

NHS Global Health Volunteer Fellowship

Fellowship Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is an NHSE Global Health Volunteer Fellowship?

The Global Health Volunteer Fellowships Programme enables NHS doctors in training to undertake clinical work as a volunteer for 4-6 months in supervised clinics and hospitals in Africa.

The aim of the Programme is to make a contribution to improving health outcomes in resource limited communities and to develop the clinical skills of doctors in training in the NHS. The clinical sites are chosen with these aims in mind, in particular to promote professional development of doctors in training by working alongside international colleagues. It is expected that those undertaking this fellowship will gain skills in leadership, teamwork, decision making, resilience, cultural competency as well as enhanced learning in their clinical skills, which they will bring back to their NHS Training Programme on completion of the GHVF Programme.

Who can apply for a NHSE Global Health Volunteer Fellowship?

Applicants must fulfil the following criteria:

- Be a resident doctor, either in a specialist training program or undertaking alternative training pathways via locally employed route
- completed at least 2 years specialist training at the time of starting the fellowship (i.e. completed ST2, CT2, IMT2 etc).
- To be on track with their curriculum requirements by the time of undertaking the fellowship (particularly having passed the required examinations or assessments for that stage of training)
- To have agreement from their TPD to undertake an OOP from their training Programme. If undertaking the alternative pathway for training, to have agreement of locally nominated educational supervisor.

Please note, doctors training in all areas of the UK are welcome to apply, but there may be some differences in processes and funding implications in areas other than England.

How can I apply?

Complete the application form. You will then be invited to an on-line competitive interview with the NHSE Associate Deans in Global Health.

What are the processes involved if I am successful at interview with the Associate Deans in Global Health?

You will be invited to meet our partner organisation, ProTalent. The ProTalent team know the placement sites in detail and will discuss logistical considerations with you for a successful partnership, such as what type of placement suits you with living and travel considerations. After this initial meeting, considering your practical, logistical and medical training requirements, a suggested placement site will be made.

What happens after a placement site has been offered to me?

If you are happy to accept the suggested placement site, then you will be asked to sign a contract with ProTalent and pay a fee to them. They will then start the process of helping you through the practical logistics of getting ready to undertake your volunteer medical work. This is quite a lengthy and complex process, but you will be supported through this. You will also be

asked to sign an NHSE Training Agreement which outlines your responsibilities during the placement.

What will an NHSE Global Health Volunteer Fellowship cost me?

The cost can be quite variable according to the country and placement site. At present there are no NHSE funds available for monthly reimbursement of living expenses or flights, as has been available in former years. We would encourage individuals to apply for external sponsorship from charitable organisations.

The following are some rough estimates of the costs as of May 2026:

Cost For GHF to Consider – Estimate Pre Deployment Costs in £				
Type of Cost	South Africa	Malawi & Sierra Leone	Namibia	Uganda
ProTalent Contract and fee	800	400	800	800
ECMFG verifications	450	0	0	0
Document notarisation/ Courier	300	100	100	100
Local Medical Registration	500	400	0	500
Logistics subtotal	2050	900	900	1400
Flights	1000	1000	1000	1000
Health Insurance/vaccinations etc	600	700	600	700
Estimate Monthly Costs Once Deployed in £				
Estimated Car hire/ Transport	500	100	0	100
Estimated Accommodation Costs (very variable)	500	200	0	250
Estimated Food Costs	500	400	400	400
Estimated Internet Costs	50	50	50	50
Estimate Total Monthly Costs	1550	750	450	800
Renewal of registration once off	150	100	100	100

NB in South Africa, you will need to renew your visa after 3 months, which may mean having to leave the country and return from a non-adjacent country (+ associated costs). This will be further explained by ProTalent.

How will NHSE Global Health team support my training and professional development during this placement?

The placement sites have been vetted by the NHSE Global Health Team and they will advise on the best clinical site for you according to your training needs.

In the Spring before the placement starts, an in-person Pre-deployment Course will be run for all GHV Fellows, or prospective fellows. This course is mandatory for those going on placement. The aim of the course will be to prepare you for undertaking medical volunteering in a setting very different to the NHS settings you are familiar with. As well as covering medical conditions more common in your overseas clinical placements, there are sessions on working within a different culture and with fewer resources. You will also have a chance to meet previous volunteers and those who will be working in the same country as you. We will also help you to construct a personal development plan that is appropriate to the setting you will be working in.

The Associate Deans in Global Health will introduce you to your Clinical Supervisor in your placements so that you can meet them on-line before arriving in the placement.

During your placement, your day-to-day supervision will be by the local Clinical Supervisors, but for any issues arising outside of this, the Associate Deans in Global Health are available for support at your request.

At the end of your placement, you will undergo a formal debrief session with the Associate Deans in Global Health, and from this there will be communication with your TPD to update that you have completed your fellowship. A completion of fellowship certificate will be available to upload to your portfolio.

Can this fellowship “count” towards my training?

The NHSE Global Health Volunteer fellowship cannot automatically “count” time towards training, but if you take time out of their training program via the OOPP system (rather than the usual OOPE system), you can document training experiences in your e-portfolios, which can be formally considered at your next ARCP on return to UK training. In addition, at the end of your placement, after your debrief session, the Associate Deans in Global Health will summarise your clinical experience (in collaboration with your local site supervisor) for your TPD and for formal documentation in your eportfolio. Please note the decision to undertake OOPP or OOPE can only be decided between you and your TPD.

What is the minimum and maximum time I can spend undertaking this fellowship?

We encourage placements of 6 months, because it does take some time to become familiar with the new working environment and to become really productive. Some placements can accept doctors for 4 months at a time. Some placements cannot last longer than 6 months.

I have not worked overseas before; can I still apply?

Yes. Support will be given to you both pre-departure and in-country to make the best use of your skills, and previous experience of working in another country is not a requirement of this Fellowship. We encourage you to reference your experiences of working/travelling abroad (or how you would apply your skills and behaviours if you), and/or working with those from different backgrounds and cultures, in your application and interview.

Can I take my family with me on an overseas Fellowship?

Yes, but their safety, accommodation and logistical planning will be entirely down to you. We are very happy to try and place partners with medical training in the same placement if possible.

Will I need Indemnity Insurance whilst an NHS Global Fellow?

You should contact your professional indemnity provider for their advice.

Do Fellowships count as NHS employment, and will I be entitled to incremental pay rises?

Fellows should check with their employer’s HR department regarding anything to do with their employment.

What are the risks of participating in an NHSE Global Health Volunteer Fellowship?

By choosing to work in a different country and culture, you accept a potential increase in personal security risk posed by a new and unfamiliar environment. You are responsible for briefing yourself on security and safety and ensuring you are satisfied with the information you receive before you go. For up-to-date travel advice we advise all Fellows to regularly familiarise themselves with the latest information on the [Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office travel advice website](#), signing up to email updates to stay up to date.

In addition, there may be particular health risks during your placement. These include exposure to infectious diseases (HIV, TB, Malaria and Infectious Disease outbreaks), trauma from road traffic accidents and worsening of chronic disease management, by fact of being away from your usual health care provider and environment. In some sites there may also be a risk of strain on mental health due to the nature of the work and the lack of usual support networks. These health risks will be different in each site and can be discussed at the point of choosing your placement site. Fellows are strongly advised to take pre-travel health preparations, such as vaccination, Malaria prophylaxis advice and potentially discuss with any doctors involved in your usual healthcare. See NathNac website for by country information <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>. When you meet with your placement Clinical Supervisor before arriving in site you can ask about the availability of HIV post exposure prophylaxis after needlestick injuries and the availability of personal protective equipment against infectious diseases.

What will my accommodation be like?

Your accommodation options vary between sites and will be discussed with you with the ProTalent team. For example, some accommodation is provided free by the hospital, some hospital accommodation is for single rooms only, and some require your own transport options to get safely to work.

What should I do if I need emergency care whilst on the Fellowship?

In the event of an emergency, in the first instance please contact your insurer. Your local supervisor and the ProTalent team may be able to direct you to best local care.

What is the dress code for Fellows whilst in-country?

The general rule for all Fellows is to dress modestly and respectfully, whether you are in the office, in health facilities or in the community – you may receive advice regarding this from the in-country partner on your arrival. If you are unclear, please ask. You might find it useful to refer to the ‘Local laws and customs’ section on the [UK Government Foreign Travel Advice website](#). Many GHV Fellows wear their own scrubs, but depending on placement site, you will need to check if the colour is appropriate.

Can I socialise with local staff?

The Programme is funded by the NHS so although you are not employed whilst on your Fellowship, you are acting as an ambassador to the NHS. You are encouraged to socialise with work colleagues but in a responsible and professional manner, including out of work time.

Are there any occasions when my Fellowship would be shorter than planned?

If you have any concerns about your safety, health, or working environment whilst you are on your placement, then concerns can be raised via either ProTalent or the Associate Deans in Global Health. If a local solution cannot be sought, then options for an in-country transfer of placement can be considered. If this is not possible, then the fellowship may need to be terminated early.

If there are any concerns about your conduct (professional or personal) raised by your local supervisor, a review will take place by the Associate Deans in Global Health who will decide whether the fellowship period can continue.

What are my commitments post-Fellowship?

At the end of your fellowship period, you are expected to return to your Training Programme as arranged with your TPD. You will need to have a debriefing and feedback appointment with the Associate Deans in Global Health. During this appointment your personal development plan for the fellowship and reflections will be reviewed and any feedback from your local supervisor. Once this meeting has been undertaken a certificate of completion of the NHSE Global Health Volunteer Fellowship will be issued to upload to your portfolio. Your permission will be sought to join the Alumni database. You may then be asked by prospective GHV Fellows helpful details about your placement.

Can I talk about my fellowship at conferences or seek publication about the experience?

We support and encourage this, however, please check with the Associate Deans in Global Health in the first instance in case details of the Programme have changed.

Am I entitled to annual leave whilst deployed on the Fellowship?

You are entitled to pro rata days of annual leave during your Fellowship. These dates must be agreed with your local Clinical Supervisor, and should mirror the annual leave of others on the same rota