made in your current GP post to allow you to continue working, then you may be eligible for the scheme after discussion with your local Associate Adviser.

How many sessions can I work?

GP-SIPS doctors can work 2-6 GP sessions per week. At least two sessions must be practice based clinical sessions. The total number of sessions could include two non-GMS sessions e.g. out of hours, undergraduate teaching, family planning clinics.

What kind of non GMS sessions can I do?

Sessions can include Out of Hours, undergraduate teaching, family planning or some clinical assistant sessions.

I am in my late fifties and thinking of retiring early due to the administrative burden of being senior partner. I still enjoy clinical work and teaching. Would I be eligible for the scheme?

Yes. This scheme is an option for those doctors who are nearing retirement and wish a reduction in the administrative burden of their role. While the post will have some administrative responsibilities, it will be mainly based on provision of GMS services e.g. consulting/ house calls. It is expected that applicants in this category would have indicated their thoughts on early retirement at their most recent appraisal or have enquired about the implications of retiring with their financial adviser. You could develop your role as an additional teaching asset in a practice although you could not be an educational supervisor as you yourself would be in an educationally supported post.

How long can I stay on the scheme?

The maximum time on the scheme is 3 years but may be shorter depending on individual circumstances e.g. if your caring responsibilities change while you are on the scheme. Your eligibility for the scheme will be reviewed annually by the Associate Adviser.

What type of contract should I have?

Your contract of employment should be based on the BMA Salaried Doctor’s contract and should incorporate the NES GP-SIPS Educational contract. This is a fixed term contract and is held with the practice.

How much should I be paid?

Your salary should be based on the Salaried Doctors Pay scale. Please note that this is based on numerous increments and you will have to negotiate with your practice as to your increment. This pay scale is based on a 40-hour week so you will need to make adjustments to take into account your reduced hours.

I spent four years on the GP Retainer scheme - can I transfer the unused year to add on to the GP-SIP scheme?

No. You cannot transfer unused time from one scheme to another. You are not eligible for GP-SIPS unless you completed the GP Retainer scheme more than 10 years ago.

I have just completed the Returner scheme after a spell away from GP. Can I now join GP-SIPS?

No. Recent GP Returners are eligible for this scheme on the same basis as those who have previously been on the GP Retainer scheme i.e. a gap of 10 years between schemes is required.

Do I have to return to a GP post after the scheme?

You do not have to return to a GP post if the reasons for being on the scheme are as an alternative to early retirement. Those doctors who are on the scheme for a mid-career break, for whatever reason, should have the intention of returning to a GP post. If, while on the scheme, you decide that you do not intend returning to GP then you should notify the Associate Adviser and resign from the scheme.

Can I get maternity leave?

This scheme is a pilot programme with no guaranteed funding beyond three years. The scheme is specifically targeted at mid-career and end of career GPs. It is suggested that the GP Retainer scheme might be a better option for those planning further pregnancies.

What educational support do I get?

You should receive two hours of protected mentor time a month. This should be directed towards helping you with appraisal requirements, developing your PDP and involvement in practice-based quality activities. If you have had previous experience, some of this time could also be used by you to provide education for others e.g. tutorials with trainees.

You should be able to access practice based educational activities and other practice meetings.

Am I entitled to study leave?

You should receive 2 sessions per year for Appraisal and Revalidation purposes. In addition to your 2 hours of mentoring per month you should also receive one session per year for each session worked per week e.g. if you work 6 GP sessions per week you should get 8 study leave sessions per year.

What about holiday entitlements?

You are entitled to 6 weeks holiday per year, pro rata and public holidays pro rata.

What about benefits?

If you have not had a break in service for any length of time prior to starting the scheme you will have accrued rights for sickness and maternity benefits.

What if the reasons for being on the scheme are no longer valid?

If the criteria under which you joined the scheme are no longer present, then you would be expected to resign and seek a more appropriate post. You would have to give the agreed notice period as per your contract to both the practice and NES.

What happens if I do not feel I can return to an unsupported GP post after 3 years?

If you feel the protected 3 years has not been sufficient then you should arrange to meet with the Associate Adviser for career advice. Extensions to the scheme are not permitted.

Do I have to stay for the duration of my contract?

If you wish to move to a substantive GP post before your contract expires then you should send notification of your resignation to both the practice and the Associate Adviser for the scheme, giving the appropriate notice period. If you are a pre-retirement member of the scheme and wish to retire earlier than anticipated, then again you should adhere to the agreed notice period in your contract.

This is a pilot scheme – what difference does this make?

This is a 3-year pilot scheme funded by the Scottish Government to ascertain demand for the scheme and whether it achieves the aim of retaining GPs in the workplace. This means that you will be asked to complete some pre and post placement evaluations.