

# Less Than Full Time Training: A Workforce Necessity

## Reporting from the Annual Questback Survey of Less Than Full Time Doctors in Training in Scotland

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### Aim

As per the "Gold Guide", less than full time (LTFT) working should be available to all doctors in training (DIT) with a "well-founded reason" to "retain doctors in the workforce". Here we review the responses to the annual review questionnaires submitted by LTFT DIT in Scotland to understand their changing demographics and needs.

### Methods

The "Form C" Questback Survey was distributed via e-mail to all DIT in Scotland working LTFT during the academic year 2023/24. The content of the survey was created by the Associated Postgraduate Deans responsible for LTFT training in NHS Education for Scotland. The anonymous responses were collated and exported to Excel for analysis. Comparisons are made to previous years' "Form C" submissions.

## What is the impact on Doctors in Training?

96%

report LTFT is beneficial



### FREE TEXT THEMES



✓ Ability to balance caring responsibilities

✓ Reduced risk of burnout



✓ Better work life balance

✓ Better physical and mental health

✓ Better engagement with training, including professional examinations

Flexibility in the training programme means I can continue doing something I love.

60%

report improved physical and mental health



LTFT has greatly improved my resilience in medicine, and made me a better doctor

LTFT has allowed me to share childcare more equitably with my wife

I had wavered in my desire to continue a medical career prior to LTFT. I now feel motivated to continue once more. It has made all the difference in my case.

I feel happier, healthier and more energised. I enjoy my job more and am a better doctor for it.

I was so burnt out by exams and workplace stress that I would have undoubtedly left my training if not for LTFT

I am able to provide care to elderly and unwell relatives without the guilt that I am letting my colleagues down

By dropping to LTFT I have been able to better manage hospital appointments, my own wellbeing, physical activity and reduce stress which has helped with my health recovery

my anxiety has reduced, I feel less burnt out and generally have a better quality of life

## Conclusions

- Increasing trend of doctors seeking LTFT training
  - particularly for health and wellbeing reasons
- DIT's self-reported health and wellbeing is improved by working LTFT
- Responses suggest that access to LTFT essential for retention of DIT
- Challenges remain, majority at local employer level, around accommodating LTFT DIT

## Challenges Identified



- Integration to clinical teams
- Negative stigma about LTFT working
- Local accommodations to LTFT:
  - Regular days off
  - Out-of-hours
  - Teaching sessions
- Unclear information around:
  - Pay
  - Out-of-hours expectations
  - Portfolio requirements
  - Extension to training

## Who is working Less Than Full Time?

85%  
response rate  
1126 trainees

2024: 1,359 DIT  
working LTFT

102%  
increase in  
LTFT working  
over last 4  
years

2020: 674 DIT  
working LTFT

25% of trainees with  
undisclosed gender (279 DIT)  
12% of all male trainees (294)  
27% of all female trainees (985)



68%  
working ≥ 80%  
WTE  
3% work <50% WTE

78%  
found application  
process straight  
forward

### Why are DIT seeking LTFT?



45%  
childcare  
responsibilities



39%  
health and  
wellbeing

Significant jump in LTFT for health and wellbeing over last year

2024: 579 doctors

2023: 313 doctors

### Top 5 Specialties

- GP - 381 doctors - 42% of specialty
- Paediatrics - 132 doctors - 47% of specialty
- Anaesthetics - 63 doctors - 22% of specialty
- Obstetrics & Gynaecology - 54 doctors - 32% of specialty
- Internal Medicine - 49 doctors - 17% of specialty

### Stage of Training

