

**Trainee Guide to Inter Regional Transfers (October 2021)**

This guide is designed to provide information and practical guidance for trainees considering applying for transfer under the IRT process. It describes the eligibility criteria and lists the documents required to support an application.

Please read this guide carefully before applying for an IRT to ensure you understand the process and to ensure you meet the eligibility criteria and supply the correct documents along with your application.

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**Introduction**

From 1 April 2014 the four Scottish Deaneries became a single Scotland Deanery. The Scottish Inter-Regional Transfer (IRT) process has been developed to support medical trainees who have had an unforeseen, significant change in circumstance since the commencement of their current training programme in Scotland.

“An unforeseen, significant change in circumstances” should relate to:

* personal disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010
* a condition relating to mental health following the acceptance of an offer of a training post *or*
* primary carer responsibilities *or*
* parental responsibilities *or*
* a committed relationship (or the breakdown of a committed relationship)

It should be recognised that transfers are not an entitlement. IRTs will depend on compliance with eligibility criteria and evidence requirements, and there being vacancies in the training programme in the region into which trainees are applying to move.

Trainees who wish to transfer to England, Wales or Northern Ireland must use the UK Inter-Deanery transfer process (IDT) <http://specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk/inter-deanery-transfers/>

Please note that the IRT process does not apply to Foundation doctors, Locum appointments for training (LATs), Dental trainees in any level of training or trainees in the Scottish National Programmes. Foundation trainees will be dealt with under their current processes, dental should contact their Postgraduate Dental Dean for further information and trainees in Scottish National Programmes should request a transfer through their Training Programme Director. Trainees in a Cross Regional Programme can only apply for an IRT to the region not linked with current Programme, for example, a Urology trainee in the South East Region can only apply through the IRT process to transfer to the West Region. If a trainee wishes to transfer to a region which is incorporated by their current programme, they should request a transfer through their Training Programme Director.

Clinical lecturers appointed to SCREDS academic posts to the local University appointment process are **not** eligible as their circumstances are already addressed by the current processes and these should be able to transfer by agreement with the SCREDS leads in the academic centres.

The IRT process is open to all other doctors in training.

**Guidance Notes**

**Before applying:**

1. Trainees must discuss alternative support arrangements with their Educational Supervisor or Training Programme Director before applying for an IRT. Trainees should consider all alternatives before applying.

2. Trainees must demonstrate that significant change to personal circumstances has occurred that could not have been foreseen at the time of commencing their training programme. Criteria for change in circumstances are detailed in Section 5.

3. Changes to personal circumstances must have occurred before making an application and applications cannot be based on expected or anticipated future events.

4. As trainees will require statements and supporting evidence from medical specialists and/or local authorities it is recommended that they allow sufficient time for this to be done.

5. Trainees may request transfers to a programme in a different geography but may not specify particular posts or rotations they wish to be placed in at the IRT application stage. This will be discussed at a later stage in the process with the trainees who have been accepted into a new region.

**Eligibility Criteria**

1. Trainees must have experienced a change in their personal circumstances relating to one of the four criteria detailed in subsequent section after commencement in their current training programme.
2. Trainees must have at least 12 calendar months to complete their programme at the point of transfer.
3. Trainees can apply for an IRT with an ARCP Outcome 1, 2, 3, 10.1 or 10.2. However, trainees must at the time of application have a letter of support from their Postgraduate Dean in the case of Outcome 2, or 3
4. Trainees who have not yet started in programme or are new in programme and do not have an ARCP outcome will have to provide a letter of support signed by their Lead Dean Director.
5. Trainees are also required to confirm they have no unresolved “cause for concern” at time of application. Any unresolved “cause for concern” may result in trainee’s application not being eligible for the IRT process. Trainees must have the correct immigration status to be eligible to transfer.
6. To be eligible to apply for a transfer under the IRT process trainees must supply the required evidence to support their application. Failure to supply all documents will invalidate the application.

**Criteria for a change in personal circumstances**

Trainees may apply for a transfer under one of the following criteria.

**Criterion 1A** – The trainee has developed a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010 (see below) for which treatment is an absolute requirement and where the treatment, care or social requirements can only be carried out in the geographical area the trainee has applied to relocate to, as confirmed by a report from their Occupational Health Physician, GP or their medical specialist.

**Criterion 1B** - The trainee has developed a condition relating to mental health following the acceptance of an offer of a training post, for which treatment is an absolute requirement and where the treatment, care or social requirements can only be carried out in the geographical area the trainee has applied to relocate to, as confirmed by a report from their Occupational Health Physician, GP or other registered clinician providing care for the individual.

**Criterion 2** – The trainee is the primary carer for someone who is disabled as defined by the Equality Act 2010 (see below), expected to be a partner, sibling, parent or child, and these responsibilities have changed significantly, resulting in the need to move location, since the commencement of training in their current region. Trainees who provide care for a person as part of a group of carers e.g. a family, are not eligible to apply under this criterion.

**Criterion 3 –** The trainee is a parent or legal guardian of a child (or children) under the age of 18 who reside primarily with them, and for whom they have had significant change in caring responsibilities, resulting in the need to move location.

Please note: The criterion is based on childcare. Pregnancy is not part of this criterion. A trainee whose sole criterion is that she – or a partner – is currently pregnant will not be regarded as eligible.

**Criterion 4** – The trainee has had significant change in personal circumstances due to a committed relationship that could not have been foreseen at the time of their current programme, resulting in the need to move location.

Please note: a committed relationship refers to the relationship a trainee has with a partner (e.g. boyfriend, girlfriend, civil partner, husband, or wife) and not with other family members or friends.

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| **Definition of ‘disability’ under the Equality Act 2010**  The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.  For the purposes of the Act   * *substantial* means more than minor or trivial * *long term* means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely last for at least 12 months (there are special rules covering recurring or fluctuating conditions) * *normal day-to-day activities* include everyday things like eating, washing, walking, and going shopping   Some conditions, such as a tendency to set fires or addictions to non-prescribed substances, are specifically excluded. People who have had a disability in the past that meets the above definition are also covered by the scope of the Act. There are additional provisions relating to people with progressive conditions. People with HIV, cancer and multiple sclerosis are protected by the Act from the point of diagnosis. |

**Supporting documents**

1. Trainees applying for an IRT will need to complete an application form, stating clearly the significant and unforeseen change in circumstances that has taken place since they started training. This can be downloaded from <http://www.scotlanddeanery.nhs.scot/trainee-information/transfers/inter-regional-transfer/>
2. All trainees are required to submit a copy of their most recent ARCP outcome form, which must have been received whilst on their current training programme. If you are currently out of programme (OOP)for any reason, you should submit a copy of your last OOP ARCP Outcome 8 form (if issued) and the last clinical ARCP outcome form received while still in programme, prior to the approved period of OOP. Trainees who have not yet had an ARCP review in their training programme will need to provide a Letter of Support from their Lead Dean Director.
3. Trainees must also submit the Regional Document, signed by the current Lead Dean Director for their specialty training programme.These documents are included within the list of mandatory documents and your application cannot be progressed without them.
4. Depending on the criterion under which a trainee is applying, further supporting documents are also required as mandatory pieces of evidence. Please see below for a list of the documents required for each criterion.
5. Trainees are advised to check that all mandatory documents are submitted along with an application form. It will not be possible to progress any application that does not include the correct documentation completed to the required standard.
6. All trainees will be required to submit new versions of the Application Form, Regional Document and the Supporting Document which relates to their criterion each time an application is made. Certificates (such as birth/marriage/civil partnership) and examples of shared financial responsibility may be re-submitted.

**Signatories for Documents**

1. The Regional Document must be signed by the trainee’s current Lead Dean Director for their specialty training programme or their nominated representative for the IRT process.

2. Relevant supporting Documents A, B, C or D should be signed by the appropriate signatory as outlined on the document and below. Trainees should ensure that the appropriate signatories endorse these documents as it will unfortunately not be possible to accept alternatives.

**Evidence to Support Criterion 1 – ‘Supporting Document A’**

A copy of Supporting Document A can be found on the NES website and must be submitted along with an IRT application made under Criterion One (Own Disability). It will not be possible to accept alternative documents in place of ‘Supporting Document A’.

Supporting Document A must be completed by the trainee and by an Occupational Health Physician, GP, or medical specialist, who will be required to:

* confirm that the trainee has a disability according to the Equality Act 2010
* describe the nature of the ongoing treatment and frequency of the follow up required
* state why the reasonable adjustment of a transfer needs to be made and how a move would support the trainee in their change of circumstances

All sections of Supporting Document A must be completed.

**Evidence to support Criterion 2 – ‘Supporting Document B’**

A copy of the Supporting Document B can be found on the NES website and must be submitted along with an IRT application made under Criterion Two (Primary Carer Responsibilities). It will not be possible to accept alternative documents in place of ‘Supporting Document B’.

Supporting Document B must be completed by the trainee and by the General Practitioner or Social Worker of the person being cared for by the trainee and will consist of:

* a statement confirming the trainee’s role as primary carer for the person being cared for.
* care plan for the person being cared for.

All sections of Supporting Document B must be completed.

**Evidence to support Criterion 3 – ‘Supporting Document C’**

A copy of Supporting Document C can be found on the NES website and must be supported along with an IRT application made under Criterion Three (Parental/Guardian Responsibility). It will not be possible to accept alternative documents in place of ‘Supporting Document C’.

Supporting Document C must be completed by the trainee and a signatory. The signatory must be the trainee’s current Training Programme Director who will confirm, to the best of their knowledge, that they are aware of the change in personal circumstances occurring. This document will not be used by Training Programme Directors to refuse or deny a transfer request.

All sections of Supporting Document C must be completed.

Trainees applying for Criterion Three must also submit a birth certificate for each child listed on Supporting Document C.

Where Criterion 3 has arisen due to the relocation of the other parent/guardian. Evidence of this, for example a job offer, must also be submitted.

**Evidence to support Criterion 4 – ‘Supporting Documents D’**

A copy of Supporting Document D can be found on the NES website and must be submitted along with an IRT application made under Criterion Four (Committed Relationship). It will not be possible to accept alternative documents in place of ‘Supporting Document D’.

Supporting Document D must be completed by the trainee and a signatory. The signatory must be the trainee’s current Training Programme Director who will confirm, to the best of their knowledge, that they are aware of the change in personal circumstances occurring. This document will not be used by Training Programme Directors to refuse or deny a transfer request.

All sections of Document D must be completed.

Trainees applying for Criterion 4 must also provide

**EITHER** a marriage certificate or civil partnership certificate

**OR** 2 pieces of evidence of shared financial responsibility (such as joint mortgage/joint tenancy agreement or joint utility bills or joint bank statements). All examples of shared responsibility should include the names of the trainee and the trainee’s partner.

**OR** 1 Piece of shared financial responsibility and any one piece of evidence from the list below

**OR** Any 2 pieces of evidence from the following list:

* Letter of intent from mortgage lender/rental company
* Letter of intent to marry from religious leader
* Beneficiary documents
* Wedding/venue deposit receipts

If you are applying because your partner has a job offer in another region, you will also have to supply evidence of this in addition to the above:

* If partner is medical, please provide confirmation of training letter, including start date.
* If partner is non-medical, please provide official job offer letter or contract, including start date.

**IRT Process**

**Application Stage**

This is a Scotland-wide process that takes place twice each year and there are two application windows:

1. Trainees, who wish to transfer in **February** must submit their application between **25th July and 30th September**.

Where the application is eligible, but the receiving region has no capacity, the application will remain active and included in capacity checks to transfer in August.

1. Any application received from **1st October** until **1st May** would only be considered for a transfer in **August.**

If an incomplete application is submitted, the date the outstanding evidence is submitted will be counted as the date of submission.

No applications will be accepted between **2nd May and 24th July (inclusive)**. This is to allow ARCPs to be completed for the current training year.

Application forms and supporting documentation can be found on:

http://www.scotlanddeanery.nhs.scot/trainee-information/transfers/inter-regional-transfer/

Completed application and accompanying paperwork should be emailed to:

[IRT@nes.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:IRT@nes.scot.nhs.uk)

1. It is the **trainee’s responsibility** to submit the correct supporting documentation with all sections of the form complete.

2. All trainees will be required to submit new versions of the application form and supporting documentation each time an application is made. Trainees will not be able to resubmit documents which have already been submitted for a previous IRT except certificates e.g. birth, marriage, civil partnership, and examples of shared financial responsibility which may be resubmitted.

3. All information provided at the application stage should be completed to the best of the trainee’s knowledge. If it is subsequently discovered that any statement is false or misleading or relevant information has been withheld the application may be rejected or, if a transfer has already been confirmed, then this may be withdrawn. It may also be appropriate to report any such incidents to the General Medical Council.

**Allocation and Offer Stage**

1. Each region will supply information regarding vacancies to the IRT administrator on a monthly basis.

2. The IRT Administrator will check each trainee application for eligibility and completeness.

3. The application will then be considered by the strategic leads of the training management

workstream of NES Medical Directorate. These include a Postgraduate Dean, GP Director and General Manager (or delegated officer) who will make a final decision on eligibility.

4. Ineligible trainees will be informed by the IRT Administrator of the outcome and that the application will not be progressed.

5. Eligible allocations will be progressed to the allocation stage where the IRT Administrator will contact the relevant programme to confirm an appropriate vacancy.

6. If an allocation has been made the trainee will receive a conditional offer from the IRT Administrator which can be accepted or declined within an agreed timescale.

7. If the trainee accepts the offer then their details will be forwarded to the region. The new region will contact the trainee to confirm their start date and discuss any requirements as necessary. The trainee should then work their three months’ notice with the current region.

8. If there are more IRT requests than vacancies then priority will be given to trainees with a significant change in circumstances due to their own disability. Applications from trainees with a change in circumstances related to caring or parental responsibilities or committed relationships will be considered equally afterwards.

9. In the event of more than one trainee having the same category of change in circumstances then trainees will be ranked by their date of application.

10. Trainees who have not been allocated to a post due to lack of availability will be informed of the outcome by the IRT administrator. Eligible applications will be held until the start of the next training year, at which point a new application would require to be submitted. Applicants will normally preference one region for transfer. In the unusual circumstance where an applicant would consider more than one region, they must preference their choices. Only if the first region has no capacity will the second region be approached

11. At no time during the application process, nor the allocation and offer stage should the trainee contact the Region they have applied to transfer into. This is counterproductive and can lead to misinformation. If a trainee’s application is successful and capacity is present in the new region, the regional administrator will contact the trainee directly.

**Any trainee found to have contacted their requested region may have their IRT application withdrawn**.

**Other Trainee Issues**

**Less than full-time (LTFT)**

A trainee with less than full-time status **cannot** have this guaranteed by the IRT system. Transfer into a less than full-time post will depend on capacity in the new region.

A less than full-time trainee will be considered for a **transfer into a full-time vacancy** should a suitable one exist. The trainees will then have to **make an application** for less than full-time status in the new region. The LTFT process can be found on the following webpage:

<https://www.scotlanddeanery.nhs.scot/trainee-information/less-than-full-time-training-ltft/>

**Out of Programme (OOP)**

1. It cannot be guaranteed that a new region will be able to support the transfer of a trainee who is current OOP in another region. No deferrals will be permitted. Therefore, trainees who are currently OOP should not apply for an IRT which will take place before they return to their current training programme.
2. Trainees applying for an IRT while pregnant or on maternity leave should consider applying for a transfer to take place as close to their return to training as possible.

**Request for a review**

Trainees with concerns about the process or ranking can request a formal review of the process. The review panel will be constituted under the authority of the NES Medical Director and will include a PG Dean or GP Director and General Manager from out with the Training Management Workstream and a lay representative. The review panel will review both the process and the justification of the decision and will make a recommendation to the NES Medical Director. The decision of the Medical Director will be final.

There is no appeals process for the IRT application where the policy has been correctly followed.

**Trainee Checklist**

Please ensure you have included all required documentation with your application.

1. Read trainee guide

2. Check eligibility criteria

3. Complete IRT application form (linked to NES website)

4. Regional documentation signed by Lead Dean Director or nominated representative.

5. Recent ARCP documentation

6. Supporting documentation to support eligibility criteria

7. Check all documents are completed and signed.

**Overview of mandatory supporting documentation required from each trainee:**

If applying under **Criterion One** a trainee **must** submit:

* A copy of their most recent ARCP Outcome form
* A completed Regional Document
* A completed supporting Document A

If applying under **Criterion Two** a trainee **must** submit:

* A copy of their most recent ARCP outcome form
* A completed Regional document
* A completed supporting Document B

If applying under **Criterion Three** a trainee **must** submit:

* A copy of their most recent ARCP outcome form
* A completed Regional document
* A completed Supporting Document C
* A birth certificate for each child listed on Supporting Document C

If applying under **Criterion Four** a trainee **must** submit

* A copy of their most recent ARCP outcome form
* A completed Regional document
* A completed Supporting Document D
* Either a marriage certificate, a civil partnership certificate or two examples of shared

financial responsibility (e.g. joint mortgage or tenancy agreement or joint utility bills)

* Evidence of partner’s new job if this has been cited as the reason for application to transfer.

Trainees who are **out of Programme** **must** also submit:

* The most recent ARCP outcome form received while still in programme.

Templates of Supporting Documents A, B, C and D and the Regional Document can be found on the following webpage:

http://www.scotlanddeanery.nhs.scot/trainee-information/transfers/inter-regional-transfer/

**OVERVIEW OF PROCESS**

Trainee is satisfied they meet eligibility criteria

Complete application forms, relevant supporting evidence endorsed by signatories

Submits application – checked for completeness by IRT administrator

Incomplete application returned to trainee

IRT Administrator checks eligibility and emails to Panel

to review and confirm eligibility

Not eligible. Trainee informed by IRT administrator & application no longer progressed.

Eligible application progressed.

If ranking required or queries re eligibility review panel decides

IRT administrator contacts region for availability

Region confirms availability and area in which the trainee will be based,

within 5 working days

Trainee informed no availability

Conditional offer to trainee by IRT Administrator

Offer declined, application withdrawn

Offer accepted, trainee details sent to region

Region contact trainee with post details and start date