

NW Supported Return to Training (SuppoRTT)

Return to Training Activity (RTT-A) Guidance

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Section 1: Introduction

Many trainees will take time out during their training, for a variety of reasons. The duration of this time will vary depending on the reasons: parental leave; long term sick leave; out of programme experiences etc. Research has shown that any trainee taking over 3 months out of clinical practice would benefit from supported return to training (SuppoRTT).

As part of the HEE NW SuppoRTT programme, funding is available for all trainees who are taking time out of training and wish to attend activities that will be of benefit to them in preparation for their return to training. To register with the NW SuppoRTT programme trainees will need to complete one of the online SuppoRTT meeting forms (i.e. Pre-Absence, Pre-Return or Return Review); more information about the SuppoRTT process can be found on [the NW SuppoRTT webpages](#).

HEE NW offers various free generic SuppoRTT activities throughout the year, that are designed to help trainees regain their confidence and competence quickly and safely. Please visit the [SuppoRTT Return to Training Activities \(RTT-A\) page](#) on our website for further information:

HEE recognises that trainees may also wish to attend Trust or specialty specific activities that will aid in their return to training. Trust or School SuppoRTT Champions can advise trainees of activities which may be of use to them; [you can find their contact details here](#). Trainees can apply for individual funding from the SuppoRTT budget prior to their return and up to 8-weeks post return via the Return to Training Activity (RTT-A) application form. The types of activities that can be applied for are:

- ones that will support their return.
- ones that are only available infrequently and which happen during their time out when access to study leave is unavailable.

We now offer a single application form process to enable trainees to apply for the time to undertake the activity (i.e. KIT / SPLIT / SRTT day) as well as the funding. Where a trainee intends to apply, they must have had their Pre-Absence or Pre-Return meeting with their ES / TPD and agreed the details of the intended activity prior to applying. For more information about the SuppoRTT process and the recommended timings for these meetings [please visit the SuppoRTT Guidance and Process webpages](#).

Retrospective applications for funding MAY be considered on a case by case basis whilst this new process is embedding, however this will not be the norm and we reserve the right to deny retrospective applications. All return to training activities should be approved using the RTT-A application form ahead of a trainee attending them. Funding should not be presumed until approval has been confirmed in writing.

More information about each type of day can be found in [Section 2](#) and a simple flowchart is available in [Section 4](#) to help decide which day you should apply for.

Section 2: KIT, SPLIT and SRTT Days

Please be aware this document is guidance, please refer to the Lead Employer when applying for KIT and SPLIT days.

KIT days are specifically for those on maternity and adoption leave.

SPLIT days are specifically for those on shared parental leave.

Supported Return to Training (SRTT) days are a SupportTT initiative. They can be used for all trainees returning to training, regardless of the reason for their time away.

Section 2.1: KIT and SPLIT Days

Introduced by the government in 2007, and available to all employed workers in the UK, Keeping in Touch (KIT) days are intended to facilitate a smooth return to work for staff returning from maternity and adoption leave. In 2015, Shared Parental Leave in Touch (SPLIT) days were introduced to provide equality between all parental leave returners. This guidance is aimed at returning trainees, but KIT and SPLIT days are an entitlement for all people in employed work, not just NHS workers.

In total, you can take up to a maximum of 10 combined KIT and / or SRTT days (please see [section 2.2](#) for further information about SRTT days), per maternity or adoption leave but the use of KIT days is not compulsory. **Working part of one day counts for one whole KIT day** and you do not need to use your KIT days consecutively. Using KIT days during your maternity leave will not affect the duration of your maternity leave or your CCT date.

SPLIT days are available to both parents taking shared parental leave and both parents can take up to 20* combined SPLIT and / or SRTT days (please see [section 2.2](#) for further information about SRTT days) each. These SPLIT days can be taken in addition to the 10 KIT days that the mother is entitled to whilst on maternity leave, this also applies to adoption leave for the primary adopter. For example, a mother who chooses to take 6 months' maternity leave followed by a period of shared parental leave would be entitled to 10 KIT days during her 6 months of maternity leave and a further 20 SPLIT days during shared parental leave. The partner of the mother, also taking shared parental leave is entitled to 20 SPLIT days. The rules surrounding SPLIT days are otherwise the same as for KIT days, it is only the number of days that differs.

***Note:** In some circumstances only one parent is entitled to shared parental leave but may be eligible for shared parental pay. In this case we would advise you to speak to the Lead Employer.

Please see this link for more information:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/881347/shared-parental-leave-and-pay-employers-technical-guide.pdf

What can KIT / SPLIT days be used for?

“Any work that enables an employee to keep in touch with the workplace.”

For example, this could be clinical work, local or regional teaching, specialty-specific training courses, generic life support courses, return-to-training courses, conferences, hospital induction or e-learning.

To find out more about regional courses available for returning trainees in the North West please visit the [NW SuppoRTT Activities Calendar](#).

The work must be mutually agreed in advance, ideally at the Pre-Absence and / or Pre-Return meetings ([more information about the SuppoRTT process can be found here](#)) between the ES / TPD and the trainee. If applicable, the level of clinical responsibility of the trainee must be mutually agreed *in advance* of them undertaking any clinical work. Neither School, employer or trainee can insist on what the KIT / SPLIT days are used for or when they are taken. A high level of supervision is strongly recommended if the trainee has been away from the workplace for more than three months.

When can KIT / SPLIT days be used?

KIT / SPLIT days may not be used during the two weeks of compulsory maternity and adoption leave immediately after the birth of the baby. KIT days can only be taken during the following 37 weeks when in receipt of statutory maternity pay (SMP) which is also known as the Maternity Pay Period (up to week 39). SPLIT days can only be taken whilst in receipt of Shared Parental Pay (ShPP).

Please see [section 2.2](#) for information on SRTT days which you can use during unpaid leave or accrued annual leave.

Pay and time off in lieu for parental leave associated KIT / SPLIT days

It is strongly advised that the details regarding pay for these days is discussed and agreed by the trainee and Lead Employer *prior* to undertaking any KIT / SPLIT days. All return to training activity should be discussed and agreed with the trainee's ES / TPD in advance of a trainee undertaking them and funding can be applied for from SuppoRTT using the RTT-A application form.

Working part of one day counts as 1 KIT / SPLIT day. The trainee will be paid at their basic daily rate for the hours worked, less the occupational or statutory maternity, adoption, share parental leave payments. Pay for a KIT / SPLIT day undertaken by a LTFT trainee should be the same as that of an equivalent grade full-time trainee basic daily rate for the hours worked.

Following the most recent junior doctors contract review trainees are entitled to time back in lieu (in the following situations) to reflect the loss of maternity, adoption, shared parental leave and pay associated with taking KIT and SPLIT days.

- If the KIT / SPLIT day is taken during the **full pay period**, the Lead Employer will ensure the trainee receives a day of paid leave in lieu once the employee has returned to work.
- If the KIT / SPLIT day is taken during the **half pay period**, the Lead Employer will ensure the trainee receives a half day of paid leave in lieu once the employee has returned to work.

Pay for KIT / SPLIT days is from the Trust / host organisation paying the maternity, shared parental and adoption leave pay, even if the trainee is due to return to work in a different Trust and it has been agreed that the trainee will undertake the KIT / SPLIT days in their new Trust / host organisation.

Trainees who are transferring into the North West from another region are advised to seek advice from HR at the [Lead Employer](#).

Additional financial considerations

If a trainee takes averaged occupational pay for their parental leave, we advise that they discuss the financial and lieu day reimbursements for KIT / SPLIT days with the Lead Employer at their earliest opportunity. Reimbursement should be equitable, but there is no specific NHS Employers guidance on such cases at present.

Childcare costs can potentially be more than the KIT and SPLIT day financial remuneration, especially if KIT and SPLIT days are taken early in the parental leave. Unfortunately, HEE in the North West is unable to offer reimbursement of childcare cost however we aim to make all regionally organised activity child friendly and will make every effort to offer childcare facilities where possible.

Applying for KIT / SPLIT Days

We now offer a single application form process to enable trainees to apply for the time to undertake the activity (i.e. KIT / SPLIT / SRTT day) as well as any associated expenses.

Once the RTT-A Application Form has been completed online (please see [Section 3](#) for details of the application process) the NW SuppoRTT Team will then liaise with the relevant team to ensure the trainee is correctly reimbursed for this time.

Please visit <https://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/supportt-activities> to access the online form.

Other considerations

Any employee who is breast-feeding must be risk-assessed and appropriate facilities provided. If the trainee or their child are deemed to be at risk from the KIT / SPLIT work proposed, alternative work should be considered

Medical indemnity cover may be required if clinical work is to be undertaken. It is suggested that the trainee prospectively arranges this with their usual insurer. The mainstream insurers all have policies relating to KIT / SPLIT day cover.

The trainee must have valid DBS clearance if undertaking clinical work.

If the trainee has not completed the Trust induction where they are undertaking their KIT / SPLIT / SRTT days, they must clear the arrangements with HR and only work in a supernumerary capacity. Alternatively, it may be possible to prospectively arrange an honorary contract.

Childcare arrangements are the responsibility of the trainee and can take time to organise.

The full guidance from NHS Employers on KIT and SPLIT days can be found in the [NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook](#).

Cancelling or rearranging KIT / SPLIT Days

If a trainee is unable to attend the organised KIT / SPLIT day (due to cancellation by the provider, sickness, childcare issues etc.) it is the trainee's responsibility to contact the [NW SuppoRTT Team](#) as soon as possible so that all relevant parties can be informed.

If the activity is rearranged for a different date but all other details remain the same (type of day, activity cost, expenses etc.) the trainee will not be required to complete a new RTT-A application form for this. If the details of the day are different to the original application the trainee may be asked to complete a new application form.

Section 2.2: SRTT Days

This is a relatively new concept and is currently under development at both a regional and national level. We will update this guidance and the NW SuppoRTT webpages when needed to reflect any changes.

Supported Return to Training (SuppoRTT) aims to provide equitable support to trainees returning to work from **all types** of prolonged leave. Supported Return to Training (SRTT) days are equivalent to keep in touch (KIT) days for all non-parental leave returners or those on parental leave who wish to undertake activities during the unpaid and accrued annual leave parts of their leave.

SRTT days can be used in conjunction with KIT / SPLIT days for trainees on Parental Leave up to a maximum of 10 combined days for Maternity / Adoption Leave and 20 combined days for Shared Parental Leave. **Working part of one day counts as one whole SRTT day** and you do not need to use your SRTT days consecutively.

Organisation of Supported Return to Training (SRTT) days

It is strongly advised that these days are discussed and agreed during the Pre-Absence and / or Pre-Return meetings a trainee has with their ES / TPD ([more information about the SuppoRTT process can be found here](#)) and funding can be applied for from SuppoRTT for activities during the period of time out of training and up to 8 weeks post return (if they specifically relate to the trainee's return).

For SRTT days worked in the accrued annual leave portion of parental leave an additional day of annual leave is given in return, which is added to the end of the accrued annual leave period, effectively delaying the trainee's return date. **As this has staffing implications for the host organisation the trainee returns to it is imperative that these days are applied for as soon as possible (ideally at least 12 weeks before) so that the new RTT date is communicated to the host organisation with sufficient time for them to arrange staffing on these days.**

In the case of those who are out of programme (OOP), the situation for each trainee will vary and arrangements should be discussed with the TPD.

Payment for SRTT days

For trainees returning from paid non-clinical work e.g. OOPR, the trainee may be able to attend these days and receive funding to cover expenses and course costs. This is assessed based on individual circumstances.

Trainees only permitted unpaid leave or are not in paid work at the time that they take the SRTT day are currently unable to receive a salary-type payment for these days. Time in lieu for the SRTT may be agreed locally on your return to work. This would be on a case-by-case basis and can be discussed further with the [Lead Employer](#). The trainee can still apply for funding to cover expenses and activity costs.

Trainees on parental leave who are taking an SRTT day during the unpaid leave period will be paid basic salary for the day worked.

Trainees on parental leave who are taking an SRTT day during the accrued annual leave period will be given an additional annual leave day(s) in return which will be added onto the end of the accrued annual leave period (i.e. they cannot be carried over after returning to work). **Applications for these days should be made ideally 12 weeks, and no later than 8 weeks, prior to the trainee's return to training.** This is to ensure the later RTT date is communicated to the trainee's returning host organisation with enough notice for sufficient staffing to be arranged on these days.

Funding is available to cover expenses and activity costs for any trainee participating in an approved return to training activity (RTT-A), which can be applied for from SuppoRTT using the RTT-A application form. Requests for funding will be assessed, approved, and paid by the HEE NW SuppoRTT team.

Please note: Funding is not guaranteed until you have received notification of approval following submission of the RTT-A application form.

SRTT days post-return to training

Trainees who wish to undertake return to training activities in the first 8-weeks following their return to training can apply for study leave time and SuppoRTT funding using the RTT-A application form. If the activity does not directly relate to the return to training, please use the normal study leave process.

If approved, your application will be forwarded to the NW Study Leave team so that a study day can be used.

Sick leave associated SRTT days

This is a complex issue and will require consideration on an individual basis. Most trainees returning from sick leave will undergo a phased return to practice. This will usually involve input from the trainee, their ES, TPD, Occupational Health and HEE NW.

Applying for SRTT Days

We now offer a single application form process to enable trainees to apply for the time to undertake the activity (i.e. KIT / SPLIT / SRTT day) as well as the funding.

Once the RTT-A Application Form has been completed online (please see [Section 3](#) for details of the application process) the NW SuppoRTT Team will then liaise with the relevant team to ensure the trainee is correctly reimbursed for this time.

Please visit <https://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/supportt-activities> to access the online form.

Cancelling or rearranging SRTT Days

If a trainee is unable to attend the organised SRTT day (due to cancellation by the provider, sickness, childcare issues etc.) it is the trainee's responsibility to contact the [NW SuppoRTT Team](#) as soon as possible so that all relevant parties can be informed.

If the activity is rearranged for a different date but all other details remain the same (type of day, activity cost, expenses etc.) the trainee will not be required to complete a new RTT-A application form for this. If the details of the day are different to the original application the trainee may be asked to complete a new application form.

Section 2.3: Foundation Trainees

Foundation trainees are welcome to use this application process for any expenses associated with return to training activities however at this time Foundation trainees also be asked to follow their Trust's application process for KIT / SPLIT days.

To access Supported Return to Training (SRTT) days in the unpaid period of parental leave or in the accrued annual leave period please speak to the [Trust Champion](#) and HR department first.

Section 3: RTT-A Funding

To be eligible to access RTT-A funding from HEE the trainee must complete at least one of the SuppoRTT meeting forms, i.e. Pre-Absence, Pre-Return form. All activity must be discussed and agreed with the trainee's ES or F/TPD prior to applying and included on the Pre-Absence or Pre-Return form.

Receipts are required for the following expenses relating to the return to training activities:

- Course / Conference fees
- Accommodation (max. £120 per night or max. £150 per night in London)
- Subsistence (only applicable to overnight stays)
- Rail Travel (including Tube, Train & Tram journeys)
- Parking
- Taxis

Subsistence (food and non-alcoholic drinks) can be claimed **where the trainee will be away overnight** to a maximum of £20 per day. Claims for alcohol will not be reimbursed. Receipts will need to be provided when making a claim for this. If no receipts are received, then you will not be refunded.

Mileage can be claimed back at the rate of 30p per mile.

Claims for funding must be submitted within 3 months of the activity. All claims must be supported by proof of payment, as well as proof of attendance / completion for

reimbursement to be made. The invoice number to be used will be provided with confirmation of approval.

Section 4: The RTT-A Application Process

[The online RTT-A Application Form can be found by clicking here.](#)

You can apply for up to 10 Return to Training Activities on the RTT-A application form. If you need to apply for more than 10 Return to Training Activities, please fill out another RTT-A application form.

Please note: Retrospective applications for funding **may** be considered on a case by case basis whilst this new process is embedding, however this will not be the norm and we reserve the right to deny retrospective applications. All return to training activities should be approved using the RTT-A application form ahead of a trainee attending them. Funding should not be presumed until approval has been confirmed in writing from the NW SuppoRTT Team.

All activities should be discussed and agreed during the Pre-Absence and / or Pre-Return meeting and included on the relevant form ([more information about the SuppoRTT process can be found here](#)). Applications for SRTT days in the accrued annual leave period should be made ideally 12 weeks, and **no later than 8 weeks**, prior to the trainee's RTT date so that the new RTT date is communicated to the returning host organisation with sufficient time for them to make alternate arrangements on those additional days.

Process for applying

1. **Trainee** to discuss all return to training activity (RTT-A) with their ES and / or F/TPD and include on the Pre-Absence and / or Pre-Return Form(s).
 - a. If the meeting will not have taken place before the activity, please ensure that a separate discussion is had with your ES or F/TPD before applying.
2. **Trainee** to complete the online RTT-A application form which will be submitted directly to the NW SuppoRTT Team.
3. **NW SuppoRTT Team** will review application and decide an outcome.
4. The **NW SuppoRTT Team** will assign an application number which will be used on all correspondence relating to this application.

Health Education England

5. **NW SuppoRTT Team** will email the trainee with the outcome of the application and, where funding has been approved, will provide an expense claim form. This email will be copied to:
 - the Trainee's F/TPD for information.
 - the Lead Employer if the trainee is on parental / long term sick leave.
 - the NW Study Leave team if study leave time is being used.
 - the trainee's Trust or School SuppoRTT Champion if time in lieu needs to be arranged locally.
6. Following completion of the activity the **Trainee** should complete the expense claim form and send to SuppoRTT.nw@hee.nhs.uk along with copies of all relevant pieces of evidence (i.e. proof of attendance / completion / expenditure etc.) This should be done within 3 months of the activity taking place.
7. Expenses and any salary payments will be paid by the Lead Employer as usual via payroll. Any expenses processed before the 8th of every month will be reimbursed in that same month. If expenses are processed after the 8th of the month, then these will be reimbursed in the following month.

Section 5: Flowchart



