

# Less Than Full Time (LTFT) Training: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

## What is LTFT Training?

- LTFT training is when a doctor in training undertakes their training programme as less than 1 Full Time Equivalent (FTE). Doctors who are not currently in training will have to negotiate any LTFT request with their employer.
- Historically, applications for LTFT training fell within two categories as listed in the Gold Guide. These were prioritised as Category 1, for those with caring responsibilities or ill health and Category 2, for those deemed eligible due to unique opportunities for their own personal/professional development.
- A new Category 3 for LTFT was developed for postgraduate doctors in training across England to submit an application to train LTFT due to their personal choice, not limited by the previous eligibility for Categories 1 and 2:
  - **Category 3: “Trainees who choose to train LTFT as a personal choice that meets their individual professional or lifestyle needs. Whilst that choice and the reasons for it are not subject to the judgement of anyone else, it is dependent upon and might be limited by service considerations.”**
- LTFT Category 3 was piloted in Emergency Medicine, Obstetrics & Gynaecology and Paediatrics, and was then made available across England in all postgraduate specialties using a “lead in year” model in 2021 and 2022.
- Following the success of the LTFT Category 3 pilot and the publication of the [Gold Guide](#) (9<sup>th</sup> Edition, August 2022), the categories for LTFT training have been removed, allowing

all doctors in training the opportunity to apply to train LTFT for any well-founded reason, including for their wellbeing or through personal choice.

- Doctors in training currently training under LTFT Category 3 will not be impacted by this change, this only impacts new applications from August 2022.

## When and how to apply?

- The application process will vary depending on your specialty and the region within which you train. Contact your Training Programme Director (TPD) and HEE Local Office (Deanery) for more information on how and when to apply for your specialty. It is important to try and give as much notice as possible, we advise you should try and give at least 16 weeks' notice.
- It is also important to note that acceptance of your application may be dependent upon and might be limited by service considerations as well as the capacity of the training programme itself. Those who are Out of Programme or undertaking “Acting Up” placements are not eligible.

## Am I eligible to train LTFT?

- As per the latest iteration of the [Gold Guide](#) (9<sup>th</sup> Edition, August 2022):
  - 3.122 **All doctors in training can apply for LTFT training**, the only requirement being a well-founded individual reason. A full list of illustrative examples of reasons for requesting LTFT training is included in paragraph 3.123.
  - 3.123 Reasons for requesting LTFT training – illustrative list
    - I. Trainees with a disability or ill health – this may include ongoing medical procedures such as fertility treatment.
    - II. Trainees with caring responsibilities (e.g. for children, or for an ill/disabled partner, relative or other dependent).
    - III. Welfare and wellbeing – There may be reasons not directly related disability or ill health where trainees may benefit from a reduced working

pattern. This could have a beneficial effect on their health and wellbeing (e.g. reducing potential burnout).

- IV. Unique Opportunities – A trainee is offered a unique opportunity for their own personal/professional development and this will affect their ability to training full time (e.g. training for national/international sporting events, or a short-term extraordinary responsibility such as a membership of a national committee or continuing medical research as a bridge to progression in integrated academic training).
- V. Religious commitment – A trainee has a religious commitment that involves training for a particular role and requires a specific time commitment resulting in the need to work less than full time.
- VI. Non-medical development – A trainee is offered non-medical professional development (e.g. management courses, law courses or fine arts courses) that requires a specific time commitment resulting in the need to work less than time.
- VII. Flexibility for training and career development with the option to train less than full time with flexibility that might enable development of a broad career portfolio.

## Pay and Pension

- Whilst training LTFT, your salary will drop on a pro rata basis and this will affect your pension similarly, based on what FTE you take up. Guidance can be found as follows:
  - NHS Employers have produced a guide to LTFT pay:
    - <https://www.nhsemployers.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/LTFT-pay-guidance-February-2017.pdf>
  - The BMA have also produced a guide to LTFT pay, including examples, weekend allowance, on call, transitional pay and flexible pay:
    - <https://www.bma.org.uk/pay-and-contracts/pay/ltft/less-than-full-time-trainees-pay-explained>

You may wish to get independent financial advice on how working LTFT will influence your pension.

## LTFT Allowance - £1000 per annum

### Q: What is the cost allowance for LTFT trainees?

**A:** All LTFT trainees are entitled to an annual allowance of **£1,000**. This allowance is to recognise the relative increased costs of training that doctors training LTFT face as a result of being less than full-time. This payment is only for doctors training LTFT. It is paid in full and not pro-rated in any way. Contact the HR department in your Trust to ensure this is paid. More information can be found at the below link, should your Trust be unaware of the payment:

- <https://www.nhsemployers.org/news/junior-doctor-ltft-allowance-update>

## Working Patterns

### Q: How do I work out my annual leave and study leave entitlement?

**A:** Annual leave and study leave will be calculated on a pro-rata basis i.e. if you are working at 80% FTE (full-time equivalent), you will be entitled to 80% of your FTE annual leave and study leave

### Q: Can I have a fixed day/s off, of my choosing?

**A:** In order for employers to effectively manage rotas, you will need to negotiate with your employing Trust what day/s you do not work. However, when you rotate to a new Trust, these arrangements will have to be discussed and renegotiated with your new Trust, and it may sometimes be the case that your arrangements have to change in your new rotation. Try and make these arrangements with as much notice as possible.

### Q: What about on-call?

**A:** If the equivalent full-time post has on call duties, you will need to do approximately the pro-rata equivalent of on call duties. If you have already undertaken and met the curriculum requirements for on call/out of hours work within your specialty, then whether or not you are required to do on call will depend on the service needs of the employer. If there are health reasons that would prohibit such work, particularly in the case of suggested patterns of work in an occupational health report, you will need to meet with your faculty (TPD, Head of School, AD or Deputy Dean) to agree a bespoke placement.

**Q: Can I take time off in lieu?**

**A:** Time recouped in lieu of work outside of contracted hours is normally possible. For example, if a LTFT trainee who works Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday attends a training day on a Friday, they should be able to claim back a day in lieu. It would be important however to seek out local arrangements with your contractual employer on such matters in the first instance.

**Q: Can I do locum work?**

**A:** In principle, locum work is permitted. All locum work must be declared on your Form R. Full guidance can be found at this link:

- [https://www.copmed.org.uk/images/docs/publications/Guidance\\_on\\_Undertaking\\_Additional\\_Work\\_.pdf](https://www.copmed.org.uk/images/docs/publications/Guidance_on_Undertaking_Additional_Work_.pdf)

**Q: Will being LTFT extend my total time in training and extend my CCT date?**

**A:** All postgraduate curricula have recently been revised and are being implemented. All are capability based, only foundation is time based. Normally this will mean that training is extended pro rata, however this may not always be the case and would be determined at ARCP on an individual basis.

**Q. What would happen if a Trainee changes Employer/placement during their training?**

**A:** The LTFT training arrangement is an agreement between the doctor in training, Employer and HEE Local Office/School. By approving the initial application, HEE and the School have agreed to the doctor in training reducing their hours for the specified period; this will need to be conveyed from the HEE Local Office to any new Employer/Host Organisation as part of any subsequent rotations.

**Q: What about Inter Deanery Transfers?**

**A:** If a doctor in training changes HEE Local Office through the Inter Deanery Transfer process and wishes to continue working LTFT, they would have to request this via the new HEE Local Office through the normal processes in order to reconfirm the status.

**Q: Who isn't eligible to apply for LTFT?**

**A:** Those who are Out of Programme or undertaking a period of Acting Up are not eligible to apply. LTFT is not available to doctors in training who are out of programme (including acting up) or in the grace period, it only applies to those in approved training posts. Any flexible working arrangements would need to be agreed with the local employer.

**Q: My LTFT application has been declined, can I appeal this decision?**

**A:** Where a request to work LTFT has been rejected the doctor in training has the right to appeal that decision. The doctor in training must follow the appeal process within the local HEE office.

## **Visas**

**Q: Will training LTFT affect my visa/are there any limits to what % FTE I work whilst on a skilled worker visa?**

**A:** A reduction in hours will mean a drop in salary and this could impact on your eligibility to work on a skilled worker visa. When applying for a new visa, you should ensure that your salary meets the minimum requirements, there are minimum salary requirements for a skilled worker or Tier 2 visa. Therefore, skilled worker applicants need to liaise with their HEE Local Office and UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) to ensure that any proposed reduction in working pattern (and therefore reduction in hours and pay) does not compromise your visa requirements. This is the responsibility of the doctor in training.

All sponsored doctors in training, regardless of whether they hold a Tier 2 visa or Skilled Worker visa, will need to meet the minimum salary requirements of £20,480 per annum when calculated

as a percentage of the going rate. To do this the 'going rate' is based on the basic salary as outlined in the [NHS Medical and Dental \(M&D\) pay scales](#).

A helpful guide, based on the current pay scales as of October 2022, the minimum hours are set out in the table below

	<b>Going rate/Basic salary (M&amp;D pay scale)</b>	<b>Minimum hours to meet salary requirement of £20,480 per annum</b>	<b>Salary per annum</b>
<b>FY1</b>	£29,384	70% or 28 hours	£20,569
<b>FY2</b>	£34,012	61% or 24.4 hours	£20,747
<b>CT/ST 1/2</b>	£40,257	51% or 20.4 hours	£20,531
<b>CT3 and ST 3/4/5</b>	£51,017	41% or 16.4 hours	£20,917
<b>ST 6/7/8</b>	£58,398	36% or 14.4 hours	£21,023

Please note that whilst you may be able to reduce your hours to meet sponsorship requirements, LTFT hours will need to be approved by the local HEE Office and/or Trust. For more information on visas please visit here: <https://www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa/your-job>

Doctors in training would also be required to complete a [Reporting Form](#) that can be found [here](#), which should be completed after your LTFT is approved and before it commences as we are required. Please contact HEE's Overseas Sponsorship Team via your HEE local office for more information.

## **Parental Leave**

**Q: How does LTFT affect parental leave? Are you entitled to the full amount of maternity leave and pay or would it be related to the percentage you are training at?**

**A:** All employees have a right to take 52 weeks maternity leave. For those eligible for maternity pay, this is based on the employees' average weekly earnings, averaged over a period of at least eight weeks up to and including the last payday before the end of the qualifying week. The qualifying week is currently the 15th week before the week the baby is due. Further information

on leave and pay for new parents can be found in section 15 of the [NHS terms and conditions of service handbook](#).

## Further useful information and links

- Each Trust should have a Flexible Working Champion. Their job is to support all employees who work flexibly/asynchronously or LTFT. The HR department of your hospital should be able to give you their details if you need further support or information. The BMA and NHS employers have published “The Good Rostering Guide”. There is a section within this guide that gives good advice for LTFT: <https://www.nhsemployers.org/case-studies-and-resources/2018/05/good-rostering-guide>
- NHS Employers - guidance on the pay system for LTFT trainees: <https://www.nhsemployers.org/sites/default/files/2021-07/LTFT-pay-guidance-February-2017.pdf>
- NHS Employers – LTFT weekend and on-call availability allowance ready reckoner (Excel): <https://www.nhsemployers.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/LTFT-allowance-calculator-8.xlsx>