

# Supported Return to Training (SuppoRTT)

Guidance for trainees, trainers, and employers within Health Education  
England, East of England

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## Public Sector Equality Duty

On 5 April 2011, the Public Sector Equality Duty (the equality duty) came into force. The equality duty was created under the Equality Act 2010. The equality duty was developed in order to harmonise a number of pre-existing pieces of equality legislation and to extend protection across what the Act described as “protected characteristics”. Protected characteristics is the term used to describe groups that may be discriminated against because they possess one or more of these characteristics and the Act identified nine protected characteristics and these are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) will be carried out on an annual basis and/or following any amendments to ensure that this policy will not have a positive or adverse impact on any trainee groups with protected characteristics

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy is intended to provide a practical overview of the professional support available to trainees in the East of England when returning to training (SuppoRTT).
- 1.2 In order to ensure trainees are confident and fully supported when returning to clinical practice following a sustained period of absence, HEE EoE is committed to offering a number of SuppoRTT mechanisms:
  - Opportunity for trainees to complete an individualised SuppoRTT plan, which includes structured planning and review meetings with the trainee’s Training Programme Director and/or College Tutor
  - Access to ring fenced places on pre-existing specialty specific courses and regional teaching days
  - Opportunity to participate in a period of enhanced shadowing 2 weeks prior to the trainee’s return date
  - Access to local Return to Clinical Practice Days
  - Access to internal or external bespoke training courses (the funding available for this is limited)
  - A contribution towards childcare costs when attending SPLIT & KIT days may be available
- 1.3 In order to stay up to date with training whilst away from clinical practice, trainees are encouraged to continue accessing any other educational initiatives they may find beneficial in addition to the above.
- 1.4 This document should be seen in the wider context of the on-going work to enhance junior doctors working lives and the reform of approaches to training.

1.5 It should be noted that SuppoRTT funding is non-recurrent and cannot be guaranteed from year to year.

## 2. Principles of SuppoRTT

- Seeks to ensure that there are transparent, robust, evidence-based procedures for identifying and supporting trainees following a period of absence
- Places patient safety first
- Ensures funding is accessible and is responsibly utilised
- Seeks to ensure that, where appropriate, trainers who are working directly with trainees requiring additional support are also able to access relevant support themselves
- Recognises the principles of acting confidentially, fairly and in a supportive manner for both trainees and their trainers

## 3. Eligibility

3.1 Access to SuppoRTT in the East of England (EoE) is available to all trainees in the EoE who are planning to take, or are already on, an approved period of time out of training for one or more of the following reasons:

- Parental / maternity leave exceeding 3 months
- Out of Programme for Research (OOPR) or a Career Break (OOPC)
- Global Health Fellowships
- Sick leave exceeding 3 months
- Having been out of training for more than 3 months and having accepted an EoE training post

## 4. Supported Return to Training (SuppoRTT) Plan for Individuals

4.1 Trainees should begin planning their time away from training with their Training Programme Director (TPD)/College Tutor at the earliest opportunity and no later than 3 months in advance of their intended leaving date.

4.2 Trainees will complete an individualised SuppoRTT plan and participate in structured planning and review meetings with their TPD/College Tutor when leaving and returning to training. This will enable trainees to document any plans to stay up to date with training whilst away from practice and to identify any anticipated support required upon their return

4.3 An overview of the SuppoRTT planning and review process, including timeframes can be accessed here: [https://heeoee.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/process\\_flowchart.pdf](https://heeoee.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/process_flowchart.pdf)

## 5. Access to Pre-existing Local Courses

- 5.1 A number of spaces on pre-existing local training courses and teaching days have been ring-fenced by their organisers. These spaces have been specifically reserved for trainees currently away from clinical practice to attend and stay up to date with training.
- 5.2 A full list of accessible courses and teaching will be made available on the HEE EoE SuppoRTT webpages.
- 5.3 Trainees wishing to attend any of these courses should express their interest to their TPD and reserve a space in good time. Booking instructions provided on the SuppoRTT events calendar must be followed in order to confirm any course reservations.

## 6. Return to Clinical Practice Days

- 6.1 A number of Return to Clinical Practice days will be organised centrally for returning trainees to attend.
- 6.2 Topics covered will include wellbeing, resilience, mentoring, and Less Than Full Time (LTFT) training workshops.
- 6.3 Return to Clinical Practice days are free for trainees to attend and will be advertised on the SuppoRTT pages of the HEE EoE website.

## 7. Enhanced Shadowing

- 7.1 In order to rapidly regain clinical knowledge and confidence, doctors returning to training following a sustained period of absence will be strongly encouraged to participate in a period of enhanced shadowing for 2 weeks prior to their return date.
- 7.2 If a trainee feels enhanced shadowing is unnecessary they should discuss this with their TPD/College Tutor during their return to training meeting 3 months in advance of their anticipated return date. The trainee's intention to opt out should be clearly indicated on Part 2 of the SuppoRTT plan form.
- 7.3 It is recognised that Public Health trainees and GP trainees in practice posts are already "supernumerary" and will not require access to enhanced shadowing.
- 7.4 Trainees must contact their HR/rota coordinator and Educational Supervisor/College Tutor at least 3 months prior to their return date to arrange enhanced shadowing and negotiate their start date.
- 7.5 Trainees will be surplus to the rota at their employing Trust for the enhanced shadowing period and can work out of hours/on-call providing a peer or consultant colleague is identified to offer supervision. If trainees wish to volunteer to participate in OOH/on-call this should be discussed in advance with their TPD/College Tutor.
- 7.6 The two weeks' enhanced shadowing period is whole/full time equivalent.

- 7.7 Trainees will be paid for any work undertaken during this period via the usual pay mechanisms at their employing Trust.
- 7.8 The period of enhanced shadowing will be reviewed at the trainee's ARCP and the ARCP panel will decide whether this time should count towards training.
- 7.9 The trainee's employing Trust will complete HEE EoE's SuppoRTT funding return and email it to HEE EoE on a quarterly basis for reimbursement of the trainee's basic salary for the two weeks' enhanced shadowing period, excluding any OOH/on-call payments. HEE EoE will arrange for the Trust to be reimbursed via the Learning and Development Agreement (LDA)

### 8. Bespoke Training

- 8.1 Attending pre-existing local/regional courses is the preferred method for re-developing competence and confidence, however, if there are no suitable local/regional courses available there may be a small amount of funding available for returners to attend external courses.
- 8.2 If attendance at an external course is required by a trainee this should be discussed and agreed with their TPD/College Tutor and documented in part 2 of the SuppoRTT plan form [https://heeoee.hee.nhs.uk/supportt\\_plan](https://heeoee.hee.nhs.uk/supportt_plan)
- 8.3 A SuppoRTT funding request form [https://heeoee.hee.nhs.uk/supportt\\_plan](https://heeoee.hee.nhs.uk/supportt_plan) should be completed by the trainee, approved by the TPD and submitted to HEE EoE for confirmation of funding for an external training course.
- 8.4 Trainees should be aware that it may not always be possible to reimburse the full cost of an external training course. In some instances, a contribution towards the full course fee will be paid.
- 8.5 The course attended should occur no earlier than three months before and no later than three months after the planned return date. Funding for courses outside this period should be requested from the study leave budget.
- 8.6 Trainees should claim approved funding for external courses, including standard class travel costs, via their employing Trust's usual expenses process.
- 8.7 The trainee's employing Trust will complete HEE EoE's SuppoRTT funding return and email it to HEE EoE on a quarterly basis for reimbursement of approved bespoke courses and associated standard class travel costs. HEE EoE will arrange for the Trust to be reimbursed via the Learning and Development Agreement (LDA).

### 9. Reimbursement of Childcare Costs for KIT/SPLIT Days

- 9.1 For trainees taking maternity leave, Keeping in Touch (KIT) days may be used to attend any relevant training courses, regional teaching or departmental meetings. For trainees taking shared parental leave, Shared Parental Leave in Touch (SPLIT) days may be utilised in the same way.

- 9.2 A small amount of funding may be made available to reimburse childcare costs incurred whilst trainees attend KIT or SPLIT days.
- 9.3 Any planned KIT/SPLIT days should be documented by the trainee on their SuppoRTT plan form.
- 9.4 [A SuppoRTT funding request form](#) should be completed by the trainee and submitted to HEE EoE for approval of funding for childcare costs.
- 9.5 Trainees should be aware that it may not always be possible to reimburse the full cost of childcare. In some instances, a contribution towards the full expense will be paid.
- 9.6 Trainees should claim any approved childcare costs, including standard class travel, via their employing Trust's usual expenses process.
- 9.7 The trainee's employing Trust will complete HEE EoE's SuppoRTT Funding Return and email it to HEE EoE on a quarterly basis for reimbursement of approved childcare expenses and associated standard class travel costs. HEE EoE will arrange for the Trust to be reimbursed via the Learning and Development Agreement (LDA).

### 10. Trainee Responsibilities

- 10.1 Trainees should ensure any time out of training is planned in good time. The SuppoRTT planning process should be started at least three months in advance of the anticipated date of departure, where possible. OOPC and unplanned sick leave may be an exception.
- 10.2 Trainees should understand that the date in which they choose to return to training must be negotiated and confirmed with HR/Medical Staffing at their employing Trust and their TPD, three months in advance of their anticipated return date.
- 10.3 Trainees are responsible for ensuring any SuppoRTT planning documentation is shared with [SuppoRTT.eoe@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:SuppoRTT.eoe@hee.nhs.uk) and uploaded to their e-portfolio in a timely manner.
- 10.4 Trainees are responsible for ensuring any HEE EoE funding application forms and local Trust claim forms are completed in line with given timeframes and guidelines.

### 11. Employer Responsibilities

- 11.1 In order for trainees to rapidly regain clinical knowledge and confidence, doctors returning to training following a sustained period of absence are strongly encouraged to participate in a period of enhanced shadowing for two weeks prior to their return date. Trainees will need to negotiate this with HR/rota coordinator at least three months prior to their return date.
- 11.2 There is an expectation that Trusts will accommodate the two weeks' enhanced shadowing period and a suitable start date should be negotiated with the returning trainee.
- 11.3 KIT and SPLIT days should be well advertised across the Trust for any trainees requesting parental leave.



- 11.4 The employing Trust should ensure any approved SupportTT expenses incurred by trainees are reimbursed in a timely manner.
- 11.5 Any SupportTT funding relating to enhanced shadowing (excluding OOH/on call payments), funding for external individual courses, and funding for childcare costs should be added to the SupportTT funding return and emailed to HEE EoE on a quarterly basis, or as requested. HEE EoE will then arrange for the Trust to be reimbursed via the Learning and Development Agreement (LDA).

### 12. Trainer and Educator Responsibilities

- 12.1 Training Programme Directors (TPDs) should allocate appropriate time to meet with trainees in order to complete their SupportTT plan or, in some specialties, train College Tutors to do this on their behalf.
- 12.2 Heads of School (HoS) and TPDs should be proactive with identifying appropriate pre-existing courses and teaching for doctors returning to training to attend and ensure these are identified in their Annual Development Plans.
- 12.3 HoSs and TPDs should ensure any courses deemed appropriate for returners have at least two spaces ring-fenced for returning trainees to access.
- 12.4 Trainers and educators are expected to stay up to date with HEE EoE initiatives and policies and engage in any HEE EoE training sessions, as required.
- 12.5 If at any point a trainer feels a trainee may benefit from more intensive support this should be escalated to the Head of School, Relevant Deputy Dean and/or the Professional Support Unit (PSU).

### 13. Health Education England, East of England Responsibilities

- 13.1 HEE EoE is committed to offering SupportTT to as many eligible trainee doctors as possible. This includes promoting the mainstreaming of the SupportTT process and providing awareness training to trainers and educators.
- 13.2 HEE EoE will manage SupportTT in such a way that information pertaining to an eligible trainee flows between all relevant parties. "Relevant parties" include, but are not limited to; the trainee, Training Programme Directors, College Tutors, HR/Medical Staffing Departments, Finance Officers and internal HEE teams.
- 13.3 HEE EoE will ensure any funding payable to Trusts for SupportTT expenses incurred by trainees is reimbursed in a timely manner.
- 13.4 HEE EoE will treat all trainees, trainers, and colleagues equally, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/belief, sex/sexual orientation, or any other discriminatory factor.



## Further Information and Guidance

### SupportTT in the East of England

Further information regarding SupportTT in the East of England, including FAQs, events calendar, and funding forms can be found on our website. [Please click here for SupportTT](#)

### Parental Leave – KIT and SPLIT Days

Trainees are strongly encouraged to plan the utilisation of any KIT or SPLIT days with HR at their employing Trust. <https://www.gov.uk/employee-rights-when-on-leave>

### Out of Programme

For trainees taking OOPR or OOPC the East of England OOP process should also be followed. [Please click here for OOP](#)

### Less Than Full Time (LTFT) Training

For trainees wishing to apply for less than full time training, the east of England LTFT process should also be followed. [Please click here for LTFT](#)

### Sickness Absence

For trainees returning from sickness absence guidance from the trainee's GP or Occupational Health regarding a phased return to work may be required. Further support for sickness absence can also be sought from the HEE EoE Professional Support Unit (PSU) via the usual channels. [Please click here for PSU](#)

### Enhancing Junior Doctors Working Lives

<https://hee.nhs.uk/our-work/doctors-training/enhancing-working-lives>

### The Gold Guide

A Reference Guide for Postgraduate Dental Specialty Training in the UK. [Please click here for The GG7](#)

## Document History

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1.0	April 2018	First draft RW
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