

## Job purpose

The champion of flexible training role was agreed as part of ACAS discussions between the government, the British Medical Association (BMA) and employers on the 2016 contract for doctors and dentists in training. As part of the 2018 Junior Doctor Contract review, it was agreed that the role is now made mandatory.

This is a strategic role to promote and improve support for less than full time (LTFT) and other models of flexible training. It may be a standalone role, or an additional role for an existing employee, and it is not intended to replace existing supervisory and pastoral structures that provide support to individual trainees. The champion should, however, have a working understanding of these supervisory and pastoral structures in order to be able to advocate on behalf of current and potential LTFT trainees where required.

Organisations must ensure the holder has adequate time and resources allocated to devote to the role and it must have proactive and reactive elements. The strategic importance of the champion role, in creating culture change on flexible working within the NHS, has been highlighted by medical training leaders.

## Why are champion roles important?

Increasing numbers of junior doctors are electing to train on a LTFT basis, and training authorities and employers are adopting more flexible approaches to training. However practical difficulties remain. Trainees often identify a lack of information, difficulties in application processes and even undermining behaviours from workplace staff as barriers.

Offering a flexible approach to LTFT working proportions could be beneficial to doctors and employers, potentially allowing trainees to maximise their contribution to the service in their available time. Similarly, flexibility to fix working days and on call duties around fixed caring commitments can be hugely helpful.

Giving LTFT trainees and their supervisors access to a champion will allow the sharing of good practice across the organisation and potentially across different organisations. Some organisations will have extensive experience of managing and supporting less than full time trainees which can be more effectively shared across other organisations.

The champion will also help staff to understand and feedback on the relevant policies and processes, and inform the employer about how these practices are

working on the ground. They should help trainees share their experiences and improve their visibility within the organisation. The champion will also provide continuity and an organisational overview, supporting the employer to appoint and manage LTFT trainees in a fair and consistent way.

## Key results areas

The champion will:

- Provide guidance and be a visible point of contact for less than full time doctors in training who are training flexibly or considering training flexibly.
- Signpost trainees to the relevant departments, colleagues, or information within the employing organisation to provide support to those who are, or wish to, work and train more flexibly.
- Signpost trainees to colleagues involved in the management and/or training of trainees who wish to work more flexibly.
- Help develop innovative approaches to training for those wishing to work more flexibly, such as ensuring access to mentorship and specially developed training inputs.
- Advice and or signpost trainees to ensure that the delivery of medical education and training for flexible trainees meets the standards of regulatory bodies.
- Work with the Junior Doctors Forum and the LNC to ensure a consistent approach to training flexibly is adopted across the trust/organisation.

## Competencies

To be effective in their role, the champion should have, or be supported to develop:

- A thorough understanding of the needs of current and potential LTFT trainees in their organisation(s).
- If applicable to the organisation(s) that they cover, a broad understanding of issues affecting LTFT trainees in a range of settings including hospital, primary care, public health, and other non-hospital settings and where necessary are able to signpost the trainee to the relevant departments.
- The ability to advocate effectively, capable of challenging and effecting change with senior management.
- The ability to liaise with key stakeholders on LTFT issues, including rota coordinators, the guardian of safe working, the Support Return to Training (SuppoRTT) champion, the director of medical education, educational/clinical supervisors, medical staffing/HR colleagues, Occupational Health and the LTFT lead appointed by the postgraduate dean. This may include involvement in local mediation processes, to input and advise where specific issues arise between trainees and key stakeholders (including other trainees).

- The ability to signpost trainees to the appropriate sources of advice if they are facing difficulties in relation to their LTFT status.
- Knowledge and understanding of junior doctor rostering and rotas, as well as broader deanery/HEE structures relevant to LTFT training.
- Understanding of broader workplace equalities agenda, for example laws and policies covering pregnancy and maternity, shared parental and other types of family leave, disability and reasonable adjustments, discrimination and other equality-related legislation.

### Assignment and review of work

- The line management arrangements for the champions are for local determination, which will include JDF feedback as part of the champion's review process.
- The post holder is expected to generate work in response to areas of concern from trainees.
- The post holder will agree objectives with the line manager, who will appraise the post holder. The system of performance management will include the opportunity for representatives of the doctors in training to contribute to the assessment, for example, through a system of 360-degree appraisal. The JDF's feedback on the champion's most recent annual report (see paragraph at end of this section) must be included in this system of performance management.
- At the champion's appraisal, it must be discussed whether the number of trainees covered by the champion is impacting the champion's ability to provide support to them. If they feel their ability to support trainees is being impacted by this, solutions should be mutually agreed.
- Champions must be offered enough resource and time to undertake the role. The number of hours required will vary from employer to employer and will be dependent on factors such as the number of LTFT trainees within the organisation(s) that they cover, and the level of administrative support available.
- It is suggested that on average a champion will require between 2-4 hours per week to fulfil the role effectively. As per the paragraph above, where possible, employers should respond positively to requests from champions for more resource/time where it is required.
- The necessary resources required to undertake the role should be made available to the champion. This should include appropriate IT systems and access to information and data to undertake the role.
- The post holder will be expected to provide an annual report/update to the Junior Doctors Forum, escalating any issues to the Trust Board and the DME as necessary.

## Suggested actions and activities

The most effective interventions to champion flexible training locally will depend upon the structure and context of each organisation. However, specific actions that could be considered for inclusion in the champion role, if they are not already being undertaken, include:

- Identifying the LTFT trainees in the organisation – how and where they are working, and according to which LTFT model (e.g. supernumerary or slot share arrangements).
- Identifying current employer policy regarding LTFT trainees, and updating or developing it using existing models.
- Researching and collating information on their own organisation's performance in facilitating and supporting LTFT training, and sharing findings with local junior doctors and LTFT representatives.
- Supporting the training and development of educational and clinical supervisors regarding LTFT issues.
- Creating a forum for trainees - this could be a virtual 'e'-forum to enable trainees to exchange suggestions, seek and offer advice and discuss relevant topics. There should be some opportunities in each year for trainees to meet and network with appropriate staff and colleagues.
- Including a regular item on agendas for reporting to relevant senior management meetings.
- Engaging with local junior doctor forum and local negotiating committee as appropriate.
- Engaging and sharing best practice with fellow champions, for example through a facilitated network.
- Being available to help and advise individual LTFT trainees where required, complementary to existing structures, including signposting internally and to external organisations.

To support trainees it is recommended, and is good practice to ensure:

- the champion's name is on trainees' work schedules
- that the champion has a page and their contact details readily available on the organisation's intranet
- a short, pre-recorded introductory video from the champion is produced and made available to trainees, explaining their role and suggesting areas which they can help with.

The duties and responsibilities outlined are to be regarded as broad areas of responsibility and do not necessarily detail tasks which the post holder may be required to perform.

The role description may be subject to change in the light of experience and circumstances and after discussion with the post holder.

The post holder will be expected to act with full regard to the requirements of the organisation's policies and procedures, including those relating to health and safety.

## **Champions of flexible training in non-hospital settings**

Trainees in smaller organisations such as GP practices or public health settings may find it more difficult to access support and information about flexible training options available to them.

The arrangements for a champion in a non-hospital setting may differ from those in the hospital settings. Due to the large geographical areas potentially covered by these arrangements, the trainees may be required to access and have interactions with these champions more remotely.

As such, these champions must be supported by their employer to ensure their visibility to the trainees that they cover, which may include:

- ensuring the champion's name is on trainees' work schedules
- ensuring that the champion has a page and their contact details readily available on the organisation's intranet
- producing and making available to trainees a short, pre-recorded introductory video from the champion, explaining their role and suggesting areas which they can help with.

The champions will have knowledge of contractual provisions and be able to provide advice, and/or signpost individuals, on relevant issues including contracts of employment, rotas and pay. Non-contractual elements that the champion does not feel competent to advise on, such as specific education and training issues, or options to train flexibly, should be referred by the champion to the relevant areas/bodies.