


**Trainee Testimonial**  
*Less Than Full Time Training (LTFT)*

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<b>Specialty Training Programme:</b>	General Surgery	
<b>Grade</b>	ST8	

**What did you find most challenging about training prior to working LTFT? *Word limit: 80 (max)***

I started my higher surgical training at 60% LTFT; prior to this I had done a PhD and had my first baby during this. Although I successfully finished the PhD in 3 years, taking only 3 months maternity leave, the experience was traumatising. I hadn't considered working LTFT until my job-share partner invited me to job-share. It was liberating to discover that there's more than one way to achieve career aims - I am endlessly grateful to her.

**How has working LTFT impacted on your training? *Word limit: 80 (max)***

I started ST3 in 2009 and am completing ST8 in 2017. I had another baby (9 months' maternity leave) at ST4. It has been a long process. In Surgery, long hours/working on days off are viewed as a marker of excellence for a registrar. I have chosen instead to work hard within my given hours – free time belongs to my family. Some consultants respect this, others view one as less than dedicated. You learn to respect your own opinion!

**How has working LTFT impacted on your work/life balance? *Word limit: 80 (max)***

I am far happier, and have the time to care for myself and my children. When I look back on all the days we had together when my children were little, playing in the sunshine, I have no regrets that I have missed out. Now that they are in school (and I am at 80%), I have a little time for myself too, for example to get fitter (essential as night shifts at 40 are harder!) and have hobbies.

**Are there any other benefits you've enjoyed as a result of training LTFT? *Word limit: 80 (max)***

Having a wonderful job-share partner was brilliant – often the only support and encouragement for training LTFT. We had no general surgery LTFT role-models and usually desultory surgical educational supervision, but we've had many cakes, coffees and laughs together. LTFTs also have Dr Francesca Crawley, whose non-judgemental cheerful support was key for me last year.

**How easy was the process for applying for LTFT in the east of England and how did you find the support you received during the application process? *Word limit: 80 (max)***

It was straightforward; the biggest hurdle is getting the training consultant to meet and agree a job plan prior to starting the job. I have always ended up writing one myself and begging signatures in corridors! From the deanery side, I found the criteria clear, the forms simple and the process quick. There are few surgical consultants who are enthusiastic about LTFT training, as many have never encountered it. Attitudes will slowly change as there are more of us.

**What would you say to anyone considering applying for LTFT training in the east of England, and would you recommend it? *Word limit: 80 (max)***

I would definitely recommend LTFT training. The training process is very long (even full time) and you cannot put life and family 'on hold' for years. I would never have completed my training without being LTFT. I think it is definitely much harder to juggle work and home commitments, than to merely focus on work and never bother going home! I'm proud to be LTFT.

**Is there anything else you would like to add? *Word limit: 80 (max)***

Surgical training has often felt like a struggle against the odds, and LTFT marks you out as different in a world which values male gender and uniformity. Good luck! Perhaps we'll change it together. Go LTFT team!!