

# Supported Return to Training West Midlands Guidance

Health Education England

## Introduction

This guidance is intended to provide a practical overview of the professional support available to trainees in the West Midlands when returning to training following a period of absence, usually of 3 months or more.

HEEWM are committed to offering SuppoRTT to as many eligible trainees as possible. This includes promoting the SuppoRTT process and providing awareness training to trainees, trainers and educators. In addition, HEEWM will offer a variety of SuppoRTT activities in order to ensure trainees are confident and fully supported when returning to clinical practice following a period of absence. These activities will include:

- A formal process to facilitate trainees being able to develop an individualised SuppoRTT plan in a structured way
- Good practice advice on how a period of enhanced supervision may be arranged locally
- Access to local Return to Clinical Practice Days
- Access to funding to facilitate attendance at existing courses
- A contribution towards childcare costs when attending SPLIT & KIT days

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.

HEEWM will manage SuppoRTT 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.

HEEWM 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.

## Eligibility

Access to SuppoRTT is available to all trainees in the West Midlands who are planning to take, or are already on, an approved period out of training, usually for a minimum of 3 months’ duration. Examples of types of absences are:

- Parental leave
- Out of Programme for Research (OOPR) or a Career Break (OOPC)
- Global Health Fellowships
- Sick leave
- Returning from restrictions to practise or a period of suspension

In some circumstances trainees with an absence of less than 3 months' duration may benefit from accessing SuppoRTT and these should be looked at on a case by case basis.

## Trainee Responsibility

SuppoRTT is trainee led. Trainees should ensure that planned leave (parental / Out of Programme / Global Fellowships for example) is arranged in good time and that the required approval process is followed.

During planned leave trainees must keep in regular contact with their Training Programme Director. Well in advance of the expected return date (at least 3 months), trainees must confirm to the Training Programme Director their intended return date so that a suitable training placement can be arranged for them.

In some circumstances trainees may have a period of unplanned leave (sickness / restrictions to practise for example). In these scenarios, trainees should start the SuppoRTT process as soon as it is practical and should notify their Training Programme Director and HEEWM Programmes team ([programmes.wm@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:programmes.wm@hee.nhs.uk)) of the absence.

## SuppoRTT Process

Trainees are encouraged to follow the process when planning time away from training and prior to return. The aim is for a trainee to identify support required upon return in order to step back in without unnecessary difficulties.

### The process

#### 1) Complete '[Planning Your Leave Form](#)'

This should be completed approximately 3 months prior to your anticipated planned leave date. If the absence is unplanned you should aim to complete it at the earliest opportunity following the start of your leave period

#### 2) Complete '[Pre-Return Form](#)'

This should be completed approximately 3 months prior to your anticipated return date. If this is not possible, you should aim to complete it at the earliest opportunity

#### 3) Complete the '[Return Review Form](#)'

It is advised that this is completed approximately 2 weeks after your return

All steps in this process should be completed collaboratively between the trainee and their ES/TPD/College Tutor

## KIT / SPLIT Days

Trainees on parental leave may be entitled to KIT/SPLIT days. Trainees must follow their employer policy in relation to KIT/SPLIT days and they must be applied for prospectively. Trainees are strongly encouraged to review the national guidance in relation to KIT/SPLIT days <https://www.gov.uk/employee-rights-when-on-leave>

## Return to Clinical Practice Days and other SuppoRTT activities

Several Return to Clinical Practice days will be organised by HEEWM for returning trainees to attend.

Examples of topics covered are

- Wellbeing and Self-Awareness
- Human Factors
- Remaining Effective
- Challenging Conversations
- Simulation

In addition to the courses organised by HEEWM, there may be other opportunities for trainees who are planning their return to training such as training events organised by Royal Colleges. It is essential that prospective approval is obtained by the trainee prior to attending any of these additional opportunities and that the intention to attend them is recorded on the 'Pre-return form'.

If a trainee wants to claim expenses in relation to attending SuppoRTT courses / workshops / other activities, they must seek guidance from their employer as to what costs could be reimbursed to them.

Any reimbursement claimed must in accordance with the employer policy; a 'Course Approval Request Form' must be completed and submitted with the claim.

It is recommended that trainees attend Return to Clinical Practice Days no more than 3 months' prior to their return and within 3 months' of their return date.

## Enhanced Supervision

It may be appropriate for trainees to participate in a period of enhanced supervision upon their return. This period should allow the trainee to regain confidence, clinical knowledge and skills in a supported environment. This time should not be used to provide service provision alone and should be tailored to individual training needs particularly in relation to duration and exposure to different clinical environments.

HEEWM recommend that as part of the 'pre-return' process, all trainees discuss with their ES/TPD/College Tutor whether or not a period of enhanced supervision would be beneficial and that the outcome of the discussion is recorded on the 'pre-return form'.

Where it is agreed that a period of enhanced supervision is not required, it may be enough for a pairing or buddy system to be in place for the trainee for a few days on their return.

## Examples of Enhanced Supervision Arrangements

- Inpatient/Ward work
- Outpatients/Clinic work
- Acute services – Emergency medicine/Assessment Units/Delivery suite as applicable to trainee

- Optimisation of skills/procedures – theatre, procedure lists, simulation, courses as appropriate
- Out of hours work - representative of specialty commitments with a clearly identified colleague and not as “on-call doctor”
- Experience relevant to ongoing work commitments. For example, if a GP trainee was returning to a Paediatric rotation it may be relevant for this time to be utilised in acute paediatrics.

## Reimbursement

Trainees must follow their employer's expense process in order to claim reimbursement for SuppoRTT activities; a copy of the '[course approval request form](#)' must be submitted with the claim. Only activities that have been prospectively approved by the ES/TPD/College Tutor are eligible for reimbursement and these should all be documented on the 'pre-return form'.

Through SuppoRTT employers can claim reimbursement. Employers must complete the [SuppoRTT Reimbursement Form](#) and email it to [Supportt.wm@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:Supportt.wm@hee.nhs.uk) on a quarterly basis for reimbursement which will be made through the Learning and Development Agreement (LDA) on a quarterly basis. Failure to submit the SuppoRTT Reimbursement Form on a quarterly basis may result in an employer not being eligible for reimbursement

## 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.