

Less Than Full Time (LTFT) Training for London and KSS



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1. Introduction

Health Education England, London and KSS is committed to helping doctors reach their full potential and to helping those with child-caring or other responsibilities, or health problems, to continue training.

LTFT trainees must meet the same requirements in specialty and general practice training as full-time trainees. The only difference is the possibility of limiting participation of medical activities due to the number of hours worked per week. HEE fully endorse the principles set out in the [Gold Guide](#). Essentially, LTFT and full-time trainees follow the same curriculum and will have the same requirements for completion of training. The purpose of this guide is to make clear the new LTFT application process, including notice periods and supporting documentation required. Please ensure you have read this guide alongside the FAQs before you submit a LTFT application.

2. Why Work LTFT?

- To retain, within the medical workforce, doctors who are unable to continue their training on a full-time basis.
- To promote career development and work/life balance for doctors training within the NHS.
- To ensure continuing training in programmes on a pro-rata basis.

Pros and Cons of LTFT:

Pros of LTFT:	Cons of LTFT:
Time to do other important things – childcare, pursue development opportunities, look after yourself or others.	Extended length of training.
Allow time for reflection, e-portfolio, revise while pursuing interests outside of medicine.	May miss out on opportunities within placement due to day/s hours worked
Reduced childcare costs	Reduced pay.
Can be longer placements which allows more time for establishing relationships with staff and patients.	Sometimes takes longer “to get into the swing of things” on a placement.
Need to be organised and proactive about organising LTFT training.	Can Improve leadership, management and negotiation skills.

Views of LTFT trainees:

Why they chose to work less than full-time:

“I have always been a LTFT GP trainee. I came back from maternity leave after my first son into GP training. I now have a second son and still enjoying LTFT training and the work-life balance I can achieve with it.”

“I needed to have IVF treatment and I didn’t feel that it was feasible to do this whilst working full-time. I was supported by the Deanery in being allowed to train

LTFT. I was lucky enough to become pregnant and continued working part-time then, and after the birth.”

Why they think it is an advantage:

“More time to think about cases on non-working days and more enthusiasm to offer my patients as I am seeing fewer of them”

“One of the big positives for LTFT has been the variation in hospital specialties, which I have covered. I have covered many of the topics which a full-time trainee would not be able to do in 18 months in the hospital setting.”

3. Application Process

The Healthcare Education team process applications for trainees working across London and Kent Surrey and Sussex (KSS) Before applying for LTFT you MUST contact the following to make them aware of your intention to train LTFT:

Type	Contact
GP Trainees	Scheme Director
Foundation Trainees	Please contact your Foundation Training Programme Director (FTPD)
Specialty Trainees	Please contact your Training Programme Director (TPD)

Your Scheme Director/Training Programme Director MUST be aware of your request to train LTFT as it will affect rotation planning. This does not mean your rotations will change but the colleagues listed above need to know so they are aware when they are rotation planning.

Application Process at point of entry to Training Programme:

Should you wish to train LTFT on point of entry to the training programme and are unaware of who your Training Programme Director/ or Scheme Director, please check your ePortfolio to ascertain who this is. It is YOUR responsibility to make your Training Programme Director or Scheme Director aware of your intentions.

Application Process Step-by-Step:

1. Discuss your intention to work LTFT with your Training Programme Director/GP Scheme Manager/Foundation School Manager. You should try to do this as early as possible.
Category 1 applications must give 16 week’s notice to apply to train LTFT.
Category 2 applications must give 6 months’ notice to apply to train LTFT.
2. Complete and submit your LTFT application form which is available via the PGMDE Support Portal. You must submit your application form as early as possible, no later than 16 weeks before starting your placement.

3. Your eligibility will be assessed, and you will be notified of the outcome:
Category 1 LTFT applications will be responded to within 10 working days.
Category 2 applications should be responded to within 30 working days.
4. If approved under Category 1 no further action is required. We will assume you wish to continue training LTFT at the same WTE (whole time equivalent) until you tell us otherwise. Only submit a new application if you wish to change your working hours or return to full-time work. Category 2 staff are only approved for a 12-month period after which you must apply for an extension. If you are not eligible and wish to appeal the decision, you should arrange to meet with your Head of School or Foundation programme director.
5. **LTFT Category 3** (where trainees can choose to train LTFT as a personal choice which is not subject to any judgement and is only limited by service considerations) is being offered to the following specialities and grades:
 - Emergency Medicine – ST4, ST5 and ST6
 - Obstetrics & Gynaecology – ST1+
 - Paediatrics – ST1+

For details about how to apply in these specialities, please refer to the FAQ [here](#)

4. Notice Periods

If you intend to apply for LTFT training, you should submit your application **no later 16 weeks** before the commencement of your post to ensure that all the necessary approvals and funding arrangements are in place before you begin your placement. All category 2 requests **MUST** submit their requests with a minimum of **6 months' notice**. If insufficient notice is given, your request may be denied, or the start date pushed back as the Trust may not be able to accommodate the request in the timeframe given.

5. Eligibility

In order to determine eligibility, trainees must have well-founded reasons demonstrating that it is not practical for them to train on a full-time basis. In order to prioritise requests, there are two categories under which trainees can apply.

The majority of LTFT requests are under Category 1.

Category 1 consists of the following circumstances:

- Disabled or in ill health (this may include those on in-vitro fertility programmes),
- Caring for an ill/disabled child, partner relative or other dependant,
- Personally caring for a child aged 18 or younger.

Category 2 consists of the following circumstances:

- Unique opportunities for their own personal/professional development, e.g. training for national/international sporting events.

- Religious commitment – involving training for a particular role which requires a specific time commitment.
- Non-medical professional development such as management courses, law courses, fine arts courses etc,
- Other well-founded reasons may also be considered by the Postgraduate Dean.

6. Supporting Documentation

In order to confirm your eligibility to train LTFT, you will be requested to provide additional evidence based on the category that you have applied under, please review the guidance in the table below. The application form will also prompt you for this information.

Category	Circumstance	Supporting documentation	Expiry Date of
Category 1	Disability/ill health	A letter from your GP/ Occupational Health Consultant/ Medical Specialist which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature of disability/health requirements for LTFT Training It must be on letter-header paper or be from an official email address which can be validated. The letter should be dated within the past 3 months.	Until end of training
	Responsibility for caring for children	You will need to confirm the anticipated or actual date of birth of your youngest child on the online application form. (Please note you do not need to continue to re-apply upon each period of maternity leave, eligibility is automatic until your youngest child is 18 years	Until youngest child is 18 years old
	Responsibility for caring for ill/disabled partner, relative or other dependent	A letter from your GP or Medical Specialist involved in the care of your partner/relative/dependent which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of care anticipated that you will need to provide It must be on letter-header paper or be from an official email address which can be validated, dated within the last three months.	Until end of training

Category 2	All circumstances	Complete the free text boxes on the online application form detailing the nature of your request. You can attach letters of support and job descriptions to the application form should you wish.	A year from start date of post. Category 2 applications are approved annually, and extension is not automatic.
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Applications received without supporting evidence:

Please note, we are unable to proceed with LTFT applications without the supporting evidence requested.

7. Online Application Form

All LTFT applications are now managed through the PGDME Support Portal. Please ensure you only submit the application form once you have the requested evidence. When completing the application form you will need to select if you are submitting a new application or notifying us of a change in your working pattern or re-applying for renewal under category 2.

Submitting a new LTFT Application

If you are applying for the first time, you should submit the form with at least **16 weeks’ notice**. You should ensure you have the required evidence to support your request to train LTFT.

Category 1:

Childcare Responsibilities

To train LTFT under category 1 childcare responsibilities, you will be asked to submit the date of birth of your youngest child/expected date of birth of your youngest child. The form will automatically give an expiry date in 18 years’ time. For most trainees this will mean you can continue to train LTFT until your CCT date (plus grace period). You do not need to include a birth certificate with your application. Please note you do not need to re- apply upon each period of maternity leave, you only need to re-apply to renew your eligibility under childcare if your first child is now over 18 years old.

Disabled or Health Reasons

To train LTFT under category 1 – disabled or health reasons, you will be asked to submit a supporting statement from your GP or Occupational Medicine at your current workplace supporting your request to train LTFT.

Caring Responsibilities

To train LTFT under category 1 – caring responsibilities for a family member, you will be asked to submit a supporting statement from your GP or Occupational Medicine at your current workplace supporting your request to train LTFT.

Category 2:

All category 2 requests are at the discretion of the Postgraduate Dean for your sector. The 7th edition of the Gold Guide states that category 2 applications are when;

A trainee is offered a unique opportunity for their own personal/professional development and this will affect their ability to train full time (e.g. training for national/international sporting events or a short-term extraordinary responsibility such as a national committee.

Category 2 requests will be reviewed against this criterion.

(Please note this guide will be updated if the criteria changes in future Gold Guides. Applications will be reviewed against the current edition when the application form is submitted).

Please note we require a minimum of **6 months' notice** of category 2 requests due to the unique nature of their request.

Please note that this is for existing LTFT trainees as well. Should you currently train LTFT under any of the category 1 criterion, and you wish to undertake other work alongside your training you are required to submit a new LTFT application under category 2. This will be reviewed by the Postgraduate Dean for your sector.

Should you wish to train LTFT under category 2, a text box will appear asking for further details to your support your request. We recommend a limit of 500 words. You can also attach job descriptions and letters of support should you wish.

Category 2 re-applications:

Category 2 requests are reviewed annually, and approval is granted for a year at a time. Should you wish to train LTFT beyond your approval date you will need to apply and state you are renewing your eligibility under category 2. Renewals are not automatically granted, and you should provide supporting evidence as to the extension request. Please note category 2 applications are currently considered to be unique short-term opportunities which by their nature have a finite time period.

8. Notification of Change in Status for LTFT Applications

Should you wish to notify us that you wish to increase or decrease the number of sessions you are working, you will need to complete an application form and select the option to inform us you wish to notify us of a change in your working pattern.

If you are working in a slot share and there are no gaps available at the Trust, you will need to wait until the next rotation date before you can return to full-time training. You should make your Training Programme Director/Scheme Director or Foundation School Manager aware as soon as possible of your intention to return to full-time training, so they can plan accordingly before rotations are confirmed. If you are working reduced sessions in a full-time post, if the department is happy for you to do so you can return to full-time with 4 weeks' notice.

9. Confirming LTFT Status

Once we receive and assess your application form you will receive an email response to confirm whether you are eligible. You should expect to receive a response within 10 working days for category 1 requests and 30 working days for category 2 requests. If you are not eligible you will need to discuss this further in the first instance with your Head of School/Foundation School Manager/Scheme Director and follow the appeals process.

10. Appeals Process

If your application for LTFT is turned down and you wish to appeal the decision the first step is to ask for a meeting to be arranged with your Head of School or Foundation School Director to discuss the reasons for the request being rejected.

11. Submitting queries about training LTFT

Application Forms and FAQs are available at our website:
<https://lasepgmdesupport.hee.nhs.uk/support/home#2>

You can submit an enquiry by clicking on any of the FAQs