

Paediatric Recruitment: Education for Prospective Applicants



East of England ST1-3 Teaching Day Committee:

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Introduction

Paediatrics at ST1/2 level had the lowest fill rate of all specialties in 2019 of just 82.82% (Table 1). It has been recognised by the RCPCH that recruitment is an important area of investment for our specialty, through the RCPCH Recruitment Team and the new ‘Shape of Training’ designed with making Paediatric training more desirable.

To improve recruitment to Paediatric training for 2020, both nationally and within the East of England (EoE), we held an interview orientated event run by trainees to educate fellow doctors on the application process and prepare them for interview.

Design

The event consisted of:

1. A talk/question and answer session on preparation of Curriculum Vitae’s, portfolios, and the interview process.
2. A timed mock interview circuit comprising four of the interview stations held by the selection centre for 2020 recruitment (portfolio, communication, clinical thinking, and governance & reflective practice). There were five minutes for feedback following each station.

A feedback questionnaire asked participants to give ratings using a five-point Likert scale from “Poor” to “Excellent”, with free text space for comments.

The event was attended by 22 applicants; feedback was received from 10.

Feedback Quotes

“I found the specific feedback on my answers very helpful”

“I found the advice on making the portfolio very helpful as I was unsure how to organise this”

“The portfolio station was particularly good”

“All were well prepared, excellent and helpful in feedback. I am very thankful for all”

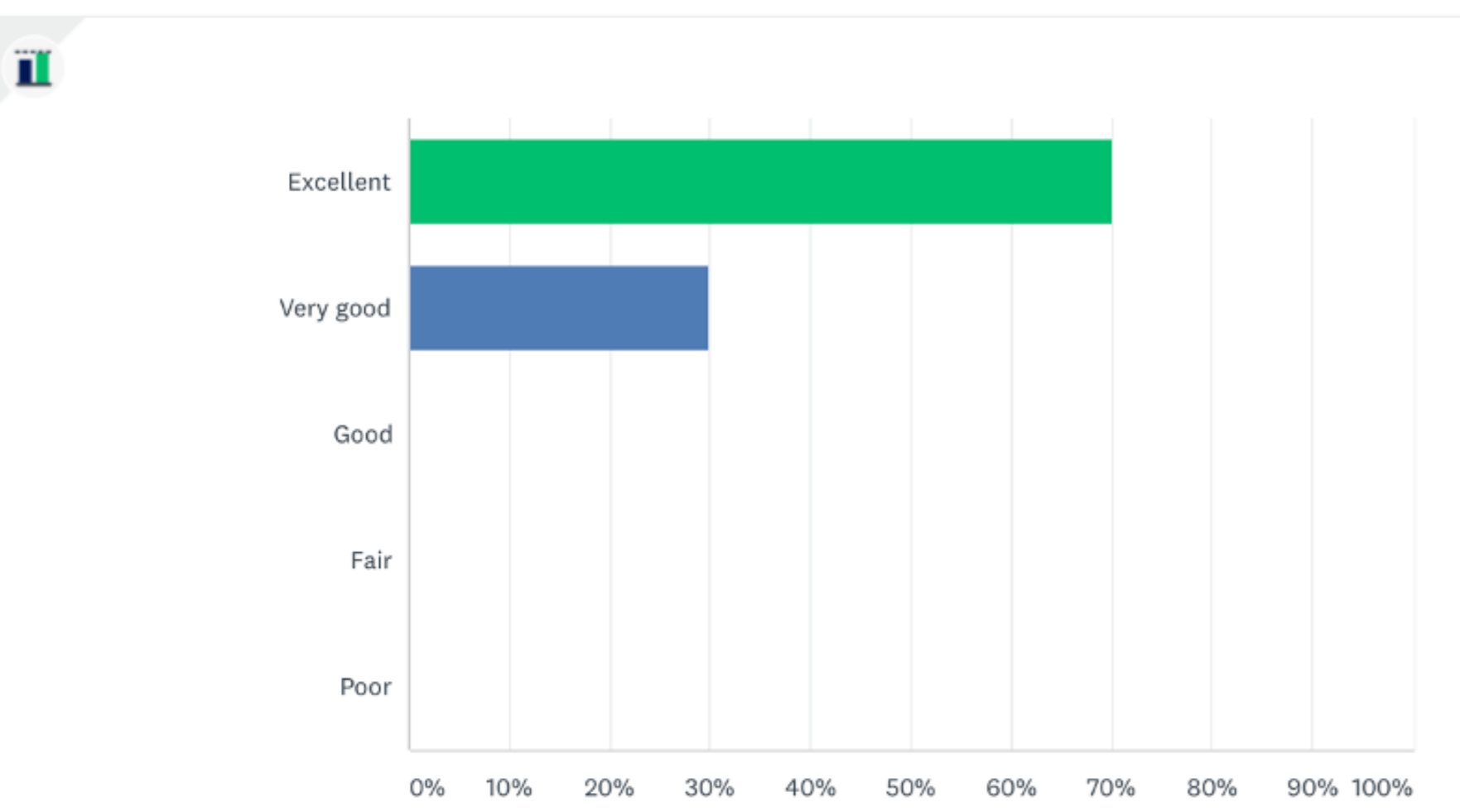
“Really good introduction to the interview and it’s format”

“Very well organised and the team were very helpful with their feedback”

Feedback

Overall, how would you rate the evening?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



Bar Graph 1: Participant feedback rating the overall session; 70% rated it “Excellent”

Table 3: Showing participant feedback regarding individual interview stations. All stations were rated “Very Good” or “Excellent”

Table 1:

National training posts and fill rates for Paediatrics in 2019 & 2020.

Health Education England 2020, *Specialty recruitment: round 1 – acceptance and fill rates*, accessed 15th Jan 2021, <<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/medical-recruitment/specialty-recruitment-round-1-acceptance-fill-rate>>.

Specialty	2019 Posts	2019 Fill Rates	2020 Posts	2020 Fill Rates
Paediatrics	419	82.82%	394	96.95%

Table 2:

East of England training posts and fill rates for Paediatrics 2018-2020.

Angela D’Amore (2020) “ST1-3, Level 1 Paediatric Training East of England” [powerpoint presentation].

	2018	2019	2020
Advertised Posts		44	48
Posts Taken	38	32	48
Fill Rate		72%	100%

Discussion

Benefits of the event:

- Educates prospective applicants on interview technique, how to “sell themselves”, and how their past experiences can be applied to a career in Paediatrics.
- Demonstrates the supportive environment created by current trainees and consultants.
- Information on local opportunities and training specifically within EoE.

Candidates were empowered in their preparation for Paediatric applications. They found the event very informative and appreciated the dedicated time for individualised feedback from their interviewers following the stations. Interview skills are often undermined and this event showed the value of being educated by trainees who have been successful in the process.

Table 1 and 2 show the improvement in Paediatric recruitment rates from 2019 to 2020; our aim was to advertise Paediatrics to foundation doctors within East of England, which subsequently filled 100% of the level one training jobs. There was also a large increase in recruitment nationally, which is likely multi-factorial after a drive to improve national recruitment by the RCPCH.

We have made this an annual event. In January 2021 we will hold the second annual event with changes in response to COVID-19:

- Virtual session held over zoom on two evenings.
- Interview structure change – 25 minute ‘real time’ mock interview rather than individual stations due to complexity of virtual breakout rooms.
- Advertised nationally. Attended by candidates from 10 deaneries.

Station	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Portfolio	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%
Governance & Reflective Practice	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%
Clinical Thinking	60%	40%	0%	0%	0%
Communication	70%	30%	0%	0%	0%