Points to consider when thinking about training LTFT (for childcare reasons)

Definitely not a complete list, but derived mainly from personal experience.

# Practical considerations:

What % would suit you - 50-80% WTE

Will increase duration of training programme depending on %WTE worked

How much sleep/ rest do you get at home?

How much support do your children need - special needs/ ill health/ educational needs?

What support do you get from partner and other family?

What childcare options do you have available to you?

Financial position? Can you afford to work decreased hours?

# When deciding on childcare provision:

* Ideally need a child care option that allows for some flexibility
  + May need to change days when moving to different rotations
  + Do you think you will be able to finish work on-time if you are responsible for picking up child?
  + Will you be working 'normal hours' or shifts?
  + Who will look after the child if they are unwell or unable to attend childcare setting because the childcare is on holiday?
* Who is going to be able to pick up the children? Childcare setting is often best placed near the work-place of the person responsible for drop-off and picking up. If combination of people, may be best suited near home.
* Who might be able to help if child is unwell or needs picking up from child-care early?
* If working nights, please consider childcare during the following day-time, especially if you have to work another night shift the following night.
* Remember to ask employing trust about childcare vouchers as these can help save money if you are able to use them for chosen child-care option (nurseries, pre-schools, some childminders)
* Children over 3 yrs old can apply for some free-childcare hours (can be used at nurseries, pre-schools, some childminders)

# Different childcare options:

**Private nanny**

Pros - look after child from any age in your home

- can be live-in or attend on daily basis

- may be able to stay late if you are not able to leave work on time (at extra cost)

- will usually look after your child even if unwell

Cons - usually most expensive option, could be more than you earn. Works out cheaper the more children you have. With 3 children it is usually more cost effective than nursery or childminders, with 2 it is borderline.

- may not be able to change days easily - depends on individual

- what happens if they are unwell and not able to look after your child?

- take annual leave themselves which may not coincide with yours

- you are responsible for their NI, tax, sick leave and maternity leave

**Au pair**

Pros - look after child from any age in your own home

- can be flexible with late finish times

- will look after child even if unwell

- can be cheaper option although require a bedroom in your house and meals etc

Cons - need a spare bedroom and to be able to live with an extra person in the house

- who will cover when the Au Pair is unwell or on holiday

- English is often not their first language

**Nursery**

Pros - usually take children from 3mths up

- may be able to change days relatively easily if given adequate notice - need to ask

- open all year round with no holiday periods except bank holidays

- usually provide all meals for your child

- reasonable cost (approx £50-75 per day)

- some nurseries make provisions for shift workers and you can book your child in just on these days (not very common, but worth enquiring as can save a lot of money)

Cons - fixed opening hours with fines if pick up late (usually 08:00-18:00)

- will not look after child if they are unwell

**Childminder**

Pros - look after child in their home. Usually have several children at one time

- may be able to continue looking after your child if you return late from work (at extra cost)

- More reasonable cost (similar to nurseries)

Cons - may not be able to change days easily - depends on individual

- may not be able to take your child when unwell as have other children to look after

- may incur fine if you pick up child late

- what are arrangements if the childminder is unwell?

- take annual leave that may not coincide with your own

- usually charge a 'retaining fee' whilst child is at school, typically 1/2 rates

**Pre-school**

Pros - often a bit cheaper than nurseries

- may be able to change days if given adequate notice

Cons - only usually take children from 2 years up

- only open during term time

- often shorter opening hours 09:00-15:00 but some do extended days

- often have to provide child with packed lunch

- fixed opening hours with fines if pick up late

- will not look after child if they are ill.

**Family members**

Pros - may be most flexible option (although not always)

- likely to be able to stay late if you don't get back on time

- will look after your child if they are unwell

- may be free, although may ask for remuneration

Cons - may not be able to change days/times easily... May cause friction within family

- what cover is there if they are sick or on holiday?

**School** (obviously only applicable for older children)

Pros - if attending public school, no cost

- many schools run pre- and after-school clubs to help working parents

- child-minder is another option for pre- or after-school hours

Cons - 12 weeks of school holidays

- inset days

- child can't attend if they are unwell

- inflexible hours and can't pick up late

# Emotional considerations:

* Will it allow you to spend more time with your children?
* Will you feel like you have missed out on your children's development milestones?
* Can end up feeling like you are doing bad job at home and at work - need to get right balance for you... Very personal decision.
* Decreased pay if work LTFT, although this has to assessed once you factor in child-care costs (and not needing to pay for child-care on the days that you are at home)