

Introduction

The needs of new Foundation Year 1 (F1) doctors entering the NHS vary year to year depending on their background and training. In 2025, only 2 out of 24 incoming F1s at Hywel Dda were international medical graduates, a significant contrast to previous years. This shift allowed the medical education team to refocus the enhanced induction programme, placing less emphasis on core clinical skills and more on nuanced challenges such as communication, professionalism, and human factors—areas critical to safe, effective clinical practice (Matharu et al, 2024).

The two-week “Start Well” induction programme was adapted to reflect the skillset of the 2025 cohort. While maintaining simulation and teaching components, more time was allocated to complex, scenario-based learning (Kalet et al 2017). Three new simulated scenarios were introduced with embedded professionalism issues: one involving xenophobia, another sexism, and a third focused on workplace bullying. Each scenario was followed by a structured debrief and facilitated large-group discussion.



Brief :

~10mins

Session objectives and structure explained to observers



Simulation

~15 mins

Included 1 of 3 of the professionalism scenarios



End Debrief:

~1 hour

Facilitate reflection and discussion in large group setting

Summary of Results

The revised programme was very well received. Participants valued the opportunity to explore complex interpersonal and ethical challenges in a safe, supportive environment. Feedback highlighted the importance of simulation in developing communication and behavioural insight, especially as these aspects of practice are central to the F1 role. Early qualitative feedback suggests participants felt better prepared to manage real-life challenges involving team dynamics, discrimination, and professionalism.

Discussion

The evolving demographic of F1 cohorts requires a responsive approach to induction. This year’s programme demonstrated that, in the absence of significant clinical skill gaps, induction can—and should—pivot towards human factors and professional behaviours. The real value of the session came from the debrief at the end, whereby open conversation allowed for issues to be raised from the scenarios, often drawing on personal real life examples to back up their discussion points.

Future iterations will further integrate these elements into simulation, with the aim of fostering a supportive workplace culture where staff feel confident to speak up about concerns.



The NHS Health and Wellbeing Framework 2026: