



NATIONAL
DOCTORS
TRAINING
& PLANNING

HSE National Flexible Training Scheme

Open to doctors in recognised postgraduate training schemes



NATIONAL
DOCTORS
TRAINING
& PLANNING

The HSE National Flexible Training Scheme

The medical workforce is changing and, over recent years, numerous reports have pointed to the importance of providing flexible working arrangements for doctors.

The HSE National Flexible Training Scheme is open from 13th October 2025 until 31st October 2025.

The purpose of the scheme is to facilitate doctors to continue their training in a flexible manner for a set period.

Job-sharing options are available across post-graduate training bodies. Job sharing involves two doctors sharing the responsibilities of a single full-time post, allowing flexible working patterns while ensuring continuity of service and training opportunities. To express your interest in a job-sharing arrangement, please contact your training body. As places on this scheme are limited it is recommended that you explore job sharing with your training body as early as possible.

This guide sets out details of the HSE National Flexible Training Scheme and provides information for trainees, training bodies and employers about the programme.

Who Can Apply to the National Flexible Training Scheme?

To apply for the HSE National Flexible Training Scheme, Trainees must be enrolled in a training programme under the auspices of one of the Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies recognised by the Medical Council in Ireland on the date the flexible training year commences. Or, intend to apply for HST if not in streamlined training. Trainees between BST and HST are eligible for the flexible training scheme subject to securing a place on the HST programme.

Year 1 BST and GP Practice Posts (Year 3 and 4) are not eligible for this scheme.

This scheme is not recommended for final year trainees however, this is at the discretion of the relevant Training Body.

Places on the HSE National Flexible Training Scheme are limited. The most common reasons to date for individual trainees receiving a place on the HSE National Flexible Training Scheme include:

- Responsibility for caring for others (e.g. children or elderly relatives)
- Physical and mental health
- Personal family circumstances.

When Can Trainees Apply to the HSE National Flexible Training Scheme?

Flexible training posts will be assigned for the period July to July each year, in line with the training year.

In order to allow the timely management of the allocation of trainees to clinical sites, and to minimise any potential service implications if an application for flexible training is successful, applicants must give as much notice as possible to both NDTP and their respective training body.

Applications for flexible training can be submitted from 13th October 2025 to 31st October 2025.

Structure of Flexible Training Posts on the HSE National Flexible Training Scheme

Applicants may propose the structure of flexible training posts within certain parameters. Flexible training posts working arrangements are at 0.5 WTE. The working pattern of a flexible trainee must be managed over a maximum of a two-week reference period, meaning that of every two-week period the agreed percentage of full time must be worked,

Examples of acceptable flexible training working arrangements are

- 3 days one week, 2 the next;
- 2.5 days on, 2.5 days off per working week;
- 5 mornings per week; or
- One week on, one week off

On Call Duties

It is important that a flexible trainee has similar exposure to learning and experience (including on-call duties) as their full-time colleagues. Therefore, trainees on the scheme will be expected to partake in on-call duties / rostered nights, long days, weekends etc. on a pro-rata basis.

In line with the NCHD contract overtime is paid at single time extra until whole time equivalent hours are reached i.e. 39 hours per week.

Duration of Flexible Training Posts

The number of available flexible training posts is limited. Each approved flexible training post should be 12 months, and commence in July each year, in line with the training year. Priority will be given to applications looking for 12 months on the scheme.

Any trainee appointed to a flexible training post and who wish to continue in flexible training after this period will be required to re-apply. No preference will be given to trainees already on the flexible training scheme for subsequent periods on the scheme.

Participation on the flexible training scheme will be restricted to a **maximum of two years** and will only be extended in exceptional circumstances. This is to provide as many trainees as possible with the option to train flexibly.

Prospective applicants should note that deferral of flexible training places is not permitted. An applicant who cannot take up a flexible training post on the specified date of commencement must re-apply in future years.

Terms and Conditions of Employment

All individuals participating in the HSE National Flexible Training Scheme are issued with the NCHD Contract 2010 by the relevant employing authority, and are subject to the terms and conditions of that employment contract. Contractual entitlements such as Training Support Scheme are to be calculated and administered on a pro-rata basis. Please note that flexible trainees are employed and managed by their host site, not NDTP. All HR issues should be managed at a site level by the employer.

The employer in line with the agreed clinical work patterns of the individual trainee will manage contractual issues such as salary, annual leave, and educational leave etc. on a pro-rata basis.

Application Process

The application process for the National Flexible Training Scheme is a two-step process. Each step is outlined below. Application forms referred to below are available in word format at www.hse.ie/doctors.

Application Stage 1: Expression of Interest

The purpose of this stage is to allow the trainee to formally register their interest in the National Flexible Training Scheme with NDTP and to provide information to NDTP which will enable the HSE to make an initial assessment of the application.

Applicants will be required to list their top three preferred sites to complete flexible training in. Please note every effort will be made to match trainees within one of their preferred clinical sites. Please be aware that if successful trainees cannot move between clinical sites for the duration of their flexible training posts.

It is strongly recommended that trainees speak with their current trainer or NSD during the initial application stage, as their signature will be required at Stage 2 of the application process.

If you wish to apply for flexible training, you should:

Determine whether you are eligible to apply by consulting the 'Who can apply' above and, if eligible, complete and submit an Application Form, which is available on the NDTP website (hse.ie/doctors).

NDTP will consider all applications positively. NDTP will contact the applicant, advising them whether:

1. They have been accepted to move forward to Stage 2 of the process, OR
2. A place on the scheme is not available but the application is appropriate for inclusion on the reserve list. Reserve list places will be allocated in the order of the placement of applicants on the reserve list, OR
3. The application is not appropriate for a flexible training post.

All decisions by NDTP on each application received are final. GP Trainees are referred to notes section for further information prior to making their application.

Application Stage 2 – Detailed Application Form

If an applicant is advised that they may proceed to Stage 2 of the application process, the applicant must complete and submit to NDTP the *Approval Form*, a copy of which is provided to successful applicants at offer stage.

The purpose of this stage is to provide NDTP with both the training details and the employment details of the proposed flexible training post. The *Approval Form* must be signed by:

1. The applicant,
2. The relevant training body representative (Dean / National Speciality Director) and
3. The employer (HR Manager/ Medical Manpower Manager/ Hospital Manager).

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the necessary approval is obtained from both the training body and the employer in a timely manner. A deadline for submission of the Stage 2 form will be applied by NDTP in order to secure the flexible training post.

Notes for General Practice Trainees applying for Flexible Training arrangements

1. The Flexible Training Scheme is not available to trainees in GP Practice posts (Year 3 & 4).
2. Prior to application trainees must discuss their application for flexible training with the Programme Director/scheme to ensure that their request for flexible training can be accommodated on the scheme.
3. In making the application it will be assumed by NDTP that your application will be supported by the training scheme.