

# Are Foundation Taster Weeks an Underutilized Resource?

LJ Clifton, N Whitelock, J Scott (Health Education England North East)

## Introduction

The UK Foundation Programme recommend that up to 10-days can be used during Foundation Year 1 (FY1) and Foundation Year 2 (FY2) to undertake Taster placements in specialties to gain further experience and explore career options before considering specialty applications.<sup>1</sup> This is an especially good opportunity if trainees wish to trial a specialty not represented during their Foundation placements. The Northern Foundation School were not aware of the number of placements undertaken in Local Education Providers over the last 5 years. We asked, was this opportunity being underutilized?

## Materials and Methods

A retrospective review was undertaken by contacting foundation education leads and medical education teams at each local education provider. Information requested included the number of tasters undertaken and in which specialty the placement was completed. Focus groups were arranged with FY1 and FY2 doctors to explore barriers and motivations to access taster week experiences.

## Results and Discussion

Nine local education providers responded to the data request from the Northern Foundation School. In total 676 foundation tasters were completed across 75 different specialties in the North East and North Cumbria (Figure 1). This represented 29.4% of FY1 and FY2 trainees over a 5-year period. Foundation trainee focus groups are underway to explore the main barriers and motivations to undertaking taster weeks, with data reporting in progress.

## Conclusion

A large number of tasters were conducted, but this represents less than a third of foundation trainees in our region over this time. In the era of covid training recovery, it is imperative we give our foundation trainees maximum access to beneficial training opportunities to develop their future career pathways. Upon completion of focus groups, innovative resources will be introduced, and further work undertaken to explore uptake in future years.

References: 1. UK Foundation Programme Curriculum 2021. <https://foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/curriculum/new-uk-foundation-programme-curriculum-2021/>

Foundation Tasters undertaken per Trust 2016-2021

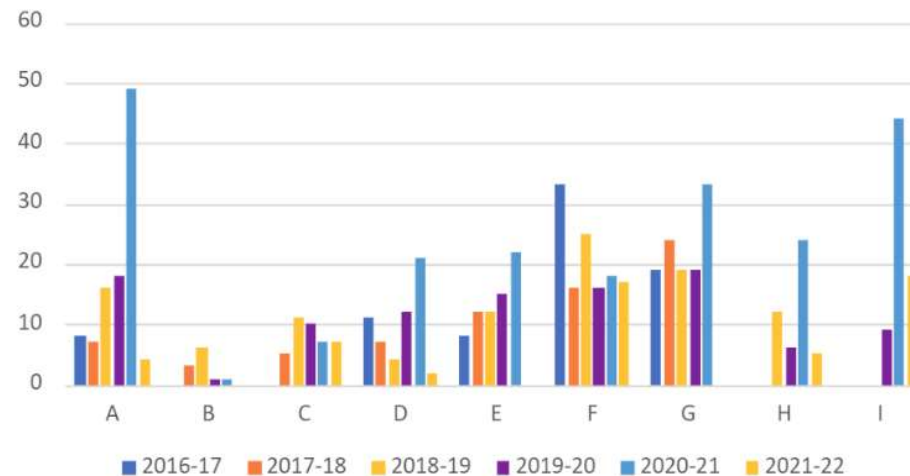


Figure 1: Uptake of Tasters per Trust, the nine local trusts are represented A-I.

**676**

**Tasters**

**75**

**Specialities**

**29.4%**

**Trainees**



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