

When the Vale of Trent Faculty Board was looking to address local issues with GP recruitment, they decided a new and innovative approach was needed.

A career intentions survey carried out in 2015 by Nottingham University showed that around a third of newly-qualified GPs were moving elsewhere and the Faculty wanted to show that they could find rewarding careers locally.

Their idea was to bring final year GP trainees and First5s together with GPs from East Midlands practices in a 'GP Jobs Speed Dating' event. The goal was to make connections between new GPs looking for jobs and practices looking for staff, with the ultimate aim of improving retention of trainees in the area after they qualified. The format was first piloted at the 2016 Vale of Trent AiT / First5 Day Conference, and building on its success, was repeated for a second time in March this year.

The event runs in the same way as 'conventional' speed dating. Practices book tables, and trainees rotate from practice to practice every few minutes when the bell rings, making contact with potential employers. Dr Andrew Foster, a GP Partner at Parkside Medical Practice in Nottingham and Honorary Secretary of VoT Faculty, said: "Trainees can sometimes have quite set ideas about the location and type of practice they want to work in, but by giving them exposure to a wide range of practices, we can ensure they don't overlook great jobs in places they might not previously have considered.

"At the same time, practices have an opportunity to sell

themselves to a wide audience of potential recruits who are actively looking for work." He admits there was some scepticism when the idea was first suggested, with concerns about whether GPs and trainees would buy into the idea and how to assure the quality of the practices and the trainees attending – but these were easily overcome. "The idea was very well received by both trainees and local practices, and we said upfront that GPs and practices were responsible for doing their own due diligence. "We were very clear that the role of the event was simply to put them in touch and facilitate connections. In speed dating

parlance, we were just making the introductions."

Over 60 trainees and 24 GP practices took part in the 2016 event. This year's event, held on 29 March in Nottingham, saw 70 delegates and 29 practices attend.

Although too early to assess how successful the recent event has been and how many 'matches' have been made, Andrew is optimistic.

"We've already had lots of positive feedback, and anecdotally we know that quite a few connections have been followed up post-event," he says. "Last year several positions were secured following introductions made at the event, and we're

confident of similar success this year."

Andrew is planning to make a recruitment video featuring soundbites from attendees. "It's the perfect opportunity. People can see for themselves that the East Midlands has a huge pool of talented and dedicated doctors, and a wide range of practices that can offer them a variety of exciting career opportunities."

For more information please email Vtrent@rcgp.org.uk You can also read Andy's blog for top tips on running a GP Jobs Speed Dating event at avoidingpuddles.com and follow the Faculty on Twitter @rcgpvt ■



A speedy solution to GP recruitment

GPs in the East Midlands are bringing new meaning to the term 'speed dating'.



Good match? Delegates at Vale of Trent Faculty's event