

Supported Return to Training (SuppoRTT)

What is SuppoRTT?

SuppoRTT is a national programme set up as part of 'Enhancing Junior Doctors Working Lives' programme which aims to improve the experience for trainee doctors who are returning to work after a period of absence. The process is designed to support trainees, help restore their confidence and also previous skills required in their post. Up to 10% of post graduate doctors may be on leave from training at any given time.

The AoMRC (Academy of Medical Royal Colleges) has suggested that a 3-month absence is likely to have a significant impact on doctors' clinical skills and confidence.

The absence period covered by SuppoRTT processes is nominally three months or longer and includes funding that can be applied for through HEE. The scheme is also available to help trainees who have been shielding and working from home during the Covid pandemic.

Here is the link to the SuppoRTT website with links to the local office covering each area in England

<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/supporting-doctors-returning-training-after-time-out>

SuppoRTT processes are based on 3 meetings held by trainees with their educational supervisor (ES) or training programme director (TPD):

Pre-Absence meeting prior to taking leave

During this meeting the following should be covered:

Duration of leave

Expected return dates

ARCP date and requirements

Informing HR/TPD/Speciality School

Initial Return Meeting (3 months before return date)

This should include:

Outline of a return to work plan

Complete application forms for funding

Liaise with HR and rota coordinators, OH as required

Return Review meeting

Complete return meeting form

Follow up/review meetings following return to work to review progress and any additional needs

Who is SuppoRTT for?

If you are a trainee in a training post and you have had time off work for three months or longer then you can use the SuppoRTT scheme to help your return to training. (If you are off for less than three months but have concerns about your return then HEE will still consider your application)

Trainees from foundation to higher speciality training can apply.
SAS/Trust Grade doctors who have secured a training programme post can also apply.

What type of leave is covered by SuppoRTT?

- Parental leave
- Sickness
- Carer leave
- OOPE, OOPT, OOPC, OOPR
- Suspension
- Unplanned leave

What kind of additional help can SuppoRTT provide?

This will depend on your individual needs but can include:

- Phased return to work and flexible working arrangements where appropriate;
- Enhanced clinical supervision
e.g. Shadowing for initial work or being supernumerary on calls,
- Supervised clinics
- Refresher Courses
- Coaching and mentoring, courses and other learning activities to refresh skills and build confidence;

It is important that these options are discussed prior to your return in your initial return to work meeting with your ES or TPD to find the right support for you. The type of support will depend on the trainee's individual needs.

Is there funding for this?

HEE will fund up to £3000 per trainee for the first three weeks of the return to training. This funding goes directly to the trust to reimburse costs of providing locums etc.

How to start the SuppoRTT process

The process is based on 3 meetings with your ES or TPD:

- A pre absence meeting three months prior to absence
- Initial return to work meeting three months prior to return
- Follow up/review meeting within four weeks of return

These meetings underpin the SuppoRTT process. The additional trainee needs can then be organised with application for funding from HEE to cover these. There is an understanding that sometimes these time frames cannot be met, due to the nature of planned and unplanned leave.

The initial return to work meeting will be the point at which the online funding application form is completed.

If I am planning time out of training, who should I inform?

Please inform your department, ES, TPD and speciality school with your dates and reason for absence.

Inform occupational health if relevant.

Please arrange for a pre absence meeting with your ES and complete pre absence forms

What do I need to do prior to my pre absence meeting?

Consider- expected return date

What are your current ARCP requirements?

What are your concerns for your return to work?

Will your return to work be full time or less than full time (LTFT)?

How do I apply for funding?

Through the online SuppoRTT form

How does the funding work?

SuppoRTT funding will cover up to £3000 for your first 3 weeks back at work.

SuppoRTT does not pay trainees directly. The trust initially pays costs and then the funding is reimbursed to the trust for additional cover or supervision.

For example, the funding will cover the cost of locums for on call shifts. The funding will not pay for you to come back to work early and shadow prior to your official start date.

From April 2021, trainees will submit claims for courses which support their return to training via the study leave process using the approval code SRTT0001. London based courses can be found on <https://london.hee.nhs.uk/professional-development/supported-return-training/supported-return-training-support-courses-and>

Returning to work prior to your agreed start date is not advised as you are not covered by Trust Indemnity prior to your start date and you will not be paid for time spent at work prior to your start date.

Keeping In Touch (KIT) days

These are specific to parental leave and are funded locally by the employing trust: they are not part of SuppoRTT.

There are refresher courses available from different speciality schools that are available but please note KIT days are for parental leave.

A trainee on parental leave is eligible for a maximum of 10 KIT days in one year. If parental leave is being shared then both parents are eligible to up to 20 shared days shared between the two parents.

KIT days can be used to perform supervised clinical work, attend meetings, courses, conferences, local/regional teaching days or to attend departmental induction days. They can be taken as a half day or full days.

In the case of maternity leave they can be taken at any time after the first two weeks of compulsory leave. However, the number of days taken and pay awarded have to be mutually agreed between trainee and employing trust. They are usually paid at a basic rate, and they must be prospectively approved.

Returning to work at a new trust:

You can still apply for SuppoRTT funding and this will apply to your new post. As stated above, do not start attending clinics/shadowing prior to your formal start date as this has implications for trust indemnity and you will not be paid for these days.

What if I need to take unplanned leave?

Following unplanned leave arrange a meeting/review with your Trust Education Lead (TEL), ES or TPD when convenient to discuss potential return dates/ARCP needs and to make a plan for your return to work.

Complete pre absence forms and start SuppoRTT process as soon as possible.

Please inform HR/ ES/TPD and occupational health if appropriate.

Please keep in touch with the ES/TPD and HR during your leave.

If I have decided to return Less Than Full Time (LTFT) how do I apply for this?

You may wish to discuss the process with your fellow trainees.

Please discuss this decision with your TPD/ES.

The application is through the HEE Portal: Link Below:

<https://lasepgmdsupport.hee.nhs.uk/support/tickets/new>

You need to apply at least **16 weeks** prior to returning to ensure you are paid correctly and the process works effectively!

Here are some further links regarding guidance to training LTFT:

<https://www.lpmde.ac.uk/training-programme/training-matters/less-than-full-time-training>

<https://www.copmed.org.uk/gold-guide-7th-edition/the-gold-guide-7th-edition>

I still have questions about the process, who can I contact?

If you need further advice or have any concerns about your return, Trust or School SupportTT champions, HR or others who are co-ordinating trainee placements in your trust or training programme can signpost you.

The current SupportTT Champion for the School of Pathology is Dr Sophie Collier, Microbiology Consultant, who can be contacted via email sophiecollier@nhs.net

The SupportTT programme manager can also be contacted on srtt.lase@hee.nhs.uk