

Wessex Supported Return to Training for GP trainees

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Introduction

Health Education England recognise that trainees who take time out of training can face challenges when they return. They have developed a programme known as Supported Return to Training (SuppoRTT), to support doctors who have had time out. Any trainee with a training number who has been out of training for 3 months or more for any reason is eligible for SuppoRTT. [Wessex SuppoRTT](#)

The process of SuppoRTT consists of a series of meetings with an appropriate supervisor in which you can plan your time out of training in advance (if possible) and consider what activities you might want to do to keep up to date while out of training or to catch up on returning.

Pre-absence planning

In most circumstances you will be able to plan your leave in advance, ideally at least 3 months before you go out of programme. If this is not possible then this planning should take place as soon as possible within your circumstances.

You should inform your Educational Supervisor (ES), your lead employer's HR and rota co-ordinator, your patch office and the local SuppoRTT team of your planned absence. [Contacts - Working across Wessex \(hee.nhs.uk\)](#)

You should arrange to meet with your ES to discuss your needs and how they may be attained. This should be recorded on a [pre-absence form](#). You should also discuss what activities may be appropriate to maintain your knowledge whilst away including the use of Keeping in Touch Days (KIT) days for those on parental leave ([Wessex LMC guidance on KIT days](#)). Use this time to think about whether you want to apply for LTFT training ([HEE LTFT guidance](#)), whether you have an upcoming ESR and what assessments need to be completed prior to your time out of training. It may also be useful to think about financial matters.

This online form should be submitted to the Wessex SuppoRTT team. A copy should be downloaded (please note this must be done BEFORE the 'SUBMIT' button is applied); this should then be uploaded onto your e-portfolio and a copy sent to your patch office. A link to the form can be found under the "time out of training" tab on the trainee eportfolio.

MATERNITY LEAVE

Maternity leave is a vast topic, for further information regarding local policies and contacts please see the maternity factsheet - [GP maternity factsheet](#). Trainees on parental leave are entitled to KIT and SPLIT (shared parental leave in touch) days. For further information on KIT days please see the above document and link to the Wessex LMC guidance.

SICK LEAVE

If sick leave is over 2 weeks, it is likely your training period will be extended. You will need to discuss this with your training programme director. This time may require a further secondary care post however the time can often be made up with additional time in your final GP Practice. Ensure that you discuss your return to training with the medical professionals involved in your care.

Resources:

- Occupational health, either at your trust or your HEE local office
- The GP Health Service for GPs & GP trainees, for mental health and addiction: [Practioner Health](#).
- [BMA advice on GP trainees annual and sick leave](#)
- [Wessex Professional Support and Wellbeing Unit \(PSW\) - Working across Wessex \(hee.nhs.uk\)](#)

OUT OF PROGRAMME (OOP)

Returning from time out of programme for research (OOPR), clinical training (OOPT, additional experience OOPE or career break OOPC or step on step off (STT) is generally a well-coordinated process as the leave is prearranged.

Resources:

- [Taking time out of training' section on the BMA website](#)

OTHER TYPES OF LEAVE

There are other types of leave which are not covered here but may be eligible for SupportTT. Contact the Wessex SupportTT office if you have any queries.

Finances

It is possible to have subsidies to some of your professional memberships while on leave:

- RCGP - [RCGP Membership Fees](#)
- GMC- [GMC registration fees](#)
- Indemnity (contact your provider)
- BMA

Applying for LTFT

If you would like to apply for Less Than Full Time Training on your return this must be done at least 16 weeks prior to your return and can be done before your departure if you know what you would like to do. The application form must be submitted to the deanery for consideration. Application and details can be found on [Less Than Full Time Training - Working across Wessex \(hee.nhs.uk\)](#)

Prior to Returning to Work

Three months prior to your expected return date you will receive an email from the HEE Wessex SupportTT team with information about preparing for your return and upcoming events to support your return.

It is the responsibility of the trainee to contact their educational supervisor (or clinical supervisor if returning to hospital placement) to arrange a pre-return meeting. It is advised this is done at least 8 weeks prior to your return. The discussion should be recorded on a SupportTT pre-return planning form. [Wessex SupportTT Pre-return/Follow-up Review Form \(onlinesurveys.ac.uk\)](#). The link to the form is also available under the "time out of training" tab on the trainee eportfolio. This should be submitted to the Wessex SupportTT team and a copy uploaded onto your e-portfolio (recorded as a placement planning meeting) as well as sent to your patch office. This is an opportunity to identify further resources that may be helpful to your return to work such as accessing a mentor, engaging in some coaching, attending a specific GP return to work course or online learning such as e-LFH courses (<https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/remote-consultation-for-shielding-trainees>) These need to be agreed with your ES and highlighted on your pre return to work form.

SUPERNUMERARY RE-ORIENTATION

Trainees can opt to begin their return with a few days of supernumerary work and funded through SuppoRTT.

If returning to a hospital post you would not be allocated a rota slot or undertake any service provision work, unless otherwise agreed. This time should not be utilized for induction purposes such as accessing IT systems and mandatory training before starting work. The time may be best spent shadowing others. This can include on-calls in preparation for doing them independently. If you are undertaking supernumerary time that will not be counting toward your training time then it is not compulsory to undertake all training requirements eg assessments. However, these may be appropriate for preparing to return to your usual duties. Any supernumerary time would need to be approved by your educational supervisor and SuppoRTT Team in advance of your return.

ENHANCED SUPERVISION

This can have a huge range of options and will be tailored to each individual. If you work in a clinic-based environment you can enhance supervision by having increased time for each patient, less appointments in a session and increased input from supervising seniors. If you are ward based or on-call then this can include working along-side seniors, increased reviews and discussions of cases. This should be agreed with your ES and recorded on the pre-return form.

MENTORING

Mentoring is a valuable tool that can support your return to training. Mentoring describes a 'learning relationship' whereby a mentor provides a confidential and safe space to discuss opportunities, challenges and problems. This can be accessed by contacting the SuppoRTT office. [Wessex SuppoRTT Mentoring Scheme](#)

COACHING

Coaching provides an opportunity for an individual to take some time out to work on an issue (or issues) that they are trying to resolve. Unlike counselling, which seeks to explain and understand feelings and behaviours, coaching is focused on determining a course of action. This can be applied for through the SuppoRTT office.

COURSES

You will be sent details of courses running for RTT in Wessex. There are specific GP courses which you will be invited to attend. You are also eligible for specialty specific RTT courses within the specialty you are returning to if returning to work in the hospital. Please contact the SuppoRTT office for more details.

Post-Return to training

Once the period of enhanced supervision is complete, the trainee should arrange a review meeting with their ES. The aim of this meeting is to review the trainee's progress since returning (including completion of any work-based assessments agreed at the pre-return planning meeting) and to address any concerns or difficulties the trainee may be experiencing. If necessary, the period of enhanced supervision can be extended.

Once the trainee and ES are satisfied with progress, the trainee can be signed off and resume usual clinical duties and out of hours commitments. [Wessex SuppoRTT Pre-return/Follow-up Review Form \(onlinesurveys.ac.uk\)](#)

Escalation procedure

If you come across problems in your Supported Return to Training it is important to be aware of who it is appropriate to reach out to. In addition to your SuppoRTT team, escalation of contacts for GP trainees would be: Educational Supervisor, Training Programme Director, Programme Manager and GP Associate Dean.

