

Trainee Guide to Inter Regional Transfer (May 2024)

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. This information will be reviewed between IRT windows and therefore changes may occur ahead of future application windows. You should carefully read this guide each time an application is submitted and, if necessary, contact the IRT administrator: irt@nes.scot.nhs.uk

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Introduction

Trainees can apply to transfer to another region within Scotland for training if they have experienced an unforeseen, significant change in circumstance since the commencement of their current training programme in Scotland (criteria 1-4) or for any other reason (criteria 5)

“An unforeseen, significant change in circumstances” should relate to one of the following criteria:

- 1a) personal disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010
- 1b) a condition relating to mental health following the acceptance of an offer of a training post.
- 2) primary carer responsibilities
- 3) parental responsibilities *or*
- 4) a change in a significant relationship with an associated impact on living or financial arrangements. You are also able to apply if you or your partner are pregnant or undergoing IVF treatment.

Personal circumstances must have occurred before submitting your IRT application; applications cannot be based on expected or anticipated future events.

Trainees can apply for an IRT under criterion 5 for which trainees are not required to demonstrate any change to personal circumstances and therefore an IRT can be requested for any reason that is not covered by criterion 1-4.

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) <https://medical.hee.nhs.uk/medical-training-recruitment/medical-specialty-training/inter-deanery-transfers-idt>

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 their 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 should demonstrate that a significant change to personal circumstances has occurred that could not have been foreseen at the time of accepting the offer of a post on a training programme to be considered under criteria 1-4 or use criteria 5 for any other reasons.
3. As trainees may 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.
4. Trainees may request transfers to a programme in a different geography but may not specify 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

Due to the limited opportunities available to transfer the Deanery operates a prioritisation framework (further details can be found later in the guide). This ensures those with the most significant or challenging circumstances have the best chance of obtaining the transfer they require. To ensure fairness it is important that those applying demonstrate their eligibility to be considered against a relevant criteria within the prioritisation framework.

1. If applying under Criterion 1-4, you must have experienced a change in your personal circumstances relating to one of the four Criteria after accepting an offer of a training post and before an application for IRT is submitted. This change must be detailed clearly and concisely in your application form. If trainees have not experienced a change in personal circumstances the application should be made under criterion 5.
2. Trainees must have at least 12 calendar months left to complete their programme at the point of transfer.
3. Requests for transfers will not normally be approved within the first 12 months of joining a training programme, but all applications will be considered on an individual basis.
3. Trainees can apply for an IRT with an ARCP Outcome 1, 2, 3, 10.1 or 10.2. However, trainees must 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 will not normally be granted a transfer within the first 12 months in the programme but if they are applying under these circumstances and do not have an ARCP outcome they will have to provide a letter of support signed by their Postgraduate Dean.
5. Trainees are also required to confirm they have no unresolved “cause for concern” at the time of application. Any unresolved “cause for concern” may result in a 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. It is the applicant's responsibility to select the most appropriate criterion to apply under depending on their own personal circumstances. The Deanery is unable to advise applicants which criteria they should select.

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). This would normally be expected to be a partner, sibling, parent, or child but all applications will be considered on an individual basis. The trainee's responsibilities regarding this individual must 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 but can request a transfer under criterion 5.

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. For applications related to pregnancy, your own or your partner's, or ongoing fertility treatment/ IVF, please use criterion 4.

Criterion 4 – The trainee has had a significant change in personal circumstances due to an important relationship that could not have been foreseen at the time of accepting a post in their current training programme, resulting in the need to move location. This change will often be associated with a change in living or financial circumstances. Some examples are listed but this is not exhaustive:

- A decision to co-habit with a partner
- The breakdown of a relationship necessitating a change in living arrangements. This may be your own relationship or one that impacts your living arrangements, such as

the breakdown of a parental relationship.

- Someone you live with is relocating for work and you need to relocate with them as not doing so would cause you or them financial challenge.
- Someone you have an important relationship with has had a change in circumstances (such as the death or a partner) and will be financially challenged unless you cohabit with them for financial support.
- You or your partner is pregnant, or you are undergoing fertility treatment/ IVF.

Criterion 5 – The trainee requires a transfer to another region to continue their training for any other reason not covered by Criteria 1-4

Criteria Prioritisation

Where there are multiple approved IRT applications but insufficient capacity to accommodate them all, the following prioritisation will apply:

Priority level	Criterion
Priority 1	Criterion 1A and 1B
Priority 2	Criterion 2 and 3
Priority 3	Criterion 4
Priority 4	Criterion 5

In the unlikely event that more than one application is approved against the same priority level but there are insufficient vacancies to accommodate all transfers the Deanery will work with trainees individually to ensure a fair and appropriate solution is identified for all parties concerned. (This will apply where the programme `being applied to has at least one vacancy; if no vacancies exist then all applications are treated equally in being unable to be progressed).

Supporting documents

1. Trainees applying for an IRT will need to complete an application form. If applying under criteria 1-4 trainees will need to clearly state the significant and unforeseen change in circumstances that has taken place since they started training. The same form is used to apply under criteria 5 and 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 in their current training programme. If the trainee is currently out of programme (OOP) for any reason, they should submit a copy of their 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

Postgraduate Dean (it should be noted that transfers will not normally be granted within the first 12 months of joining a programme).

3. Trainees must also submit the Regional Document, signed by the current Postgraduate Dean 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. These documents are required to ensure that application decisions are being made based on evidence and against the appropriate priority level.
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 any Supporting Document which relates to their criterion each time an application is made. This is to ensure decisions are being made based upon the most up to date information & evidence. 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 [Postgraduate Dean](#) 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.

Criterion Evidence Requirements

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.

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 submitted 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 based on childcare responsibilities must also submit a birth certificate for each child listed on Supporting Document C. A photograph or copy of the original document will be acceptable.

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 Document 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 (change in living/ financial arrangements). 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 evidence appropriate to their own circumstances; this could include:

- a marriage certificate or civil partnership certificate
- Letter of intent to marry from religious leader or Wedding/ venue deposit receipts.
- Evidence of shared financial responsibility (such as joint mortgage/joint tenancy agreement or joint utility bills or joint bank statements).
- Letter of intent from mortgage lender/rental company
- Evidence of a change in living arrangements, such as a job offer for the person you cohabit with.

Given that the circumstances of trainees applying under criterion 4 may be varied the Deanery will try to accept any reasonable evidence of the significant change that has necessitated the application. The IRT administration team can always be contacted for advice at irt@nes.scot.nhs.uk

If trainees are applying for a transfer under Criterion 4 due to pregnancy or fertility treatment, then evidence such as an ante-natal or fertility treatment appointment letter would be acceptable. If your name is not on the appointment letter, perhaps because it is for your partner, please provide some evidence showing that individual is your partner such as a joint utility bill/ mortgage letter/ tenancy agreement etc. The Deanery understands that there may be circumstances where a trainee wishes to relocate due to pregnancy, in order to share responsibility for the child, but where they are not in a relationship with the other parent. In such circumstances the Deanery will discuss with you directly what evidence may be available to support your application.

Evidence to support Criterion 5

Trainees are not required to provide any supporting documents or personal evidence. However, the mandatory supporting documentation (mentioned below) is required in order for the application to be deemed eligible:

- A copy of their most recent ARCP Outcome form and/or Postgraduate Dean Letter of Support which relates to their current training programme.
- A completed, appropriately signed, and dated Regional Document

IRT Process

Application Stage

This is a Scotland-wide process that takes place twice each year and there are two application windows. Each application window will remain open for 4 weeks and open in:

February (window 1)
September (window 2)

Applications made during February (window 1) should expect to receive information on their outcome by late April and transfer between August and October the same year.

Applications made during September (window 2) should expect to receive information on their outcome by late November and transfer between February and April of the following year.

Where the application is approved, but the receiving region has no capacity, the application will remain active and be added to a waiting list until the next application window opens (if no transfer

has been offered from the waiting list by the time the new application window opens the trainee will need to submit a new application).

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

Application forms and supporting documentation can be found on:

<https://www.scotlanddeanery.nhs.scot/trainee-information/transfers/inter-regional-transfer/>

Completed application and accompanying paperwork should be emailed to:

IRT@nes.scot.nhs.uk

1. It is the **trainee's responsibility** to submit the appropriate supporting documentation that corresponds with the criterion under which they are applying and ensure all sections of the form are 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. The IRT Administrator will check each trainee application for eligibility and completeness. If a trainee applies under Criterion 1-4 but does not have sufficient evidence to support consideration under this criterion the IRT administrator will amend the application to be considered under Criterion 5. Trainee's will be advised if this circumstance arises.
2. The application will then be considered by the Postgraduate Dean of the training management workstream of the NES Medical Directorate. The Postgraduate Dean will make a final decision on whether to approve or decline the IRT application.
3. Trainees whose application is declined will be informed by the IRT Administrator of the outcome, the reason for the decision and that the application will not be progressed.
4. Approved applications will be progressed to the allocation stage where the IRT Administrator will contact the relevant programme to confirm an appropriate vacancy. At this stage the IRT Administrator will also highlight any potential swaps (see below for further details on swaps)
5. If an allocation can be made the trainee will receive a conditional offer from the IRT Administrator which can be accepted or declined within an agreed timescale.
6. 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. In the case of a swap there may be a requirement for both trainees to accept before arrangements can progress.

7. If there are more IRT requests than vacancies then priority will be given to trainees using the criterion prioritisation detailed on page 4 of this document.
8. Trainees who have not been allocated to a post due to lack of availability will be informed of the outcome by the IRT administrator. Approved applications will be placed on a waiting list until the start of the next application window, 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.
9. We ask that trainees do not contact the region (TPD/ APGD etc) they have applied to transfer into. This is to ensure fairness for all IRT applicants and to assure trainees that all applications have been assessed based only on the national IRT process. Contacting the region trainees have applied to directly can be counterproductive and lead to misinformation. Contact should be avoided until an offer of a transfer has been made & accepted.

To ensure fairness & equity any trainee found to have contacted their requested region prior to an offer being made & accepted may have their IRT application withdrawn.

Swaps

At the allocation and offer stage, where potential swaps based on matching training programme and training grade exist, these are highlighted to the training programme to enhance the opportunity for transfers to be accommodated.

This is a process run by the IRT Administrator and so there is no additional information required from the trainee at the point of application. It may be the case that for there to be a transfer both trainees involved in the swap must accept the conditional offer as otherwise no vacancy would exist to transfer into.

Under no circumstances should trainees or regions attempt to facilitate their own swaps outside of IRT processes. Only the IRT Administrator is permitted to identify and facilitate swaps.

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. This is to ensure that both the educational & service requirements of this new placement can be considered. 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 currently 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. If the trainee is due to return from OOP in Aug – Jan they should apply in the preceding February application window. If the trainee is due to return from OOP in Feb – Jul they should apply in the preceding August application window.
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 can request a formal review. The review panel will be constituted under the authority of the NES Medical Director and will include a Postgraduate Dean 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 appeal process for the IRT application.

Trainee Checklist

Please ensure you have included all required documentation with your application. Documentation can be found on the [Deanery website](#).

1. Read trainee guide.
2. Check eligibility criteria.
3. Complete IRT application form.
4. Regional documentation signed by Postgraduate Dean or nominated representative.
5. Recent ARCP documentation
6. Documentation to support eligibility criteria (if applicable depending on criterion under which the application is made)
7. Check all documents are completed and signed.

OVERVIEW OF PROCESS

