

An Evaluation of the Welsh Clinical Leadership Training (WCLT) Fellowship Programme

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Background/context

Set up in 2013 with funding from Wales Deanery for four posts, the Clinical Leadership Fellowship programme is designed to develop future medical and dental leaders. It is open to trainee doctors and dentists undertaking core higher training. During the 12-month Fellowship, trainees undertake a project with their host organisation and attend structured leadership training provided by Academi Wales.

Methodology

We undertook a qualitative, formative evaluation of the first year of the programme. Data gathering was guided by Kirkpatrick's model of programme evaluation. Evaluation of the Darzi fellowship scheme shaped the questions we asked.

We conducted focus groups and individual telephone interviews with the four Fellows during the year to ascertain motives and expectations, progress with project, reflections on learning and the programme's impact and how it could be improved. Supervisors/mentors were also interviewed.

Results

Programme success included: a flexible approach to the projects; regular contact with supervisors; workplace introductions; being a valued team member; peer support; Academi Wales training. Trainees also benefitted from a visit to Massachusetts Institute of Technology and action learning sets. Challenges included funding issues which constrained project progress; varied level of organisational support and supervision; and a reduction in earnings.

Conclusions

Fellows developed skills which set them for future NHS leadership roles. Host organisations reported gaining from the input of the Fellows. Attendance at high profile events helped enhance the appeal of the Fellowship scheme and develop its status.