

Testimonials from Core Psychiatry Trainees

School of Psychiatry North West

Angel Namuddu (CT3 trainee, Greater Manchester/Lancashire scheme)

1) Why did you choose Psychiatry as a specialty?

I choose Psychiatry because I enjoyed talking to different people from all walks of life and learning about their stories. I also think that Psychiatry was one of the few specialities that considers the patient as a whole person and not just as their illness alone. Psychiatry also interested me more than any other speciality and it was the only one that I was happy to read and learn about outside of my day job. I still discuss books, podcasts and films that relate to Psychiatry to anyone that will listen.

2 Why did you choose to train in Greater Manchester?

I attended medical school in Manchester and really I enjoyed the mix of cultural and social opportunities (and it was a lot cheaper than London). The different areas in Manchester all offer a rich and diverse culture which I really love, there's always something going on.

3) What areas of Psychiatry have you trained in so far?

I've completed my core training in Manchester which has included inpatient and outpatient general Adult Psychiatry, I have done an old age Psychiatry in Bolton, CAMHS in North Manchester and I'm now in rehabilitation psychiatry.

4) What have been the highlights of your training?

I have enjoyed working in community CAMHS because of the opportunity to work with young people and their families. I have since wanted to pursue a career in CAMHS. I also enjoyed working in Community Psychiatry and managing chronic mental illness. My other highlight is doing a psychotherapy case where you see someone weekly and work with them to understand themselves and how they can cope with their mental illness.

5) What advice would you give to other doctors considering Psychiatry as a specialty?

If you like the idea of listening to people's life stories and helping them cope in their darkest hour, as well as a career that it always changing and you are always learning, then consider Psychiatry. If you are not sure then you should try and get some experience via taster week or your local Psychiatry society. Also all Psychiatrists are lovely and we are happy for people to ask us questions about our jobs.

Scott Broadhurst (CT3 Greater Manchester/Lancashire scheme)

1) Why did you choose Psychiatry as a specialty?

I have always had a sense that Psychiatry was what I wanted to do, even probably before medical school. I had read Oliver Sacks' books at school and was fascinated by those conditions described in it which appeared to affect people's personalities or behaviour. Then when I went to medical school every experience I had seemed to confirm even more that Psychiatry was the specialty for me. I did special modules in Psychiatry and an elective and was never bored or never felt like I had had enough. I continue to be endlessly fascinated by psychosis and changes in mood, and I have a keen sense of advocacy for our patients, and every day presents a new challenge and a new learning experience. I've never doubted choosing Psychiatry.

2) Why did you choose to train in Greater Manchester?

I went to medical school in Manchester and always had an affection for the area, even though I'm from Liverpool. Having gone back to Liverpool to do Foundation training, it felt right to come back to the area to complete my Core Training and re-engage with an area I love. Manchester has the benefit of plenty of wonderful hospitals and a breadth of subspecialties within Psychiatry so it felt like a natural choice.

3) What areas of Psychiatry have you trained in so far?

I am a CT3 now so I have rotated through Adult, Later Life, CAMHS, Forensics and Adult again.

4) What have been the highlights of your training?

I have found Forensics to be my favourite specialty, for several reasons. The patients tend to be quite severely unwell and this presents an engaging challenge clinically. You also have the benefit of time and resources in which to really get to know your patients and help them as best as you can. I'm also quite keen on report writing, and this makes up a considerable amount of your work in Forensics.

5) What advice would you give to other doctors considering Psychiatry as a specialty?

Psychiatry is never dull, it is full of wonderful interesting people, it provides you with a space in which to grow and understand the world and yourself through the lens of mental disorders, the work life balance is pretty fab most of the time for doctors and we need you so please come and join us.

Catarina Santos (CT3 doctor, Greater Manchester/Lancashire scheme)

1) Why did you choose Psychiatry as a specialty?

I had a really good placement as a medical student in north Yorkshire as we had enthusiastic teachers, lots of contact with different sub specialities (old age, adult, liaison). As an F2 in south Yorkshire, the Trust gave a lot of priority to your educational experience, so even though I was scheduled as inpatient adult job, I also worked in EIT outpatient work and liaison half days with the team and shadowing the liaison consultant for interesting cases. Ultimately, I had experience as well in functional cases of neurology and the approach to that management, and felt I was good at the speciality, that the teams had good atmosphere – one of learning – and it was intellectually challenging.

I was grappling with whether to do medicine or psychiatry and had a motivational coaching session with one of the Consultant Psychiatrists in South Yorkshire that ultimately led me to decide to go for it (for the reasons above).

2) Why did you choose to train in Greater Manchester?

Personal reasons – geographically made sense for my life circumstances at the time. My Consultant Psychiatrist when I was an F2 recommended it - I believe she was a Lancashire trainee. Also I thought it would be quite busy and therefore give me lots of experience.

3) What areas of Psychiatry have you trained in so far?

Adult, Old age, CAMHS, Forensic, CMHT.

4) What have been the highlights of your training?

Really good clinical supervisors that have been enthusiastic about my training. Interesting and complex cases and discussions (in Forensics and in adult CMHT). I like how in Forensic Psychiatry, Consultants make an effort to do Forensic specific training. Psychotherapy, whilst logistically difficult at times (balancing with the many clinical responsibilities that trainees in other deaneries don't face) has been exceptional.

5) What advice would you give to other doctors considering Psychiatry as a specialty?

Try and get involved in tasters of what the training and job would be like, whether that is shadowing a week in Psychiatry, and if already having Psychiatry as a job – trying to proactively attend other areas you wouldn't otherwise attend (i.e perinatal clinics, EIT, arranging taster days in Ashworth/Edenfield Forensic hospitals, or even attending liaison work within hospitals. Try and get involved in Balint groups if you are doing Foundation training in Psychiatry.

Mjai Kumar (CT3 Trainee, Mersey scheme)

1) Why did you choose Psychiatry as a specialty?

Psychiatry is the only discipline which allows the creative satisfaction of addressing individuals in a holistic manner, informed by cutting edge science and measured in human behaviours! Having worked in psychiatry and public health for a while, I have chosen to retrain in psychiatry.

2) Why did you choose to train in Mersey?

Though primarily driven by geography, the existence of good public health institutions and psychiatry networks also contributed to my decisions to choose Mersey Deanery.

3) What areas of Psychiatry have you trained in so far?

I have trained in General Adult (community and inpatient), old age psychiatry, Forensic psychiatry, and Child And adolescent psychiatry.

4) What have been the highlights of your training?

Working through complex caseload in Old age psychiatry at the interface of neuro-psychiatry!

5) What advice would you give to other doctors considering Psychiatry as a specialty?

It is the only branch of medicine which integrates cutting edge science and humanities in the same breath, while fostering leadership!

Saumya Singh (CT3 Trainee, Mersey Deanery)

1) Why did you choose Psychiatry as a specialty?

Psychiatry is a very attractive and interesting branch of medicine which provides unique opportunities to make a real difference to the lives of the patients. It is one of the most rewarding and interesting specialities in medicine. Everyday can be a new experience and every patient is an individual. I believe that Psychiatry is the only specialty where we treat people and not diagnosis.

2) Why did you choose to train in Mersey?

Honestly, I chose to train in Mersey to avoid all the commuting to Manchester/Salford area. Also, Mersey provides quite a varied experience as it covers a range of areas from Leigh, Warrington, Prescott, Runcorn, Wirral, Cheshire and so on! So, there is a lot to experience.

3) What areas of Psychiatry have you trained in so far?

So far, I have trained in General adult inpatient and community settings, Old age community, Learning disability and currently I am based at Liverpool CAMHS Community.

4) What have been the highlights of your training?

The highlights so far have been acquiring insight into specialist assessments, intensive risk management in different specialities, safeguarding practices, developing personal development skills relevant to current practice as well as leadership and management skills.

5) What advice would you give to other doctors considering Psychiatry as a specialty?

My advice to doctors considering Psychiatry as a career is to go for it if you are looking for work-life balance, professional satisfaction, variety of illnesses and opportunities for research. Psychiatry has a very bright future as there is still much to explore. I suggest that please do not feel demotivated by what others say because those who have no or very little experience in the specialty develop quite a few prejudices. We as Psychiatrists hear different real stories everyday and we strive to make a change to people's lives, not just treat them. Psychiatry is the only specialty where we work closely as an MDT team with varied number and quality of professionals. Ending on that note, Psychiatry is the only specialty which sees sunshine everyday! I hope you understand what I mean!