

Dr Aamir Awan

Trailblazer Fellow 2022-23

[\(Trailblazer Fellowship – NHS England Workforce, Training and Education \(formerly Health Education England\)](#)

Introduction

My name is Aamir Awan and I'm a newly qualified GP and work as a salaried GP in City of Coventry Health Centre, Coventry. Much of my GP training was in the deprived inner-city of Coventry.

Activity

My Trailblazer Fellowship journey was amazing. I was supported by regular national Trailblazer teaching and meetings every month, along with our regular monthly Aspiring Leader Fellowship (ALF) meetings where we had discussion about the projects, learning opportunities including attending conferences, attending courses and mental wellbeing as well. I also had very good Mentor support.

I have attended the 'Wellness at the Margins' Conference in Dublin, found very useful, attended their social medicine placements, visited the women Jail, a special clinic who deals with the opioid dependant patients.

I have regularly received teaching virtually from the Trailblazer programme as well as having the time to access a great resource called "FairHealth", to further educate myself, and in turn, my colleagues and peers, in the subject of health inequalities. I particularly liked the teaching sessions on:

- Medically Unexplained Symptoms
- Chronic Pain
- Gypsy and Traveller Inclusive Services Training
- Refugees Health
- Safe Surgeries

Project

The Project I took was 'Severe Mental Illness (SMI)', one of the 5 Core20Plus Clinical focus area, ensuring annual health checks for the 60% of those living with SMI.

I did setup a clinic every Wednesday where I was seeing patients from different surgeries attached to my PCN, mostly face to face, focus on their physical health including their BMI, blood pressure check, blood test review, smoking and alcohol status, along with mental health review. if they need help regarding referral to the health coaches, smoking cessation, social prescribing.

After one year of working in Primary care and doing SMI clinic, I gained good insight about the difficulties patients having, health inequalities. Most of the patients were struggling

financially because of the recent pandemic, rising inflation, their immigration status, it was affecting their mental health along with their physical and medical health. A lot of patients were on control drugs for chronic pain.

Mental Health patients are complex and needs to be looked after in a broader aspect, not only their mental health but their physical health, sexual health, lifestyle, obesity, co-morbidities are all directly linked. They die early because the co-morbidities are not addressed properly.

If we see them face to face, regularly engage them with healthy activities, give them awareness about the chronic conditions including chronic pain, how to manage without control drugs, use other available tools like antidepressants/CBT, would all help.

CPD

After being a Trailblazer, and spending time in primary care, I have realised that most important issue to address is the lifestyle.

I decided to use my study budget to enrol in for Diploma in Lifestyle Medicine, to develop skills to deal with 6 pillars of Lifestyle Medicine including:

- Mental Wellbeing
- Physical Activity
- Healthy Eating
- Sleep
- Healthy Relationships
- Minimising Harmful Substances

Reflections

The fellowship did give me the confidence, managed to develop skills to work in the deprived area, and I have decided to stay in the same surgery going forward.

The Trailblazer Fellowship is a good way to encourage and support GPs to work in areas of social deprivation and I will strongly recommend the newly qualified GPs to take this role, together we can create change, improve ourselves and help our patients.

Many thanks to C&W Training Hub, Joanna and Sarah Hall for their support, you are amazing and always been there for us.