

1 Background

National Workforce Challenge

For several years Genitourinary Medicine (GUM) has faced significant national recruitment challenges (Fig 1).

Local Context

GUM exposure for medical students in Leicester is limited and largely observational. Opportunities include;

- 1 day of undergraduate GUM exposure
- optional SSC (Student Selected Component) 6-week placements
- taster days

These experiences provide only brief insight into the specialty.

Prior to this intervention, there were only taster days available for pre-speciality doctors at Leicester Sexual Health (LSH). LSH had multiple vacant GUM specialty training posts and had not hosted a GUM Specialty Trainee (GST) since 2019.

Project Aim: To improve recruitment by providing meaningful clinical exposure to GUM and tailored support throughout the GST application process for Internal Medicine Training year 3 (IMT3) doctors.

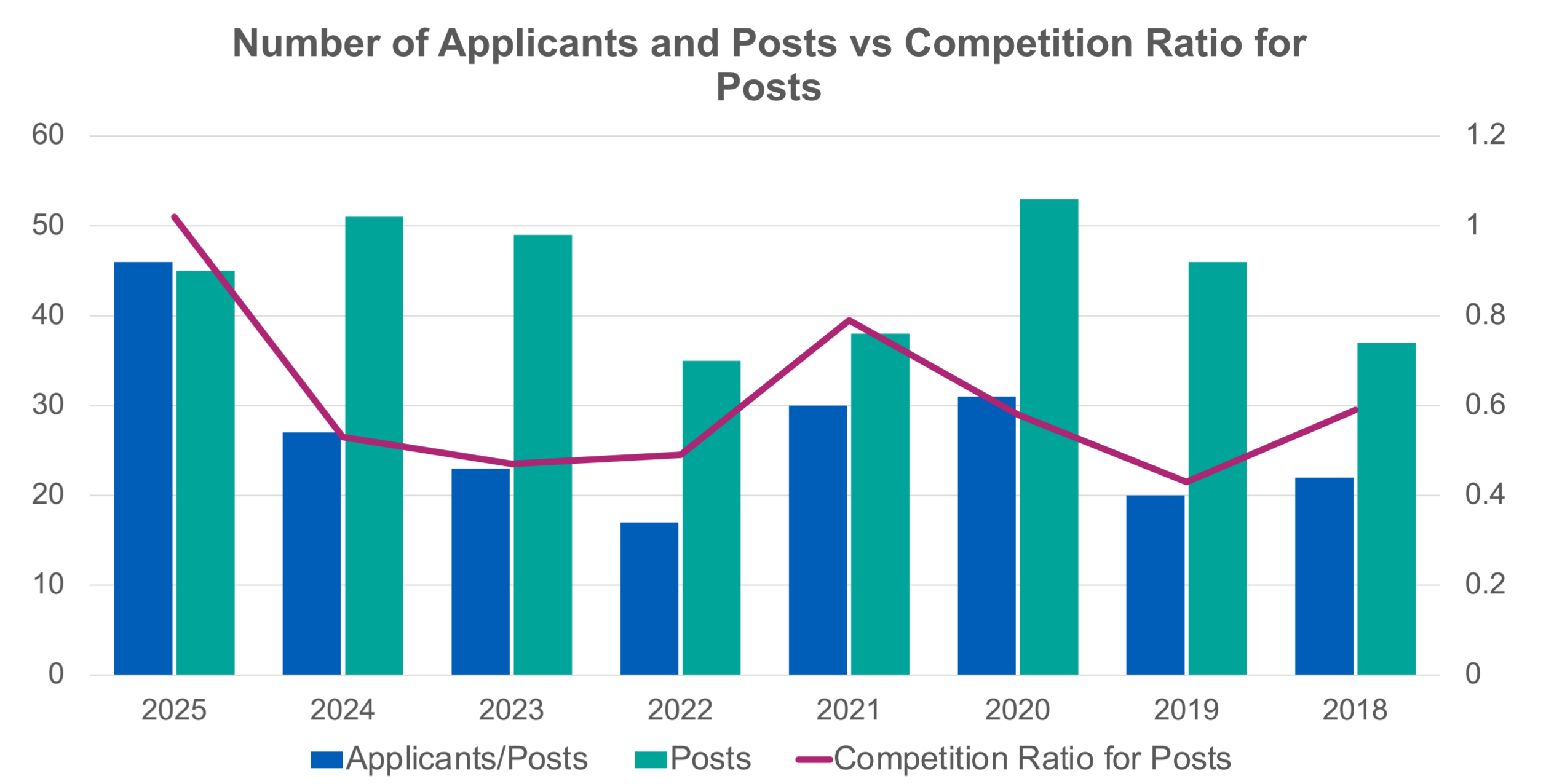


Figure 1; National GUM specialty recruitment Applicant and Post numbers and competition ratios

2 Methods

LSH, in collaboration with the East Midlands Training Programme Director for GUM, developed a targeted initiative to improve recruitment into vacant GST posts and support long-term workforce sustainability.

Intervention: In 2021, one unfilled GST post was converted into a six-month placement for IMT3 doctors. IMT3 doctors expressing interest in GUM received structured support to increase exposure, build confidence, and enhance readiness for GST applications.

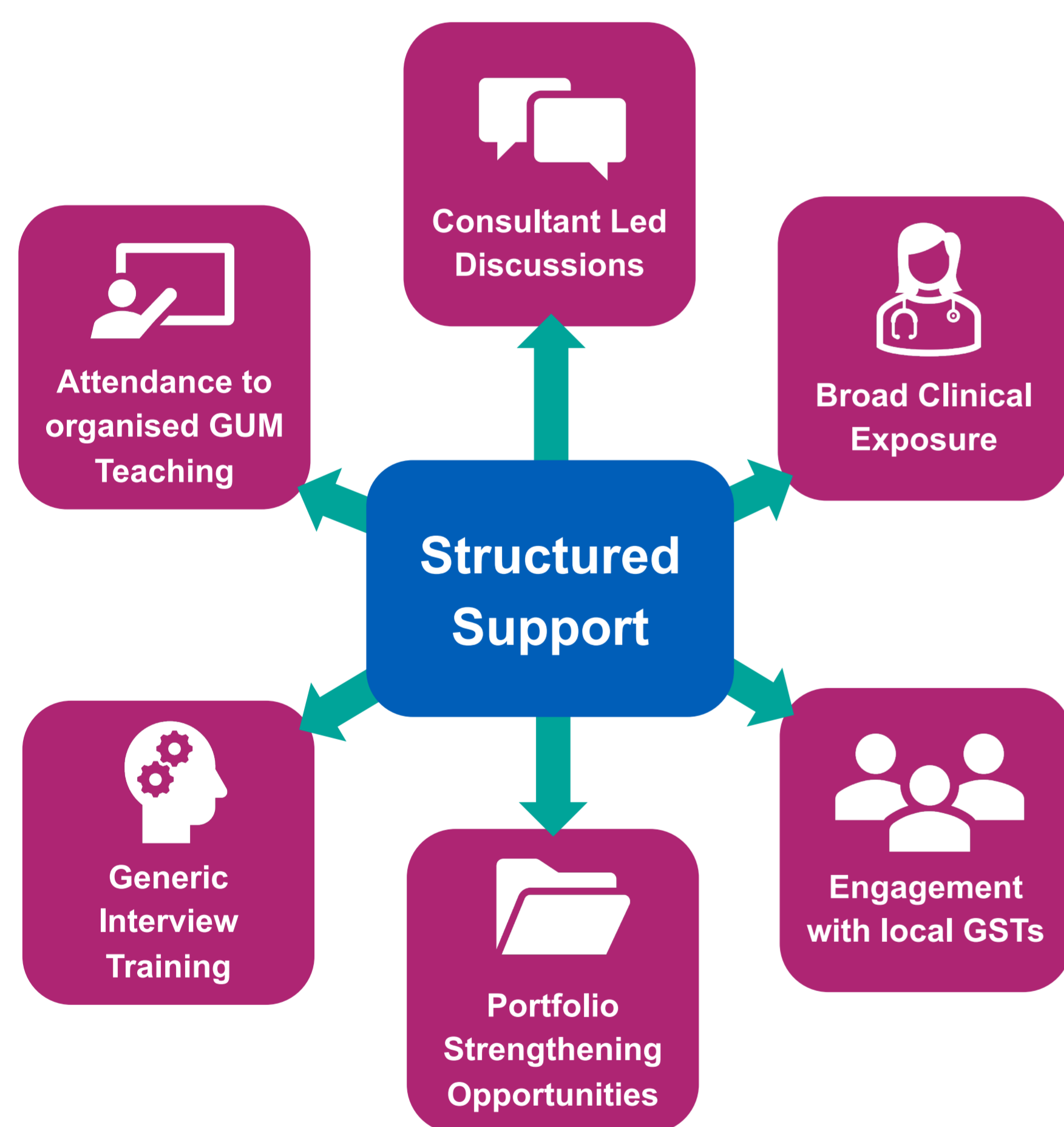


Figure 2; Summary of GUM support for IMT doctors appointed to GUM rotation

By targeting IMT doctors, this intervention aimed to engage trainees who had already committed to the IMT pathway. Thereby removing the perceived barrier (completion of IMT training) and facilitating a more direct and supported transition into GST.

3 Results and Feedback

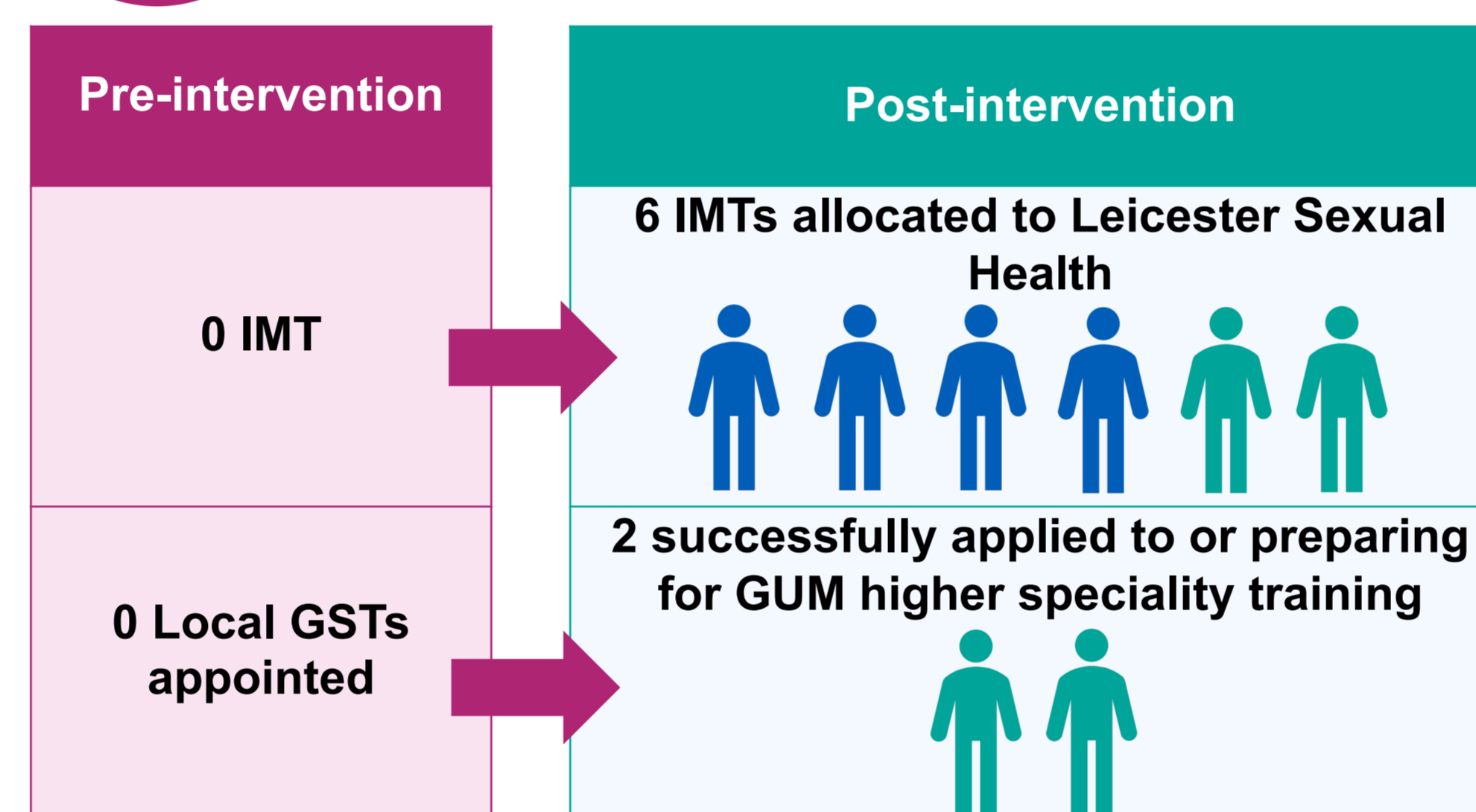


Figure 3; Summary of results of intervention

Trainee Feedback



“Prior to this, I had little exposure to the specialty, but my research revealed its compelling aspects that exceeded my expectations... During my rotation, I found immense enjoyment in the work and realised that GUM was the right path for me. This inspired me to apply for Higher Specialty Training, and I am thrilled to have secured a training number in GUM.”

“I was previously interested in applying for GUM but likely wouldn't have done so without the rotation. It was very helpful to have advice on additional events/courses and applications. It was also very useful to have GUM specific interview prep.”



4 Discussion

Strengths	Limitations
Low-cost intervention	Single centre
Replicable in other services	Small sample Size
Utilises existing workforce gaps creatively. Aligning service need with trainee development.	Relies on availability of vacant post
Builds specialty engagement	Relies on supervisor availability and clinic capacity
This is the only such post in the region for interested trainees	Early data and so small sample size

The intervention achieved the expected outcomes; however, there were specific challenges with its implementation due to the structure of the local IMT trainee rotation.

To maintain acute medicine competencies, trainees remain on the acute medical rota within the local NHS trust while undertaking their GUM placement. Consequently, their time in GUM is reduced, and clinic attendance can be irregular, limiting continuity of exposure and supervision. This arrangement also requires additional administrative coordination.

A more predictable balance between acute medicine on call and GUM clinical sessions would improve training quality, continuity and forward planning for both trainees and supervisors.

5 Conclusion

A structured, service led approach to recruitment and engagement can enhance awareness of, confidence in and interest in GUM training.

This intervention was well received, simple to implement and resulted in successful local recruitment.

While not all services can utilise IMT3 posts; short term (six month) clinical fellow posts targeted at IMT3 doctors may offer a feasible alternative. This model offers a practical and adaptable framework for services seeking to strengthen their GST recruitment pipelines and enhance workforce sustainability.

REFERENCES

1. A. NHS England. (2025) *Competition ratios*. Available at: <https://medical.hee.nhs.uk/medical-training-recruitment/medical-specialty-training/competition-ratios>.

SPECIAL THANKS

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