



FOUNDATION INTER- REGIONAL TRANSFERS GUIDANCE

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1. Introduction

The Scottish Foundation School Inter-Regional Transfer (IRT) process has been developed to support Foundation 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:

1. Parental/guardian responsibilities
2. Primary carer responsibilities
3. Medical condition which includes personal disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010
4. Unique circumstances

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. Approval does not guarantee a specific programme but is dependent upon a vacancy being available.

Trainees who wish to transfer to England, Wales or Northern Ireland must use the IFST [UKFPO Inter-Foundation School Transfer process](#). Please note that this guidance is for Foundation trainees who are part of a two-year Foundation programme. Trainees appointed to a F2 Standalone post are **not** eligible to use this transfer process.

2. How to Use this Guide

This guide is designed to provide information and practical guidance for medical students/applicants and current 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 meet the eligibility criteria and supply the correct documents along with your application.

3. Medical Students/Applicants

The Scottish Foundation School will only consider a IRT if you are a medical student/applicant and you have accepted and been allocated to a foundation training programme in Scotland if your **circumstances have changed since applying for and being allocated to Scotland.**

4. Current Foundation Doctors

Applicants for a transfer to another region will only be considered if circumstances have changed since commencing in foundation training.

5. Before Applying

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

- Trainees must demonstrate that a 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.
- Changes to personal circumstances must have occurred before making an application and applications cannot be based on expected or anticipated future events.
- 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.
- 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.

6. Eligibility Criteria

- Trainees must have experienced a change in their personal circumstances relating to one of the four criteria detailed in the subsequent section either before or after commencement in their Foundation programme.
- Trainees should be progressing satisfactorily. 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 at least 12 calendar months to complete their programme at the point of transfer.
- In order 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.

7. Criteria and Supporting Evidence

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

Criterion 1 – Parental/Guardian Responsibilities

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. The supporting documentation form can be found [here](#). This needs to be submitted along with the IRT application form. All sections must be completed, and any supporting documentation must be included as part of the application. Where the reason for transfer has occurred due to the relocation of the other parent/guardian evidence of this, for example a job offer, must also be submitted.

The supporting document must be completed by the trainee and also a signatory. The signatory must be the trainee’s current Educational Supervisor or Foundation 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 the Educational Supervisor or Foundation Programme Director to refuse or deny a transfer request.

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 2 – Primary Caring Responsibilities

The trainee is the primary carer for someone who is expected to be a partner, sibling, parent or child(ren), and these responsibilities have changed significantly, resulting in the need to move location, since they applied for or commenced 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. The supporting documentation form can be found [here](#). This needs to be submitted along with the IRT application form. All sections must be completed. The supporting documentation 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

Criterion 3 – Medical Condition

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.

The supporting documentation form can be found [here](#). This needs to be submitted along with the IRT application form. All sections must be completed. The supporting documentation 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

Criterion 4 – Unique Circumstances

If you consider there are unique circumstances that require you to be in a particular environment whilst you undertake your Foundation Programme, you can apply for IRT under this criterion. Caring responsibilities that do not meet the requirements of criterion 2 (primary carer) are not considered to be unique circumstances. Applications under this criterion are for unique circumstances only, and not just any other circumstance for which evidence is not available to meet the requirements for criteria 1, 2 and 3. You must provide evidence including the reasons for placement in a particular location from a professional individual who has recognised standing to support the application.

The supporting documentation can be found [here](#). This needs to be submitted along with the IRT application form. All sections must be completed. The supporting documentation must include a statement by a professional that:

- describes the current unique situation
- explains why foundation training can only be carried out in a specific location rather than another location in Scotland

You should also include proof of current address, e.g. driving licence, utility bill dated within the last three months or council tax bill dated within the last twelve months.

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.

8. Supporting Documents

- 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 [here](#).
- Trainees will also need to complete the relevant supporting documentation for the criterion under which they are applying. These can be found [here](#).
- Depending on the criterion under which a trainee is applying, further supporting documents may also be required as mandatory pieces of evidence.
- 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.
- All trainees will be required to submit new versions of the application form and supporting documents which relate to their criterion each time an application is made. Certificates (such as birth) may be re-submitted.

9. Signatories for Documents

- The Application Form must be signed by the trainee's current Foundation Programme Directors or Educational Supervisor as well as the local Associate Postgraduate Dean for Foundation.
- Relevant supporting documentation for criterion 1, 2, 3 or 4 should be signed by the appropriate signatory as outlined on the document. Trainees should ensure that the appropriate signatories endorse these documents as it will unfortunately not be possible to accept alternatives.

10. Application Stage - IRT Process

This is a Scotland-wide process and applications will be taken from trainees throughout most of the year. Whilst the Foundation School will continue to keep this application process flexible, a couple of application deadlines have been brought into effect. This is to ensure that three months' notice can be given, in most cases, to the employer. It is anticipated that trainees would transfer regions between F1 and F2 or prior to commencing F1. 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.

Any application received from 1st October until 1st April 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 April 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 [here](#).

Completed applications and accompanying paperwork should be emailed to: sfas@nes.scot.nhs.uk

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

11. Allocation and Offer Stage

- The Foundation School Team will check each trainee application for eligibility and completeness.

- Each application will then be considered by the four regional Associate Postgraduate Deans for Foundation, one of whom is the Foundation School Director, and the Foundation School Manager who will make a final decision on eligibility.
- Ineligible trainees will be informed by the Foundation School Administrator of the outcome and that the application will not be progressed.
- Eligible allocations will be progressed to the allocation stage where the Foundation School Administrator will contact the relevant Training Management Foundation Team Lead to confirm vacancies.
- If an allocation has been made the trainee will receive a conditional offer from the Foundation School Administrator which can be accepted or declined within an agreed timescale (usually 48 hours).
- If the trainee accepts the offer, then their details will be forwarded to the relevant Training Programme Administrator. The trainee should then work the agreed period within their current region. If any concerns are identified the trainee will no longer be eligible for a transfer and the offer of a post will be withdrawn.
- 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 unique circumstances will be considered equally afterwards.
- 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.
- Trainees who have not been allocated to a post due to lack of availability will be informed of the outcome by the Foundation School Administrator. 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.
- At no time during the application process, nor the allocation and offer stage, should the trainee contact a member of administrative or clinical staff for the region into which they have applied to transfer. This is counterproductive and can lead to misinformation. If a trainee's application is successful and capacity is present in the new region, the Training Programme Administrator will contact the trainee directly.
- **Any trainee found to have contacted their requested region may have their IRT application withdrawn.**

12. Other trainee issues

A trainee with less than full-time status **cannot** have this guaranteed by the IRT system but where possible the Foundation School will try and facilitate this. 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 exists. The trainee will then have to **make an application** for less than full-time status in the new region.

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.

13. 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 Postgraduate Dean, 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.

14. Trainee Checklist

- Read trainee guidance
- Check eligibility criteria
- Complete [IRT application form](#)
- Complete supporting documentation for the relevant eligibility criteria
- Attached any additional required evidence
- Check all documents are completed and signed

15. Overview of Process

