The evaluation of a period of extended shadowing for FY1 doctors at induction and mentorship schemes at Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust

Background
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the 2020/2021 cohort of foundation year one (FY1) doctors at Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust (SWBH) were offered a two-month interim placement (FiY1), ahead of their August start date. A buddy scheme was established, the feedback from trainees was overwhelmingly positive (Pailing et al. 2020) so we wanted to apply what we learnt to the 2021/22 intake.

Methods
Prospective FY1 doctors were invited to start a week earlier for an extended shadowing period. They were assigned individual FY1 buddies for shadowing, SHO mentors from August and a near peer group of FY1s and FY2s for the year. Surveys were used to evaluate the benefits of these schemes.

Extended (optional) shadowing period
- One additional week (paid)
- In the same or complementary* speciality as starting
- Paired with a FY1 “buddy”

Shadowing (compulsory) period
- One week
- Includes induction days
- In starting speciality
- Paired with a FY1 “buddy” to shadow

4th August: FY1 jobs start
- 2-4 new FY1s allocated to a “SHO mentor”
- SHO mentor in same or complementary* speciality from August

Results
Of the 66 FY1 doctors starting in August 2021 31 (47%) responded to the evaluation surveys. A selection of the results are presented.

100%
Were glad they opted for the extended shadowing period

85%
Felt that shadowing prepared them well for FY1

83%
Felt that sampling complementary specialities was more beneficial

“I felt safer starting FY1 after both shadowing periods”
“Multiple sources of mentorship was useful for providing different perspectives”

“FY1 buddies were so helpful”
“Great mentorship scheme”

“I wish I had done extended shadowing, I only had two full days of shadowing after induction/training days”

Conclusion
Optimising a mentorship schemes for new FY1 doctors is challenging and is an ongoing dynamic process at SWBH. We will continue to offer extended shadowing to new FY1 doctors and encourage regular contact between senior mentors and mentees.