

# RCPsych “Psych Star” scheme - *introduction and evaluation*

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- What is the “Psych Star” scheme?
- Why was it implemented?
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Have you heard of the  
“Psych Star” scheme?

Do you know of any medical student who has applied to the “Psych Star” scheme?

Have you ever supported a  
medical student to submit  
an application to the  
“Psych Star” scheme?

# What is the “Psych Star” scheme?

- Established in 2019
- One-year scheme, running from September to September.
- 10 appointments made per annum
- Open to medical students in any year of their studies, except for final year students
- Students who are intercalating are eligible to apply
- Applicants must be a Student Associate of the College

- Students who have previously been unsuccessful in applying for the scheme are eligible to apply again.
- Open to students with any disabilities or health conditions.
- All medical schools across the UK are eligible.
- Aimed at medical students interested in and committed to psychiatry and who can demonstrate evidence of this.
- Students can still apply for the RCPsych Foundation Fellowship at a later stage.

# Benefits of the “Psych Star” scheme

- Successful applicants offered:
  - **Mentoring** - matched for interest(s) and geographically
  - **Welcome and introduction evening at the College**
  - Free attendance at the **International Congress**, including contribution towards travel and accommodation
  - Free access to the College’s **CPD online modules** (over 225 modules and 140 podcasts)
  - Free access to **TrOn (Trainees Online)**, supporting trainees to prepare for MRCPsych exams
  - **Free subscriptions to journals** - BJPsych, BJPsych Bulletin and BJPsych Advances
  - CPD and travel fund of **£500 for conferences, courses and events of interest**. Can also be used towards an elective.

# Why was the “Psych Star” scheme set up?

- RCPsych Pathfinder Fellowship scheme set up in 2013.
- 3-year scheme. Applicants awarded £5,000 bursary and allocated a mentor.
- Five annual cohorts of Pathfinders appointed. Always relied on funding from external sources.
- Pathfinder Fellowship scheme was no longer financially viable and sustainable.
- Pathfinder Fellowship scheme was formally evaluated, incorporating views of both Fellows and mentors from the five cohorts appointed.

- Evaluation of the Pathfinder Fellowship scheme showed mentoring was viewed as most valuable benefit.
- Relationship between Fellow and mentor not sustained for the final year of the scheme (when Fellows were Foundation Trainees).
- Decided to shorten the scheme to one year and reduce the bursary awarded to each applicant to £1000.
- Scheme needed to be re-branded - hence “Psych Stars.”
- Scheme remains within the remit of “Choose Psychiatry” committee.

# Application process for the “Psych Star” scheme

- Statement of how you would spend the “Psych Star” funding (max. 500 words)
- Answer the question: “In no more than 500 words, what do you hope to achieve in your career as a Psychiatrist? Please outline how you will prepare of this, both personally and professionally”
- One-page CV
- List any previous awards, bursaries, prizes from the RCPsych, any other Royal College, university, charities, other organisations
- Applications should consider and incorporate the College’s values
- Pre-COVID-19 / post-COVID-19, shortlisted applicants are invited for interview at the College

# Applications to the “Psych Star” scheme

Medical School	2019	2020	2021
Aberdeen	1	1	0
Anglia Ruskin University	0	0	1
Aston	0	0	0
Birmingham	4	5	5
Brighton and Sussex	0	2	2
Bristol	3	3	2
Buckingham	1	0	0
Cambridge	3	4	3
Cardiff	4	3	11
Dundee	0	1	0
East Anglia	0	0	2
Edge Hill	0	0	0
Edinburgh	3	4	8
Exeter	0	3	5
Glasgow	2	0	5
Hull	0	1	2
Imperial College London	1	1	4
Keele	0	0	2
King's College London	11	5	5
Lancaster	0	1	2
Leeds	1	1	0
Leicester	4	1	3
Lincoln	0	0	0
Liverpool	0	2	2
Manchester	1	4	3
Newcastle	1	2	2
Nottingham	1	2	3
Oxford	2	2	3
Plymouth	0	1	1
Queen Mary, University of London	2	4	4
Queen's University Belfast	1	3	3
Sheffield	6	1	2
Southampton	0	3	1
St Andrews	0	0	3
St George's, University of London	1	1	1
Sunderland	0	0	0
Swansea	2	0	1
University College London	1	2	3
University of Central Lancashire	0	1	2
Warwick	1	0	4
<b>Total number of applicants</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>100</b>

# Successful applicants to the “Psych Stars scheme

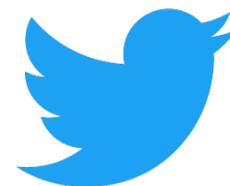
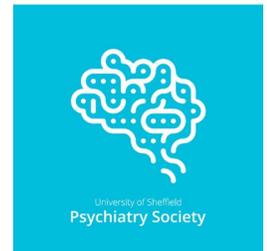
Cohort	Name	Medical school
2021	Jed Winstanley	Liverpool
	Gloria Cheung	Hull York
	Gire Nadeem	University of Central Lancashire
	Maria Haughey	Queen's University Belfast
	Juliet Raphael	East Anglia
	Manu Sidhu	Imperial College London
	Rajaei Sharma	Exeter
	Becca Gilmore	East Anglia
	Dana Beretta	Edinburgh
	Samyak Pandey	King's College London
2020	Ratnu Vaidya*	Newcastle
	Danish Hafeez	Manchester
	Bethany Platford	Sheffield
	Tamara Searle	Birmingham
	Isabella Conti	Queen's University Belfast
	Mehdin Shah	Barts and the London
	Lucretia Thomas	Birmingham
	Heather McAdam	Edinburgh
	Cecilia Vincenzo	Lancaster
	Emily Jones	Exeter
	Rebecca Murphy Longeran	Edinburgh
	Bibirie Baykeens**	Peninsula
	Anushka Pathak**	Edinburgh
	2019	Hamilton Morrin
Annabelle Hook		Cardiff
Haridha Pandian		King's College London
India Lunn		Sheffield
Tom Scurr		Leicester
Owen Crawford		Cambridge
Poppy MacInnes		King's College London
Sarah O'Connor		Cardiff
Julia Morris		Glasgow
Mandeep Singh		King's College London

*	<b>Psych Star in Intellectual Disability Psychiatry</b>
**	<b>Smaller bursary - mentoring, £500 CPD/travel fund and CPDO and TrOn only</b>



# My experience as a “Psych Star”

- Balint group +++
- Academic mentor – now on the Academic Foundation Programme
- Nearly made it to Philadelphia for American Psychiatric Association conference
- Networking → close friends & opportunity
- Welcomed to the world of Twitter
- Book groups
- Elective at psychiatric hospital in Ghana and Oxford
- (Saw Louis Theroux at IC)



# How can you support students interested in applying to the scheme?

- Promote the scheme
- Encourage any student who shows enthusiasm on placement
- Link students who are interested in psychiatry to each other
- Sign post to PsychSocs and other relevant groups
- Offer students opportunities
- Review applications
- Practice interviews

# Tips for medical students applying

- Don't worry if you only have a little specific psychiatry experience – it is about showing what you plan to do and what you've learnt from previous experiences
- Seek help from staff and other students
- Practice interviews
- Get others to read your application
- Show how you will be an ambassador for psychiatry and about your plans for personal growth
- Be creative (but genuine) with what you plan to do

# But what did students actually think of the scheme?! – scheme evaluation

- Online survey of the experiences of Psych Stars and their mentors
- First and second cohorts in the scheme (2019-20 and 2020-21)
- Overarching aim: to improve the scheme for future years.

# What we asked

- Overall experience
- Clarity of the scheme's aims and objectives
- Best rated aspects of the scheme
- Impact of the scheme on application to psychiatry core training
- Previous mentorship experience
- Benefits and barriers to successful mentorship
- Improvement for the future

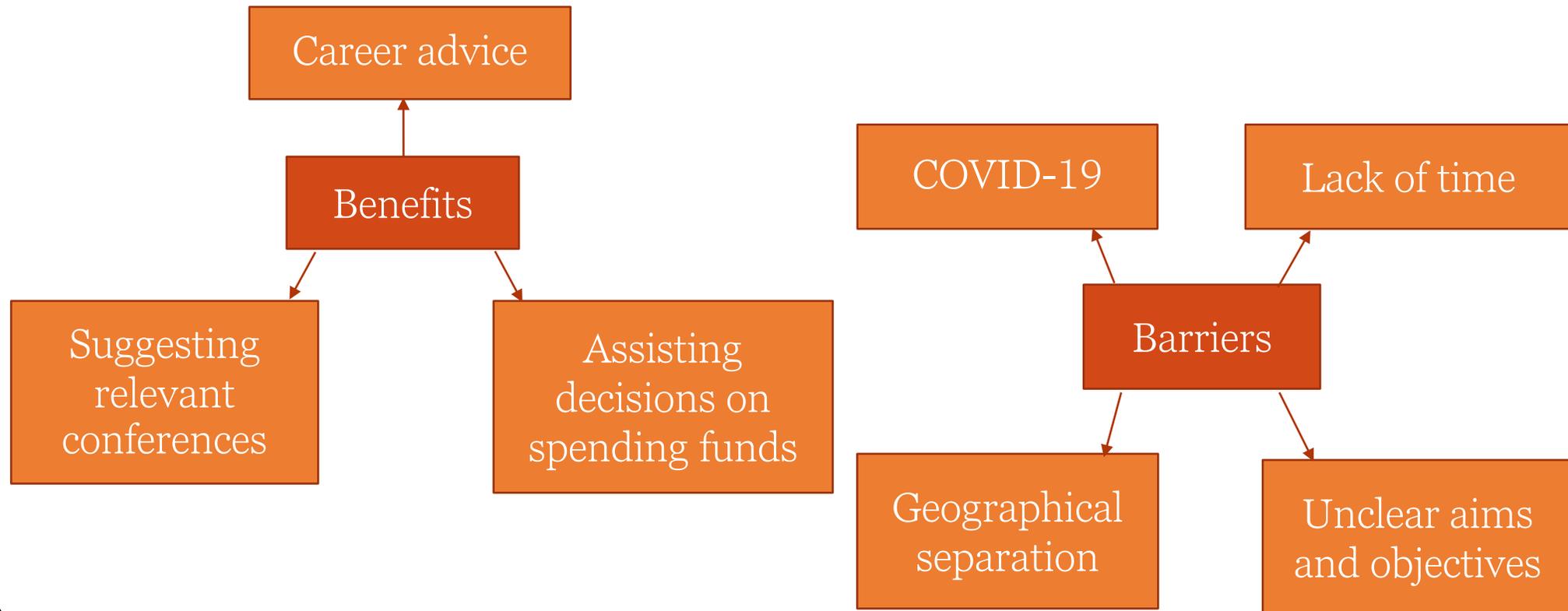
# Results: Psych Stars

- All found the scheme was enjoyable
- Clear aims and objectives
- Highly rated aspects:
  - Funded place at International Congress
  - Funding to explore areas of psychiatry of particular interest
  - Opportunity to be an ambassador
  - Mentorship
- All but 1 more likely to apply for psychiatry core training

*“I found being a Psych Star provided an amazing opportunity to network and collaborate with fellow medical students interested in psychiatry as well as a large number of incredibly kind psychiatrists who were happy to provide mentorship”*

# Results: Mentors

- All had had some mentorship experience before, some more than others
- Met an average of 4 times



# Suggestions for improvement

- Networking
  - Digital network/forum
  - Introductory events for both mentors and mentees
  - Share ideas and plans
  - Twitter
  - Promote psychiatry as a group as well as being an individual ambassador
  - Support each other during and after the scheme
  - Attend events together
  - Alumni network
- Funds
  - More support with spending the bursary
- Defining the mentor role
  - Clearer guidance
  - Role clarification
  - Specific aims and objectives



# Future of the scheme....

- 11th “Psych Star” funded by RCPsych Faculty of Intellectual Disability Psychiatry. Any other Faculties to follow suit?
- Launch of the “Psych Star Information Evening” with some current “Psych Stars.”
- More regular online meetings with the “Psych Stars”, with promotion of collaborative working and idea sharing.
- Peer-peer mentoring to be offered (involving previous “Psych Stars”).

# Future of the scheme....

- Funding needs to be secured for future cohorts.
- Ongoing evaluation of the scheme - its effectiveness and perceived benefits. Need to look at the long-term impact of the scheme, e.g. how many “Psych Stars” subsequently apply for Core Training.
- Promote the scheme more widely, emphasising that it is not aimed at just academically-minded students.
- Encourage applications from the new U.K medical schools and target those medical schools who have submitted few applications since the scheme begun.

# Future of the scheme....

- Re-implement the interview process for shortlisted applicants post-COVID-19
- Work closely with U.K medical school undergraduate leads, Recruitment Leads for the eight English Divisions and devolved nations, PTC and Choose Psychiatry Committee to advertise the scheme.
- Wider promotion of the scheme - on social media and at International Congress and other College events
- ? Increase number of “Psych Stars” appointed for each cohort.

For further information or queries  
about the “Psych Star” scheme  
contact:

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# Any questions?

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