

MEDIA RELEASE

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LPT pioneers international psychiatry training programme

Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) is spearheading an innovative Royal College of Psychiatrists programme to expand the skills and training opportunities of psychiatrists abroad.



LPT is one of three NHS Trusts providing mental health services who are piloting the new medical training initiative (MTI). It supports psychiatrists from overseas to work in the Trust's services for up to two years.

The scheme is overseen by Dr. Mohammed Al-Uzri, who is clinical director for LPT's adult mental health and learning disabilities division, and national MTI adviser to the College.

He said: "The training initiative we are piloting provides a unique opportunity for doctors from developing countries where training opportunities are limited. They can benefit from specialist psychiatric training in the UK, including areas such as learning disabilities, forensic psychiatry, eating disorders and

dementia care, before returning to their home country.

"It also means they can bring their own experience and skills to help us understand more about mental health in different cultures. This understanding is very important for us when we are providing mental health care to a culturally diverse community in Leicester."

Dr. Chathurie Suraweera, (pictured), a senior registrar in psychiatry from Colombo, the Sri Lankan capital, is the first trainee to take up a place under the groundbreaking new initiative.

She has been working on Watermead Ward at the Bradgate Mental Health Unit in Leicester since September, after completing her postgraduate programme in psychiatry at the Post Graduate Institute of Medicine, University of Colombo in 2013.

She said: "I was working in the university psychiatry unit at the National Hospital of Sri Lanka, one of the biggest tertiary care hospitals in Asia, where we see a wide variety of patients.

“I’m working initially for six months on Watermead Ward, a ward which supports people with complex mental health needs who often find it hard to engage with services. This is providing me with a totally new experience. The legislative system regarding mental health is different in Sri Lanka from what is here and I’m being exposed to new areas and new clinical materials and I’m getting involved in research work, with supervisory clinical support from Dr. Al-Uzri.”

Dr. Suraweera’s husband (who is also a doctor) and two children have made the temporary move to Leicestershire with her and she has been granted leave of up to two years while she undergoes training.

She added: “ I hope to give the best I can to the people in the UK and also learn a lot of new things to take back home to serve my motherland.”

Further information about the [medical training initiative](#) is available at www.rcpsych.ac.uk

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NOTES TO EDITORS Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) provides a range of health and wellbeing services mainly for people living in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. The Trust serves a population of one million people, has a budget in excess of £267 million and employs approximately 5,400 staff. For more information visit www.leicspart.nhs.uk
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