

# LESS THAN FULL TIME TRAINING (LTFTT)

(Previously “Flexible Training”)

## Policy and Guidance

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Less Than Full Time Training (LTFTT) is a scheme whereby eligible Postgraduate Doctors/ Learners and dentists of all grades are able to work on a part time basis. Full time training relates to a 40-hour week and for the purposes of the scheme, “part time” means working from between 50% and 80% of a full time equivalent.
- 1.2 NHS England working across North West manages LTFTT for all Postgraduate Doctors/Learners, including General Practice Specialty Postgraduate Doctors/Learners (GPSTs) in general practice (GP) based placements (and Integrated Posts), in the North West.
- 1.3 General Practice Specialty Postgraduate Doctors/Learners (GPSTs) in GP practice based placements are arranged through The GP team once a LTFT application form has been fully completed and returned to the LTFT team for confirmation.

The GP section in NHS England, working across North West manages LTFTT for GP based placements. If you are applying to train Less Than Full Time in a GP based post (including GP+ and ITP posts), please complete a fully completed LTFT application form and return to the LTFT team, who will forward to the GP team accordingly.

For hospital-based placements, GPST's are no different from other specialty Postgraduate Doctors/Learners .

- 1.4 From 30 June 2014 every employee has the statutory right to request flexible working after 26 weeks employment service. Request for flexible working are not covered within this Policy and you should liaise with your employer regarding such requests

## 2. Scope/Aim

- 2.1 The Improving Working Lives (IWL) Initiative, NHS Policy 2002, aims to improve doctors' working lives by improving their work/ life balance and providing employment conditions which enable all doctors to work and train in the NHS to their full potential. LTFTT is included as one of the IWL standards.
- 2.2 NHS England fully endorses the principles set out in the NHS Employers' guidance document – “Doctors in Flexible Training: Principles underpinning the new arrangements  
[http://www.nhsemployers.org/~media/Employers/Documents/Pay%20and%20reward/doctorstraining\\_flexible\\_principles\\_cd\\_080405.pdf](http://www.nhsemployers.org/~media/Employers/Documents/Pay%20and%20reward/doctorstraining_flexible_principles_cd_080405.pdf)
- 2.3 NHS England aims to provide a robust provision of LTFTT, to promote LTFTT and to manage the LTFTT budget in such a way that LTFTT is available to as many eligible Postgraduate Doctors/Learners as possible.
- 2.4 This policy is non-contractual.

## 3. Eligibility

3.1 LTFTT is available to doctors and dentists of any gender in training who are able to present well founded reasons as to why fulltime training is impractical. The eligibility criteria are described in European Union Council Directive 93/16-/EEC 1993 and provisions of the Employment Rights Act (as amended)1996 and its associated legislation and may change from time to time.

3.2 From December 2022 the Eligibility categories have been amended to the following:

- Disability / Ill Health
- Caring Responsibilities
- Welfare and Wellbeing
- Unique Opportunities
- Religious Commitment
- Non-Medical Development
- Career Development

**Categories 1,2 and 3 are no longer in use.**

3.3 Please note the below points which apply to all Postgraduate Doctor/ Learners & Learners in Training:

1. LTFT will commence only at rotation points – unless an unexpected reason is identified during a placement for example health, carer, parental leave, this includes changes in any percentage in LTFT training.

2. Increasing back to fulltime will only be allowed at a rotation change and with notice unless exceptional circumstances apply.

3. If a welfare situation escalates to an 'Ill health issue' then the Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training must notify the LTFT team and be able to provide evidence of they have engaged with Occupational Health or their GP.

3.4 A less than full time (LTFT), application form is available on the LTFT webpage or can be provided by request, this is to be fully completed by both trainee making the request and the TPD or FPD and returned by the TPD/FPD to the LTFT team. Please note that for training approval LTFT Postgraduate Doctors/Learners have to work a minimum of 50% (5 sessions) of the full-time equivalent although can work up to 80%.

3.5 It should be noted that while a Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training has the right to apply LTFTT and NHS England has a duty to consider each application positively, consideration of service needs will always be taken into consideration.

3.6 For information on the eligibility screening process see section 5 of this policy.

## 3.7 Appeals

If the Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training is deemed not to be immediately eligible for LTFTT they have a right to appeal that decision. They can do this by following the appeals process found in the appendix at section 11.4.

## 4. Types of LTFTT

- 4.1 The training programme for a LTFT Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training should contain the same educational opportunities on a pro-rata basis as that of a full-time trainee, including but not limited to, out of hours opportunity, audit, research and teaching.
- 4.2 On the 18 October 2011 the GMC's Postgraduate Board reinstated a minimum time requirement of 50% for doctors in specialty training who work on a less than full-time basis. There will be provision for Postgraduate Deans to further reduce the time requirement to a minimum of 20% where Postgraduate Doctors/Learners are experiencing exceptional difficulties.

There are three ways a LTFT Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training can be accommodated within the NHS England

### 4.3 Slot-Shares

- 4.3.1 Slot-shares comprise of two Postgraduate Doctors/Learners occupying one full time-post with both Postgraduate Doctors/Learners arranging the out of hours component between them. Each Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training in a slot-share works at 60% of their full-time counterparts (to both facilitate effective handover and enable each partner to benefit from the formal teaching programme).
- 4.3.2 The NHS England part of the LTFTT funding for slot-share arrangements is agreed automatically and there is no separate authorisation needed from the Associate Dean for LTFTT funding in the post approval process (see sections 5 & 6). 50% of each basic salary is funded centrally through the education contract, with the remaining 10% funded by the NHS England LTFTT budget.
- 4.3.3 "Slot-sharing" is distinct from "job-sharing" in that it does not restrict the Postgraduate Doctors/Learners to work up to a maximum of 50% each for the duration of their contract.
- 4.3.4 It is possible for Postgraduate Doctors/Learners in a slot share post to train at 80%, alongside their slot share partner who could still train at 60%, the additional funding will be provided by NHS England.

### 4.4 Reduced hours in a full-time post (RHFT)

- 4.4.1 In a RHFT arrangement the Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training occupies an established full-time post at reduced hours. RHFT arrangements offer the most flexibility as Postgraduate Doctors/Learners in training are permitted to work between 50% and 80% of their full-time equivalents, subject to Local Education Provider (LEP) /Host Trust and specialty agreement. The full-time post is funded through the education contract and so no further funding is committed from the LTFTT budget.
- 4.4.2 LEPs/Host Trusts are entitled to utilise the leftover funding for the full-time post (for example where a Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training is occupying 60% of a post, the LEP/Host Trust would have 40% left over) as they see fit. Usually this would be to fund additional cover. A Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training may, if willing, fulfil the full-time on-call commitment providing the total hours worked does not exceed 40 hours per week.

## 4.5 Supernumerary

- 4.5.1 Supernumerary placements should only be considered if slot-shares or RHFT placements are not feasible as identifying the necessary funding from the LTFTT budget will be subject to financial constraints and may lead to a significant delay in the start of LTFTT.
- 4.5.2 Supernumerary posts are temporary and exist for a Postgraduate Doctor/Learner in training only for that specific post and not the entire duration of training.
- 4.5.3 Once a substantive post has been secured and the LEP/Host Trust has agreed to accommodate the trainee, a new supernumerary post is created in addition to NHS England funded full-time training post.
- 4.5.4 The basic salary for supernumerary placements is usually wholly funded from NHS England LTFTT budget, and the LEP/Host Trust pays the out of hours component. Therefore, supernumerary placements place considerably more strain on the LTFTT budget than either of the other forms of LTFTT.
- 4.5.5 The relevant Training Programme Director (TPD) must also confirm that there is capacity within the training programme and host site to support a supernumerary placement – see section 7.3.
- 4.5.6 Postgraduate Doctors/Learners in supernumerary funded placements are permitted to work up to a maximum of 60% of their full-time counterparts. The only exception to this is for Postgraduate Doctors/Learners in their final year of training when by increasing to 70 or 80% there is no additional funding required as the total number of sessions is unchanged and has already been budgeted for. However, in the period of grace this reverts to 60%.

## 4.6 On-call

- 4.6.1 LTFT Postgraduate Doctors/Learners must do the same amount of on call work pro rata as full- time Postgraduate Doctors/Learners as a minimum requirement
- 4.6.2 Additional hours will inevitably vary from specialty to specialty, and also within a specialty, and even for the same level within a specialty across different LEPs/Host Trusts; this does not affect Certificates of Completed Training (CCT) dates.
- 4.6.3 If willing, LTFT Postgraduate Doctors/Learners are permitted to carry out full time on-call as long as the total hours worked per week (basic plus on-call for which they will receive a LTFT banding) does not exceed 40 hours.; this does not affect CCT dates. As with all LTFT placements, the banding is calculated individually.
- 4.6.4 If a LTFT Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training wishes to maintain their on call work at the same level they can do so (and in fact if willing can increase their on call work up to full time providing total hours worked do not exceed 40 as described in 4.6.3) but this will not affect CCT date.
- 4.6.5 LTFT Postgraduate Doctors/Learners are permitted, if willing, to carry out a additional responsibilities within the LEP/Host Trust to cover unexpected short-term gaps in the rota, e.g. to cover sickness. It is not permissible for planned absences except with specific consent of the Associate Dean leading LTFTT.
- 4.6.6 In some specialties Postgraduate Doctors/Learners are permitted to train for one year with no on-call responsibilities. This needs to be agreed in advance, in writing, with the relevant Head of School and NHS England.

## 5. Application procedure

- 5.1.1 Once the Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training has decided they wish to apply for LTFTT, they need to complete the less than full time (LTFT), application form which is available on the LTFT webpage or can be provided on request, this is to be fully completed by both trainee making the request and the TPD or FPD. Once fully completed the TPD or FPD need to return to the LTFT team at [england.ltft.nw@nhs.net](mailto:england.ltft.nw@nhs.net).
- 5.1.2 Following submission of the Application it is assessed for completeness and if approved confirmation is sent out to all stakeholders.
- 5.1.3 If the Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training is deemed not to be eligible to start LTFT immediately, they have the right to appeal as outlined in section 3.6 above.
- 5.1.4 Usually, Postgraduate Doctors/Learners will be informed of the decision within two working weeks of submitting their application form, although this may increase in periods of heavy volumes of email communications.

5.1.5 Please note that the time period set out in section 5.1.5 may be extended where a Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training is applying on the grounds of disability or ill health where further investigations are required, for example where occupational health screening will be required.

5.1.6 There may be occasions where the Associate Dean for LTFTT wishes to interview a Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training who has applied for LTFTT.

### 5.2 LTFT Post Approval

5.2.1 If the only way a Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training can be accommodated is as a supernumerary trainee, the authorisation of NHS England funding may be delayed by budgetary constraints and the Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training placed on a waiting list until it becomes available. ~~This is time based as Postgraduate Doctors/Learners must request approval for each placement.~~

5.2.2 If a Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training is placed on a waiting list, they will be kept up to date regarding the progress of funding authorisation.

5.2.3 The application form should be completed and submitted and confirmation received from the LTFT team. LTFT Post Approval E-form must be completed **before** the Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training starts in post. Failure to do so could lead to adverse consequences such as non-recognition of training time or being paid incorrectly.

5.2.4 Post Graduate Doctors / Learners are required to give **16 weeks notice** to their local office when submitting their application. This is in line with National Guidance.

### 5.3 Existing LTFT Postgraduate Doctors/Learners

5.3.1 Existing LTFT Postgraduate Doctors/Learners who are rotating into placements in a different LEP/Host Trust no longer have to complete a new form unless they are changing the percentage they are training, either increasing or decreasing. Once rotations are known they should liaise with the Less Than Full Time Champion at the trust they are rotating to who will provide support with contacting medical staffing, finance and other relevant departments. Any changes in percentage should be discussed Training Programme Directors before rotations and complete the form with the Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training in a timely manner.

5.3.2 For the avoidance of doubt, a new application form **is required** when the Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner changes programme, so a separate application form is required for Foundation, Core and for Higher or run through training.

5.3.3 If considering the need for short term supernumerary funding in exceptional circumstances for a Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training please contact the LTFT team for advice or email [england.tres.nw@nhs.net](mailto:england.tres.nw@nhs.net).



## **5.4 LTFTT in General Practice**

**5.4.1** Existing LTFT Postgraduate Doctors/Learners in GP practice-based placements who are rotating into placements in a different practice must complete a new time table to confirm that the new practice is happy with the planned arrangement and discuss with their Educational Supervisor.

## **5.5 LTFTT application and arrangement timelines**

**5.5.1** All GP trainees wishing to apply for LTFT status should follow the process as outlined above and follow the same 16 week guidance.

**5.5.2** Once approved NHS England will send the Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training a confirmation letter.

**5.5.3** The process of applying should be initiated ideally 16 weeks before the Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training is hoping to start as a LTFT Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training or is due to rotate into a new LEP/Host Trust in line with national guidance.

**5.5.4** Postgraduate Doctors/Learners must not start in LTFT training before the LTFT status has been fully confirmed as there are likely to be adverse consequences, such as non-recognition of training time or being paid incorrectly.

## 6. Funding arrangements

6.1 NHS England will fund the basic salary of LTFT Postgraduate Doctors/Learners – either via the education contracts or directly from the LTFTT budget (depending on which form of LTFTT), and the LEP/Host Trust will pay the out of hours component.

6.2 The method for calculating pay for LTFT Postgraduate Doctors/Learners can be found in national guidance from NHS Employers, entitled “Equitable Pay for flexible medical training, 2005”. The system for paying LTFT Postgraduate Doctors/Learners is one where the basic salary is determined by the actual hours of work, as derived initially from the rota and confirmed by subsequent monitoring.

Further funding information can be found on both websites.

## 7. Additional guidance

### 7.1 Study Leave

7.1.1 LTFT Postgraduate Doctors/Learners are entitled to periods of study leave with funding pro-rata of their sessional commitments. For example, a Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training working at six sessions per week will be entitled to 60% of the equivalent full-time study leave funding per year, subject to 7.1.2 below.

7.1.2 At the discretion of the study leave budget holder, LTFT Postgraduate Doctors/Learners may be permitted to receive additional study leave funding to undertake necessary courses.

### 7.2 Annual Leave and Bank Holidays

7.2.1 Annual leave and bank holiday entitlement for LTFT Postgraduate Doctors/Learners is calculated on a pro-rata basis. Employers may have additional policies in this regard

### 7.3 LTFT post approval (GMC)

7.3.1 Supernumerary LTFTT posts only need to be separately approved by the GMC if the addition of a supernumerary post would cause the approved training capacity in that specialty to be exceeded.

7.3.2 If the addition of a supernumerary placement would cause the approved training capacity in the specialty to be exceeded then the relevant training programme director should inform the NHS England who will need to apply for the increase to be approved by submitting an updated Form A to -GMC.

## 7.4 Increase of sessions

- 7.4.1 LTFT Postgraduate Doctors/Learners who are in **RHFT** posts have the greatest flexibility in terms of the number of sessions they can work per week. RHFT Postgraduate Doctors/Learners can work between 50% and 80% of their full-time equivalents. Increases to the initial agreed level must be agreed in advance with NHS England the Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training and the employer, taking into account training and service needs and must not commence until without approval. **A fully completed application form to increase percentages has been submitted to and approved by the LTFT team.**
- 7.4.2 LTFT Postgraduate Doctors/Learners who are in **slot-shares** are generally only permitted to work up to a maximum of 60% each. In the case of one slot share partner leaving the arrangement (for example a period of maternity leave) the remaining partner will usually, with local agreement, be treated as a RHFT Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training and has the flexibility described in sub-section 7.4.1. If the slot-share is re-established, both Postgraduate Doctors/Learners will revert to 60% each. **For any changes in percentage either up or down a fully completed application should be submitted and approved by the LTFT team prior to changes taking place.**
- 7.4.3 LTFT Postgraduate Doctors/Learners who are in **supernumerary** posts are permitted to work up to a maximum of 60% with no scope to increase beyond, subject to 7.4.4. below.
- 7.4.4 If the supernumerary Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training is in the final year of their training and is due to finish their training within the current financial year, they are permitted to increase sessions up to 80%, subject to prior written agreement from the LEP/Host Trust, specialty and NHS England..
- 7.4.5 If the LTFT Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training wishes to increase the number of sessions they work then they should contact the LTFTT Administrator at the NHS England to request the necessary form. An increase in hours must be approved by NHS England, Head of School and LEP/Host Trust prior to undertaking increased hours. **For any changes a new application form must be completed and sent to the LTFT team.**

## 7.5 Additional employment

- 7.5.1 No Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training is permitted to undertake any additional employment, either within or out of the NHS, to their training posts that requires a medical licence, or any other work without discussion with their TPD or Supervisor.
- 7.5.2 The guidance found at [https://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/Guidance%20-%20Postgraduate Doctors/Learners and trainers%20undertaking%20additional%20work%20V3.pdf](https://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/Guidance%20-%20Postgraduate%20Doctors/Learners%20and%20trainers%20undertaking%20additional%20work%20V3.pdf) applies to all Postgraduate Doctors/Learners in training in regard to additional work and should be followed. If a long-term opportunity arises for additional activity, eg a fellowship this needs discussing with the AD or DD lead for LTFT.

### 7.6 Returning to Full-Time Training

To return to Full time training the section of the LTFT application concerned with increases in percentage of training should be completed. It should be forwarded to your TPD for consideration. They will then forward to the LTFT team. Full time training must not be returned to until confirmation is received by the LTFT team.

### 7.7 Local Appointment for Training (LAT)

7.7.1 LAT posts are up to one year fixed-term appointments. Those doctors appointed to LATs will not be allocated a National Training Number (NTN) and will be placed for the fixed duration of their appointment regardless of their working pattern (fulltime or less than full time.)

## 8. LTFT Trust Champions

8.1 Trust Champions are committed to assist and advise LTFT Postgraduate Doctors/Learners in training during their LTFT experience and aspire to ensure the transition to LTFT training is seamless.

8.2 To this effect we are now in a position to implement the role of LTFT Trust champions in each trust as agreed as part of the ACAS discussions between the British Medical Association (BMA), the government and employers during the contract negotiations for doctors in training.

8.3 The role is designed to improve existing local support for LTFT Postgraduate Doctors/Learners in training.

8.4 The champion will be a senior point of contact who advise and assist on behalf of current and potential LTFT Postgraduate Doctors/Learners.

8.5 The Champion will have an overview of all LTFT Postgraduate Doctors/Learners within their trust and will be available to advise and assist any Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training within that trust regardless of grade or specialty on any concerns they have over the LTFT process.

8.6 For more information and a complete list of LTFT trust champions please check the LTFT Trust Champions section on the LTFT website page at <https://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/content/less-full-time-training/>

## 9.1 Postgraduate Doctors/Learners

- 9.1.1 Postgraduate Doctors/Learners in training should understand that LTFTT is not an automatic right and its availability is governed by finite resources.
- 9.1.2 When applying for LTFTT, Postgraduate Doctors/Learners in training must ensure all information used in support of their application is accurate and is not in any way misleading. NHS England reserves the right to cross-check all information entered on to eligibility application forms.
- 9.1.3 Postgraduate Doctors/Learners in training should not dictate the terms and conditions of their LTFTT placements to LEP/Host Trust. The process is one of negotiation between all relevant parties.
- 9.1.4 Postgraduate Doctors/Learners in training are not permitted to carry out any additional employment not covered by sections 7.5.
- 9.1.5 Trust Champions will be available to advise and assist all Postgraduate Doctors/Learners in training.
- 9.1.6 Postgraduate Doctors/Learners in training must ensure that the LTFT application form is in progress in good time before the planned start date of LTFT training. It is the Postgraduate Doctors/ Learners responsibility to be aware of their application forms progress at all times; and raise concerns about the progress of an application with the LTFT Trust Champion or the NHS England LTFT admin team.
- 9.1.7 Once the application form is completed the LTFT team will include in their confirmation email the trainee, the specialty school representative at NHS England and the LEO.
- 9.1.9 Postgraduate Doctors/Learners in training should notify NHS England (and other relevant parties) when there is a change in circumstances relating to:
  - 8.1.9.1 The planned start date
  - 8.1.9.2 Their eligibility
  - 8.1.9.3 A proposed change to their LTFTT arrangements
  - 8.1.9.4 Resignation from the training programme

## 9.2 NHS England , working across North West

- 9.2.1 NHS England will treat all LTFTT applicants, who meet the eligibility criteria, equally, regardless of race, gender, age, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or any other protected characteristic.
- 9.2.2 NHS England is responsible for ensuring that all LTFTT of any kind is undertaken in posts and programmes that have been prospectively approved by GMC.
- 9.2.3 NHS England will manage the LTFTT system in such a way that information pertaining to a LTFT Postgraduate Doctor/ Learner in training (application information or otherwise) flows between all relevant parties. “Relevant parties”

includes, but may not be limited to; the Trainee, Training Programme Directors, Lead employer personnel, trust staffing officers, finance officers and sections of the NHS England

- 9.2.4 NHS England is committed to enabling as many eligible LTFTT applicants as possible to train on a LTFT basis. This includes promoting the mainstreaming of LTFTT and ensuring that supernumerary placements are arranged only as a last resort.
- 9.2.5 NHS England will endeavour to adapt its policy from time to time to reflect changes in national guidance and/or legislative changes relating to LTFTT or part-time working in general. Changes to LTFTT policy will be communicated to all relevant parties in good time.

### 9.3 LEPs/Host Trusts

- 9.3.1 LEPs/Host Trusts are expected to treat LTFT Postgraduate Doctors/Learners no differently from full-time Postgraduate Doctors/Learners , and in accordance with the policies and procedures of the lead employers.

### The Training programme

- 9.4.1 The responsibilities of training programme directors and educational supervisors (or college tutors/ specialty leads) for LTFT Postgraduate Doctors/Learners are no different to full-time Postgraduate Doctors/Learners. This includes annual training assessments (NB Assessments should not be carried out pro-rata for LTFT Postgraduate Doctors/Learners ).

## 10. Further resources/contacts

### 10.1 National guidance

10.1.1 NHS Employers have published two guides to LTFTT which can be downloaded from:

<http://www.nhsemployers.org/PayAndContracts/MedicalandDentalContracts/JuniorDoctorsDentistsGPReg/Pages/DoctorsInTraining-FlexibleMedicalTraining.aspx>

### 10.2 Contacts

10.2.1 A list of LTFT trust champions is published on the LTFT webpage for your information.