

## Applying and being approved for Less than Fulltime Training (LTFT) - a guide of Postgraduate Doctors in Training

These steps are designed to guide you through the process of applying for LTFT training from start to end. At times, a doctor may need to access LTFT training quickly and often at short notice. Such reasons might include a personal or family illness. Fortunately, the majority of doctors who decide to go LTFT have time to prepare and plan. This is also important for your Training Programme Director (TPD) and especially for the Trust you will be working for. Please read the time-lines section in Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) within this document carefully so you can plan your move to LTFT as smoothly as possible for everyone.

### Step 1 - explore

Moving to LTFT is a major career decision and should be carefully considered. There will be a significant impact on your training schedule, your time in training and your income. Most doctors in training will say that LTFT is much more challenging because you must be especially organised and plan training opportunities ahead. Some doctors in training feel they may not be regarded in the same way once they become LTFT, but this is not the case. Trainers understand and appreciate that people need to combine their profession with the things happening in their own personal life.

There is plenty of information available, sources include:

- Friends and colleagues, (your senior colleagues may have trained LTFT and be happy to share their experiences)
- Websites, including HEE Yorkshire and Humber and your College websites
- National HEE Guidance on LTFT is valuable, especially the section on progressing through training LTFT which is essential information you must consider
- Senior Faculty are available at HEEYH to guide you if you are still unsure, or you think your circumstances may be more complicated or challenging
- At the end of this section is some guidance on when, why and how you can speak to someone in Professional Support at HEEYH

### Step 2 – meet with your trainers, talk to them about your plans

Once you have decided you would like to consider LTFT training you should speak with your Educational Supervisor, so they are aware. They may have already been part of your decision process. Following this you need to approach your TPD to express a formal wish to become LTFT. This should be at least 16 weeks before your planned start date. You will need to fill in an application form which can be

found on the HEEYH website under the LTFT section. However, we would strongly advise speaking to your TPD in person as well so they are aware of your request.

Once you have sent this form to your TPD you have started the formal process of applying for LTFT training. If there is important supporting evidence which you are happy to share then this should be attached with your form.

### **Step 3 – Training Programme Director processes your application**

Your TPD should process your application in as timely a way as possible. Please remember though that they are often involved in many roles and may be on leave so the greater time you can give the better. TPDs are very supportive of LTFT and very much aware of the benefits it can provide to doctors in training who for whatever reason find full time training is not right for them. They will always consider your application for LTFT but it may be that the TPD cannot agree to the move. This is generally because of there already being an existing number of LTFT doctors in training on a rotation and there being insufficient resources.

If your application is turned down, you have the right to appeal. Information is available on our website. It may also be helpful to speak with Senior Faculty at HEEYH at this stage. (See FAQs).

In most cases the TPD will be in a position to agree to your request. They will then confirm their agreement on the application form which will then be sent to the administrative team at HEEYH.

### **Step 4 – identifying a placement**

This is potentially the most crucial step, and it may be that your TPD may wish to do this before confirming acceptance of your move to LTFT. Your TPD will need to identify a placement that is suitable for your training needs within a Trust that is able to accommodate a LTFT doctor in training.

Obviously, some Trusts and departments may struggle with having several LTFT doctors in training on their rota and it is within the rights of the Trust to say that unfortunately they cannot accommodate you. If this happens, your TPD may suggest alternatives which should be discussed with you to ensure you are aware of any changes to your training schedule. Situations can vary from month to month so it may be that a Trust cannot accommodate you at this moment but may be able to at a later date.

The important thing is to stay in touch with your TPD if they are struggling to find a suitable placement for you so that you can be involved in any decisions. Our Trusts in Yorkshire and the Humber are very supportive of LTFT doctors in training but at times of over subscription for LTFT placements there may need to be decisions based on the priorities of the equality act.

Wherever possible your Trust placement should be identified 12 weeks prior to starting. This gives both the Trust and you time to plan ahead.

## **Step 5 – is there a need for supernumerary funding?**

Under certain circumstances a doctor in training may qualify for supernumerary funding which may help in finding a placement. This is generally restricted to doctors who need a bespoke work pattern for a short period (usually max 3 months). If your TPD considers this to be useful (following a discussion with yourself) they should speak directly to HEEYH. The vast majority of LTFT doctors in training in Yorkshire and the Humber are funded in a standard fashion from the normal training budget.

## **Step 6 – conformation of your Trust placement**

When the Trust has confirmed that they can accommodate you in a placement they should inform you, your TPD and the administrative team at HEEYH so the changes can be made to your placement details. Providing the time scales have been met this should be by 12 weeks before your start date. However, please remember that things may impact on this particularly if there has needed to be changes to a rotation to accommodate yourself or indeed other doctors in training.

## **Step 7 – notification of rota and work schedule**

Different Trusts may approach this in different ways. Some Medical deployments will organise all the rotas and will do their very best to let you know as soon as possible what your forthcoming timetable is. Everyone involved understands that it is important to know what you are doing and when.

Things which might hold this up may be if the Trust has received the notification from the TPD of which doctors in training are coming a little late, or if there has been last minute sickness or gaps. Please be understanding, if you have not heard anything about your rota 6 weeks before you are due to start then contact your local team and ask them if they have any information.

Alternatively, in some Trusts some departments create their own rotas and there will be a rota coordinator on the team you are joining. For that reason, as soon as your placement confirmation is received contact the department you are joining and ask who you should speak to about the rota plan. This is especially important if you are requesting a certain rota pattern. Remember that a department will do their best to help you with your needs but the rota should be balance of being workable for everyone on it, your training requirements and any individual pattern you may request.

## **Step 8 – contacting your educational supervisor and planning induction**

This is one of the most important steps in your process to LTFT training. If you are returning after an absence or if you are likely to have certain needs related to your health or to carers responsibilities, you need to make early contact with your Educational Supervisor to discuss how you can be supported and get the most out of your training. Remember to access Supported Return to Training (SuppoRTT) if you have been off for more than 3 months. They may also be very helpful when it comes

to planning your timetable so ideally plan to meet with them as soon as you have their contact details.

## FAQS

### ➤ **What is the timeline for my LTFT application?**

The more time we have to proceed your application the better. Though obviously if your anticipated start date is many months away it may be too early to contact Trusts for instance or to plan a rotation. In general, we would ask you to speak to your TPD and place your application at least 16 weeks before you wish to commence LTFT. Trusts are asking for a minimum of 12 weeks' notice when doctors in training wish to commence LTFT in order to be able to plan rotas. Obviously there may be a sudden change in your circumstances that means you need to move to LTFT very quickly. In this situation we will do everything we can to help expedite formal LTFT and many departments are extremely supportive in agreeing to a temporary reduction in hours till this can be done

### ➤ **What should I do if my application is refused?**

Whilst it is unlikely that your application would be refused it is something you must be aware of. Schools and Trusts will do everything they can to accommodate doctors in training who for well-founded health reasons or carer roles cannot train full time. Training less than full time is now open to everyone who wishes to apply and we are seeing an increasing number of doctors in training who for life work balance are applying to be LTFT. If demand exceeds the resources available, then there will undoubtedly need to be priority given to those who cannot train full time. However, every application is considered on its own merit and everyone is aware of colleagues different needs.

If your application is turned down, it will be most likely due to insufficient training resources. The first thing to do is to talk options over with your TPD. There is an appeal process which you can access and at the same time we would encourage you to make an appointment with the Professional Support team at HEEYH to talk to someone about what has happened.

### ➤ **When should I approach the Professional Support team at HEE Yorkshire and the Humber for advice?**

Senior faculty at HEEYH who are based in Professional Support are available to talk to you one to one about your wish for a move to LTFT training or at any point in the application process. Examples of when you might want to talk to someone include –

- You are unsure if LTFT is right for you
- You would like to talk to someone outside of your speciality about LTFT training

- After discussions with your ES/TPD you have both identified that your situation may be more challenging and the input from Professional Support might be helpful
- You are having difficulty accessing LTFT training for any reason
- You have commenced LTFT training, but you feel things are not going as well as you had hoped.

To meet with one of our Professional Support team, please complete an enquiry form on our website. A member of our team will then be in contact to talk to you about how we can help. Sometimes this is an appointment to talk to an Associate Dean (which can be in complete confidence if you wish) or it maybe we can direct you to other resources we have which can help.

➤ **Should I speak to Occupational Health before I apply for LTFT for health reasons?**

It is no longer required that you access LTFT training for health reasons via OH or with a letter of support for LTFT training from your GP or Specialist. We respect that some doctors may also not wish to put much detail about health conditions on their application form.

However, particularly if you are seeking an extended adjusted pattern of working perhaps involving shift length or shift timing or OOH then you should make an appointment with OH prior to your application. A letter from their Practitioner explaining what work pattern adjustments is needed is important to enable you to gain the best from your move to LTFT and to ensure that the Trust employing you can accommodate these adjustments.

It is understandable that people may not wish their health condition to be known widely. However, if your health is impacting on your ability to train full time then it is reasonable to talk to your Educational Supervisor in general terms about what you need to stay as healthy as possible at work, and in turn to talk to your TPD about why you think LTFT will help you. You do not need to go into detail on your application form if you prefer not to, but it is important that your supervisors are aware of your need for support

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