

# A Peer Interview Scheme: Enhancing Specialty Training Prospects through Peer-Led Interview Preparation

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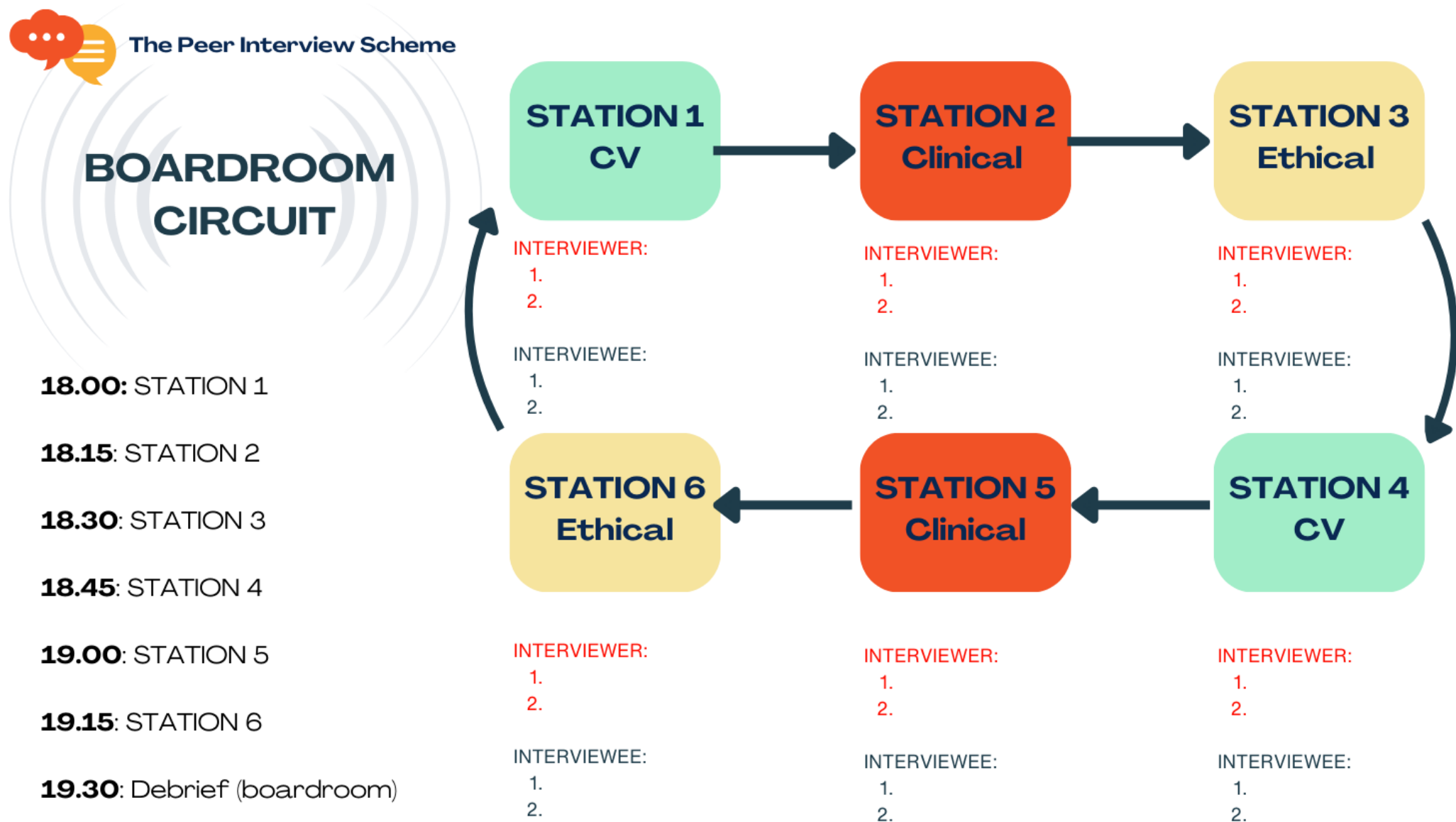
## Aim

The Peer Interview Scheme was developed by NIMDTA (Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency) as part of the ‘VALUED’ strategy, to support and retain high-calibre doctors in higher specialty training (HST). The scheme aimed to enhance Core Surgical and Internal Medicine trainees’ interview skills, through a peer-led programme, improving their HST application prospects. An earlier pilot was not sustained post COVID-19, but recognising a continued need, the scheme was reintroduced in 2025.

## Methods

The Peer Interview Scheme started with a didactic teaching session led by a consultant interviewer, a senior manager and a senior trainee. Presentations focused on how to **present** and **prepare** yourself for interview, and how to navigate the online interview platform **QPercom Recruit**. This was followed by a ‘Meet the Registrars’ networking session. Two **interview circuits** followed, with six stations each. Trainees were paired, and alternated between interviewing and observing their peer, each attending a station covering **CV**, **Clinical** and **Ethical** scenarios. Interviewers were higher level trainees (ST3+) who were provided with Recruitment and Selection training. Interviews lasted ten minutes, followed by three minutes of **qualitative feedback**. Interview questions were written by senior registrars in medical and surgical specialties.

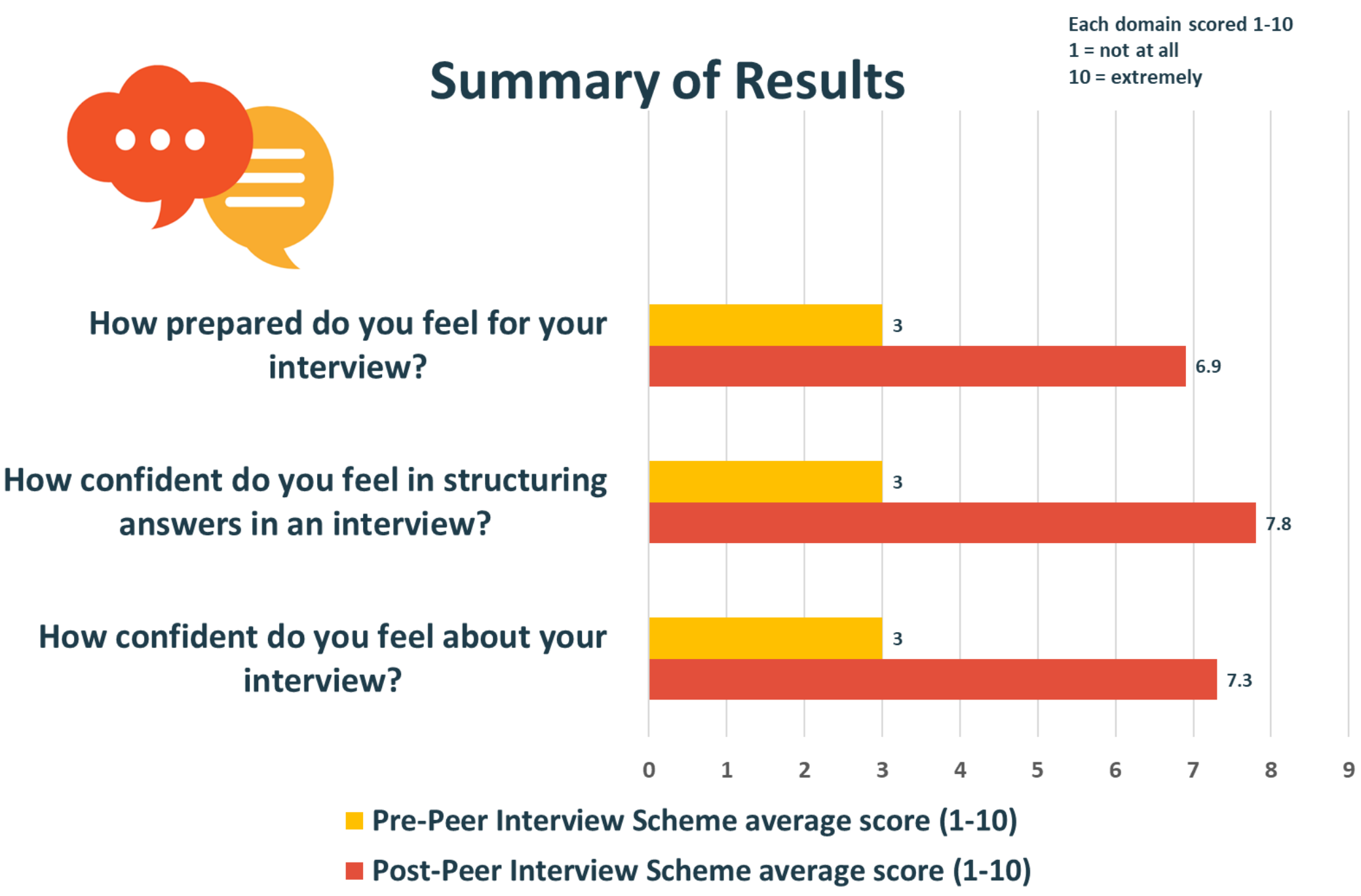
Pre- and post-course evaluations were collected via QR codes.



*I hope it continues every year as it is excellent.  
This is amazing. So good. Thank you so much.  
Recommending for anyone!!*

### Acknowledgements:

Dr Grace McClune  
Mrs Emma Dale  
Mr Jack Kennedy  
Mrs Roisin Campbell  
Mr Kenneth Jones  
Dr Fintan Corvan  
Dr David Johnston  
Dr David McShane  
Dr Sally Anne Phillips



## Outcomes/ Results

Pre-course evaluation showed **14** out of 22 trainees had done **no prior preparation**, 2 had engaged in self-directed mock interviews with colleagues, and **none** had attended a formal course. Confidence scores pre course were **low** (3.05/10 for confidence and structuring answers, 2.95 for preparedness). Post-course feedback showed **significant improvements** (7.29 for confidence, 7.76 for structuring, 6.86 for preparedness). Statistical analysis using the Mann-Whitney U test showed clear statistical significance with  $p < 0.000001$ .

Qualitative feedback highlighted the value and need for structured practice and peer support within this cohort.

**9.4** Do you feel the Peer Interview Scheme was helpful?

**9.8** How likely are you to recommend the Peer Interview Scheme to a friend or colleague?

Score 1-10 (1= not at all; 10= extremely)

## Conclusion

This structured, peer-led interview initiative, was highly successful in addressing a **gap in interview preparation** for those applying to HST. Given ongoing workforce and recruitment challenges, such initiatives could significantly contribute to improving specialty training application success in the future.

Future plans will include extending the scheme to foundation doctors and higher trainees within all specialities, as well as assessing its long-term impact on recruitment outcomes.

