# A Trainee’s Guide to Less than Full Time Working During the Foundation Programme

## Yorkshire and the Humber Foundation School

There are lots of reasons for deciding to train and work on a less than full time (LTFT) basis and you may choose to do so either at the start of your training, after a period of time out of training (for example, after maternity leave) or any point during your training for different reasons.

This guide is designed to give you an overview of the process of applying for LTFT training during your Foundation programme. It should give you a starting point for the application process and tell you where to find more information if you require it.

**Reasons for LTFT Training**

At present when you apply for LTFT training you need to apply under one of the following categories:

* Category 1 – ill health or disability, or caring responsibilities (for children, partner or other relatives)
* Category 2 – other significant commitments. These may include national committees, high level research (such as a PhD), study in a non-medical subject or religious or sporting commitments.

In some specialities it is now possible to apply to LTFT training without needing to fulfil either of the above criteria (Category 3), but this is not currently possible in Foundation training (it is planned to be rolled out in the next 3 years).

**What to expect as a LTFT trainee**

LTFT training should offer you the same opportunities as your full-time colleagues. However, you should be aware that your foundation training will take longer than two years to complete and you will need to be organised when planning your commitments along with your work life and teaching/training opportunities.

Remember that if you choose to work 60%, for example, you will be paid approximately 60% of what your full-time colleagues earn.

The Foundation Programme in Yorkshire and the Humber is thinking about how to make LTFT training work best for trainees. At present you are likely to rotate every 4 months (at the same time as full-time colleagues), but this is likely to change in the near future. We know that moving frequently when LTFT may make it difficult to get to know how a department works, but we also know there can be advantages to moving in line with full time colleagues. If you have any feedback on how rotations have worked for you, then please let the Foundation School know! In the first instance contact Alex Damazer (Leadership Fellow to the Foundation School and also a current specialty trainee who has worked LTFT – [adamazer@doctors.org.uk](mailto:adamazer@doctors.org.uk)).

**What hours do LTFT trainees work?**

Full time training equates to 100%.

When you apply to train LTFT, you will be asked what percentage you wish to work (you cannot train at less than 50% except in very exceptional circumstances, which would be discussed on an individual basis).

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| **Percentage** | **Working Time Equivalent** | **Hours Worked (per week)** |
| 100% | 1 | 40 to 48 |
| 80% | 0.8 | 32 to 38.4 |
| 70% | 0.7 | 28 to 33.6 |
| 60% | 0.6 | 24 to 28.8 |
| 50% | 0.5 | 20 to 24 |

The variability in your hours worked depends upon the contracted number of hours that your full- time colleagues are working on each rota and also on your individual work schedule (see more about this below).

Foundation Year 1 doctors hold provisional registration. The GMC stipulate that the maximum amount of time any doctor can hold provisional registration is limited to 3 years and 30 days. This is taken from the time provisional registration is granted (usually following Medical School graduation) and includes any time out of training (such as maternity leave). There is process by which you can apply to extend this.

For more information – see the GMC website at:

https://www.gmc-uk.org/registration-and-licensing/guide-to-provisional-registration

**How to apply**

Choosing to be LTFT is not as simple as deciding that you meet either category 1 or 2 above. You need to apply through a formal process and there are a number of people who need to be made aware. At present there are still significantly more full-time Foundation trainees than LTFT trainees and therefore some of the onus for arranging your work pattern will fall on you as the trainee.

Steps in application:

1. You should give as much notice as possible that you are thinking of training LTFT. We know that sometimes situations change rapidly, but please try to give notice whenever you can. In the first instance you should speak to your TPD and to your Educational Supervisor (if you are not yet aware who your TPD and/or Education Supervisor are, then you should contact the Foundation School to ascertain this information ASAP)
2. You need to complete the Health Education England Yorkshire and the Humber paperwork as soon as possible. This can be found at: <https://www.yorksandhumberdeanery.nhs.uk/learner_support/policies/less_than_full_time>

There is also a flowchart available which guides you through the LTFT application process.

1. Once your LTFT training has been approved you need to inform:
   * Your TPD and Educational Supervisor (they should already aware from the initial discussions that you have had with them)
   * The Yorkshire and Humber Foundation School – email [LTFTEast.yh@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:LTFTEast.yh@hee.nhs.uk) (for ALL Foundation trainees, even if you will not be working in the east)
   * Your Trust HR and Medical Workforce/Education teams. They will be responsible for organisation of your work schedule and rota.

**Work Schedules, Contracts and Rotas**

Your work schedule should explain where you will be working, your general working hours and the requirements for on-call shifts, weekends and night shifts. It will also have details of your Educational and/or Clinical Supervisor and the Trust Rota Co-ordinator. The work schedule also includes a summary of your pay for that job and the teaching and training opportunities that will be available to you.

Your contract is separate to the work schedule and should include information about your pension and your annual leave and study leave entitlements. It will also have information about trust/hospital induction, any necessary pre-employment checks and any expenses that you are able to claim for (travel and relocation are the most common examples).

All LTFT trainees should be issued with a personalised (bespoke) work schedule. You are likely to have some input into the design. You will need a copy of the full-time rota in order to do this.

As a starting point:

* Expect to work a percentage of each type of shift – for example a trainee who works 60% should work **approximately** 60% of the number of night shifts, weekends and standard day shifts that a full-time colleague would work. This is the case unless you have a health reasons not to work some shifts (such as long days or night shifts) in which case this will be incorporated into the design of your personalised work schedule.
* If you have to attend mandatory training or a study day on a non-working day, you should ensure that your study leave is approved in advance. You will then be able to take time of in lieu for this, or to claim pay for the extra day worked.
* Your working days may not always be able to be same when moving between departments in the Trust. This is because educational opportunities and other pressures of work will vary in different jobs. Make sure that you get in contact with your new department as far in advance as you can. You will need to discuss working patterns and negotiate a plan with your clinical supervisor and the rota co-ordinator(s) for that job. This will be true when moving between hospital departments, as well as when moving to a new Hospital/GP Practice
* Historically, LTFT Foundation trainees in Yorkshire and the Humber were made supernumerary (that is, not included in the trainee numbers) from the onset of training, which made these negotiations easier. However, this is no longer the case. Remember that you are a professional and have a duty of care to your patients and colleagues as well as yourself.
* When working in General Practice it will be easier to arrange your work schedule, but it is still important to give your GP Supervisor and the practice where you will be working as much notice as possible.

Work schedules and rotas are complex. For more information see:

* [www.nhsemployers.org](http://www.nhsemployers.org) – work scheduling templates and guidance
* The BMA also have some excellent information on work schedules and rota design
* Every trust will have a flexible working champion. HR should be able to give you their details if you need further support.

**Annual Leave and Bank Holidays**

If you have worked in the NHS less than 5 years (as is the case for most Foundation trainees) you are entitled to 27 days annual leave plus 8 bank holidays if you work full time.

LTFT leave is calculated as per the following examples:

* 60% = (27 + 8) x 0.6 = 21 days TOTAL (this includes bank holiday allowance)
* 80% = (27 + 8) x 0.8 = 28 days TOTAL (this includes bank holiday allowance)

If the bank holiday falls on a day you are scheduled to work a standard day (i.e./ not an on call or out of hours shift) you will usually not be expected to work. You DO subtract this from your total leave allowance.

If the bank holiday falls on a zero day/non-working day then you do NOT subtract it from your leave allowance.

If you work any part of a bank holiday (this would include long days, a night either starting or finishing on a bank holiday, short days when you are expected to provide cover etc..) then you do NOT subtract it from your leave allowance, but you do NOT get an extra day in lieu for going to work.

Once you have been employed by the NHS for 5 years or more (this is 5 calendar years not 5 full time equivalent training years) your leave entitlement will increase to 32 days per year.

The calculations and rules are exactly the same. For example:

* 60% = (32 + 8) x 0.6 = 24 days TOTAL (this includes bank holiday allowance)

**Teaching and Training**

The Yorkshire and the Humber Foundation School organise regional training days in both Foundation years 1 and 2. These enable you to meet a number of your core competencies during the Foundation programme and have a very similar structure across the region. There is further opportunity for other study days; this might include Bridging the Gap days during FY2 or study days specific to your career interests going forward.

More information can be found on the Yorkshire and Humber Foundation School website at: <https://heeyh-deanery-live.azurewebsites.net/foundation/teaching-and-training/regional-training-days>

The current target is for each trainee to have 60 hours of allocated study leave during both FY1 and FY2. Approximately half of this will be taken up by your regional training days, and half can be used elsewhere.

As a guide for LTFT trainees:

* You are expected to attend all of your regional training days. They are mandatory.
* Your study leave entitlement runs across your foundation years, irrespective of what percentage you work. A full-time trainee is entitled to 60 hours in FY1 (12 months), and so are LTFT trainees – for example, if you work 50% you are entitled to 60 hours in 24 months because this is the duration of your FY1 year. It is also true that if you worked 50% then your FY1 year would last 24 months, and you could therefore choose whether you attended each regional training day during the first or second half of that time (but it must be during FY1).
* It is possible that there will be a regional training day which falls on a day when you are not working (for example, the regional training day may be on a Friday and you work Mon, Tues, Weds). If that is the case, you have 2 options:
  + If you are able to arrange your commitments to enable you to attend the regional training day on the Friday, then ensure your study leave is authorised in advance and you will be able to take time off in lieu or receive payment for that day.
  + If you cannot arrange your commitments to attend on the Friday, then you should look at other options for the regional training day. For example – if you work in Barnsley and cannot attend on a Friday, Doncaster may have the same regional training day on a Tuesday. You are then able to apply for study leave and attend the day in Doncaster. The content of each regional training day is the same across the region, so this will not disadvantage you compared to your colleagues.

**Pay, Tax deductions and Subscriptions**

Remember that the GMC, defence organisations (such as MDU or MPS) and trade unions (such as the BMA) may have reduced rates for LTFT trainees. It is always worth informing them that you are LTFT and asking if there is a reduced rate available.

Doctors are also entitled to tax deductions on a number of items, including subscriptions to the above organisations and other expenses such as royal college examinations and courses that you have paid for yourself.

For more guidance on this, please see:

* <https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/professional-fees-and-subscriptions>
* https://www.medicsmoney.co.uk

**Trainees with Disabilities**

Trainees with disabilities must be considered alongside all other applicants to the Foundation programme. Your employer (usually the Trust) must make reasonable adjustments to enable you to perform your duties and the need for these reasonable adjustments is not a reason for not offering an otherwise suitable placement for you.

Reasonable adjustments will also be made to the Foundation programme competencies if required. This is something to discuss with the Foundation School, your Educational Supervisor and your TPD as early as possible in your foundation training.

For more guidance, please see:

* [www.foundationprogramme.nhs.uk](http://www.foundationprogramme.nhs.uk) – The Foundation Programme Guide (2019)

**And Finally…**

Enjoy being LTFT!

LTFT training is an excellent way to train and often has significant advantages to both you and your departments/trusts. You will discover that lots of senior trainees are LTFT for a wide variety of reasons. It can often feel that being LTFT as a Foundation trainee means that you are progressing more slowly than your full time colleagues but remember that you will gain the same competencies as everyone else. You should never be discriminated against for being LTFT, and if you do have any problems you should speak to someone about this (your trust’s flexible working champion, your educational supervisor or TPD or the foundation school should all be able to support you).

**Further Help and Advice**

This is only a brief overview of LTFT training and it is normal to have a lot of questions about what to expect and what to do next.

There is lots of support and advice available, so please do not sit in silence!

* <https://www.yorksandhumberdeanery.nhs.uk/learner_support/policies/less_than_full_time> This is the Yorkshire and the Humber guideline for LTFT in the region. It has all the relevant forms and documents at the bottom of the page
* <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/career-opportunities-doctors/less-full-time-training-doctors>

This is another excellent website with further guidance and information about LTFT training.

* The BMA produces fantastic advice on lots of topics, including LTFT training, on their website. Yorkshire and the Humber also has a fantastic regional LTFT representative.
* The Guide for Foundation Training in the UK (2019) is very detailed, and worth referring to if you have specific questions. It can be accessed at <https://www.foundationprogramme.nhs.uk>
* The Foundation School have a wealth of knowledge, and their website also has a lot of information on it. <https://www.yorksandhumberdeanery.nhs.uk/foundation>
* There is a brilliant LTFT trainees whatsapp group for all LTFT trainees in Yorkshire and the Humber. There is normally someone who knows the answer to most questions!
* Alex Damazer is currently the Leadership Fellow to the Foundation School (until August 2021), and is happy to be contacted directly with queries or to give the details of the whatsapp group above. Email her at [adamazer@doctors.org.uk](mailto:adamazer@doctors.org.uk). There is also a Foundation LTFT support group being developed, which will enable you to discuss any issues directly.
* There are Foundation training reps for each hospital/region at both FY1 and FY2 level. Don’t be afraid to use them if you want to raise any issues that way.
* Each Trust has a flexible working champion, who will be able to support you with issues surrounding work schedules, rotas and contracts.