



LTFT Radiology Trainee Survey 2019

An increasing cohort a decade on

The less than full time (LTFT) cohort of trainees has grown considerably since 2009. To better understand their needs and support requirements, the RCR Junior Radiologist's Forum conducted a short survey in late 2019. The results show that there is some work to be done to fortify the doctors of the future.

While a better work/life balance has shone through as a primary driver for the demand for LTFT posts, unfortunately, the majority of those applicants report encountering many obstacles. These include applied pressure to work full time, having to cover gaps in on call rotas that are beyond contracts, and feelings of receiving a diminished training experience.

The [NHS People Plan](#), the [HEE Workforce Strategy](#), and the [RCR Workforce Census 2020](#) all tell us that the NHS workforce is increasingly expected to do more with less. Evidence from the GMC asserts that [healthy working environments are vital to recruitment and retention of staff](#). It is therefore imperative to encourage employers to see the value of flexible training posts, moving towards a culture of inclusion to accommodate this growing group of future doctors.

The survey of LTFT trainees has highlighted that some enabling actions are needed to empower the workforce of the future to be able to train flexibly.

Survey Key Findings

- The LTFT trainee cohort has grown by 45% in the last decade
- 90% report LTFT training has helped to optimise work/life balance and facilitate exam success
- 2/3 encounter obstacles when applying to train LTFT
- Nearly 1/3 of respondents reported not feeling adequately supported upon returning to training.
- 1/4 have felt under pressure to work full time
- 1/4 of LTFT trainees continue to work non pro-rata on call despite [national guidance](#), causing a negative impact on their training and quality of life
- 70% of LTFT trainees would consider working full time when they become consultants
- Compared with the previous survey in 2008 a higher proportion of trainees now work at 80% rather than 60% whole time equivalent.

Tailored support for radiologists of the future that are training flexibly

Recognising the value of flexible working for trainees, the JRF and the wider team at the RCR are here to offer their support via the following measures:

Peer support

The RCR has designated consultant and trainee LTFT and flexible working representatives who are happy to be contacted via the RCR's training@rcr.ac.uk email address if there are difficulties encountered accessing advice at a local level.

Supporting contractual compliance

As part of the 2018 junior doctor contract in England, each employer should have a nominated [champion of flexible training](#). The champion role is intended to support trainees working LTFT, or those considering doing so, offering guidance on commonly reported themes (eg. on call, pay and leave), signposting to available resources, and advocating for trainees.

Maintaining standards

The RCR supports the [Gold Guide](#)'s recommendation that LTFT trainees should undertake pro rata on call and this is supported by the survey results. **We encourage trainees to contact their union representative and/or local champion of flexible training if they have been made to breach this.**

Support for returning to training

The RCR has developed a website-based resource to help provide [supported return to training guidance](#), contextualised to radiology, and the new curriculum. **Trainees and trainers are encouraged to make use of this resource, and share positive local experiences of supported return to work for inclusion on our website.**

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