# Interview Questions for General Practice Doctors

## Domains Being Assessed:

* 1. Enthusiasm for General Practice
  2. Patient care
  3. Communication skills
  4. Team working
  5. Prioritisation and working under pressure
  6. Values
  7. Flexibility
  8. Commitment to post
  9. Change management
  10. Management of conflict
  11. Coping with stress
  12. Rapport / sense of humour / affect
  13. Professional values
  14. Personal and professional growth
  15. Personal responsibility

## Instructions:

* Please tick the questions you are going to ask
* Assign a person on the panel to ask the question. If a response to a question is poor, you might want to consider asking one of the other questions in the category in order to triangulate the response.
* Each member of the panel scores a response to each CATEGORY out of 5.
* Please add annotated notes (to the side of each question) of good and not so good replies – the practice manager will need to collate these in a meeting at the end so that specific feedback can be given to the applicant if required.
* Remember, this is not an orals type MRCGP exam. There is no need to be aggressive otherwise the applicant may close up. Be relaxed, create a warm environment and prompt them if you feel they are struggling because they are nervous.
* Also remember to modify the questioning if you feel the need. Or ask additional questions if you want to clarify or triangulate what they have said. Remember, good interview technique is similar to “the helical model of the consultation” as opposed to a linear one: *A linear model* – once and done, is not enough; if you want accurate understanding you have to go over information again and perhaps again, in helical fashion, each time moving up the spiral to a little different level of questioning and understanding. Repetition, reiteration, feedback are essential elements of effective communication.
* Please keep all documentation for a period of 6 months – in case there is any subsequent challenge.

***The Questions***

**QUESTION 1: WHY US**

Why did you apply for this job?

*Has the applicant researched us and therefore genuinely interested in us rather than just another job (perhaps because their current job is not going so great)?*

Score

**QUESTION 2: ATTITUDE TO CHANGE**

* A three partnership practice has been asked to consider taking up GP training. You are one of the partners and seem quite keen on this idea but the others are more neutral and happy to go ahead if you do all the necessary stuff. How do you feel about this? What would you do next? What if one the partners says “this practice is stable and functioning just fine”: how would you respond? What are the positive and negative aspects of change?

Score

*This question explores whether the applicant can think widely and is positive about embracing change.*

* If the PCT wrote to us asking us to consider implementing a sexual health clinic because of the large number of young females with Chamydia, how would you respond? What are your views and experience of the PCT in general?

*Demonstrate a willingness to engage with PCT concerns, not to see them as a negative organisation, not to have a knee jerk negative response and a willingness to reflect on the concern raised.*

* **Optional**

The NHS is also going through a period of great change. What are the major challenges facing us at present? Have you any thoughts on where things may go in the future?

*Demonstrates insight into the future of general practice and keeping up to date with current issues*

**QUESTION 3: TEAM WORKING**

The practice has rapidly changed in the last few years. We’ve become larger in size as a team, we have more doctors and we’ve just moved into much large premises than we had before. In addition we now work in a large multidisciplinary team.

* Have you worked in a large and small practice? Bearing your experiences of that in mind, what are the challenges of a rapidly expanding team?

Score

*(short term, medium term, long term, character change in the practice, meeting everyone’s needs (educational & personal development, fragmentation of care, agreement/disagreement between parties)*

* Think about your last practice or the one you’re currently in. Where do you fit in the team? What values and roles do you think you add to the team?

*(what is the practice looking for? Good team player : respect for others, values communication, clear identification of roles, supportive of team members with difficulties, adds an element of humour?)*

**QUESTION 4: COPING WITH PRESSURE**

* Reflect on your experiences as an emergency doctor for the day. No doubt you will have been in the situation where there are loads of patient presentations, telephone consultations, phone calls from admin, interruptions from nurses and lots more. Imagine that experience. Most of us at some point feel like tearing out hair out. What strategies do you use to cope with this to neutralise yourself. Give specific examples.

Score

*Are personal coping mechanisms in place? Can they give an example illustrating delegation?, involving others, questioning why is there a high workload?*

* **Optional**

How do you deal with difficult situations? It might help you to think about the most difficult situation you have been in within the last 6m?

*Example illustrates insight. Experiential. Professional values/attitudes.*

**QUESTION 5: EMBRACING DIVERSITY & BEING FAIR**

* One of our nurses was very concerned about taking blood from patients from the African subcontinent because of their high risk of HIV and worries in case of a needlestick injury. She therefore asked us to consider the policy that new patients from the African subcontinent should not be allowed to join the practice unless they agreed to a HIV test first. She said “it’s not only to protect us, but it would screen them and thus help them to get intervention early and prolong their lives”. We had a discussion about this at a practice meeting last week. If you were there, what would you have said.

Score

*This is discriminatory, unfair and unacceptable; the candidate should clearly acknowledge that. Do we then screen gay patients, drug users etc. HIV is also on the increase in ‘straight’ people: why don’t we screen them? Should the nurse not be exercising safe protocol anyway to prevent needle stick injuries?*

* In our practice, you are encouraged to book annual leave in advance. Also, no more than two doctors are allowed to be off at any one time. In this practice, if there are 3 or more bookings for a certain period, it is the senior partners in the practice that are granted leave in preference to the others. Would you feel okay with this policy?

*This question tests the applicant’s ability to speak up on issues that might not sit comfortably with their core values. Clearly, this particular scenario is discriminatory and unfair. If the applicant doesn’t have a problem with this, push them further: “why don’t you have a problem with this?; many would say all people should be treated equal.”*

**PLEASE EXPLAIN TO THE CANDIDATE THAT ACTUALLY BOTH OF THESE SCENARIOS ARE MADE UP SCENARIOS AND NOT THE CASE IN OUR PRACTICE.**

**QUESTION 6: SELF AWARENESS -**

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

* What role do you think you can bring to the life and development of the practice? Do you have any skills you can offer? Do you have any special interests you’d like to develop?

Score

*This question enables a practice to match what they want to what you can deliver.Good team player, willing to help with education & training?, willing to participate in the strategic planning?. Do we need someone who is willing to do lots of core GP work rather than GPSI or the other way round?*

* + **Optional**

How would you describe your consultation style and relationship with patients?

*Patient centred, something about concordance and a joint approach to care, able to vary approach pending patient type*

* + **Optional**

Why should we choose you? (if not already obvious from the responses)

*Commitment to general practice, good team player?, helps in unforeseen circumstances (does not have to be asked?), clinically competent and keeps up to date, his or her view of how they see themselves in the practice.*

**QUESTION 7: DO OUR AND THE APPLICANT’S AGENDAS MATCH?**

* How do you see your career developing over the next 5 years?

Score

*Ambitions & goals; does this fit in with the practice goals? If they seem to have lots of aspirations and goals, how are they going to achieve all of that in one go? “That’s a lot to take on”*

* **Optional**

What do you want from the job?

*Are their expectations similar to ours? Can we provide for their expectations? Are they realistic? Is this what we want?*

**QUESTION 8: UNANSWERED QUESTIONS**

* Is there anything you would like to ask us or anything you would like to tell us you haven’t had a chance to say?

**QUESTION 9: SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS**

* What is your ideal number of sessions; which days of the week would you prefer to work?
* Do you have any issues in doing insurance reports and medicals (a requirement of the practice)?
* Would you be willing to support GP trainees and medical students along with the rest of the team?
* We all participate equally in Monday evening extended hours (in which you will receive an additional separate payment). Are you okay to do this?
* We also have a doctors’ meeting every Monday morning starting at 0800 hours in which all doctors are expected to attend. Do you have a problem with this?