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Wales Foundation School Maternity Policy

The Wales Deanery is committed to supporting its trainees through their training including starting a family. This document is to give you information, advice and guidance on the options available for maternity during training in the Foundation Programme.

It is acknowledged that your family commitments may impact on your training and so it is important that you consider carefully how you can balance your training with your personal circumstances.

You may need to make some difficult but important decisions, which could include delaying completion of the Foundation Programme, if this seems appropriate for you in the circumstances.

Please note this document does not cover the employment aspects, which are the responsibility of the employing NHS Health Board. Further information about your employment entitlement can be obtained from your hospital's HR/Medical Staffing Department or from the British Medical Association (BMA) and online at <http://www.nhsemployers.org/tchandbook>

Absence from Foundation Training

Whilst the legislation allows for normal statutory and contractual entitlement to maternity leave and pay, the UKFPO reference guide states that the completion of the two year programme only allows for a break of up to four weeks per year (during the F1 and F2 years), which would include statutory reasons such as maternity or sickness related absence.

This means that if you have taken more than four weeks off in one foundation year then additional training will need to be arranged by the Foundation School to enable you to complete your F1 or F2 year, and progression to the next phase of your training is likely to be delayed.

Trainees can take anywhere between 2 weeks and 12 months off for maternity leave. A place will be held for you in the Foundation School.

Please note that if time missed overlaps two posts then it is likely that you will be required to repeat both posts, however this is dependent on the amount of time missed in each one. This can be discussed with the Foundation School Manager during your initial maternity meeting.

What to do before you go on maternity leave?

If you are pregnant during your Foundation Training we advise that you notify your Foundation School as soon as possible. A maternity meeting with the Foundation School Manager will then be arranged to discuss the maternity process and go through the training options available to you.

We recommend that you meet with your Foundation School prior to you agreeing your maternity leave with your HR employers. This is so you can make an informed decision about the impact the amount of time off taken will have on your training.

Once your maternity leave has been finalised with your Employers HR then you must inform the Foundation School in writing clearly stating the dates you will be having as maternity leave and if you are using any annual leave to top up your maternity leave we will need the dates of this also.

If at this time you know your exact return date then we would ask you for this also but if this has not yet been decided then the month you intend to return will suffice.

What to do before you return to work?

If you have not advised the Foundation School of your exact return date prior to going on maternity leave you must do so a minimum of three months before you intend to return.

Many doctors who return from maternity leave prefer to return on a part-time basis if you wish to return less than full time then you will need to apply for this prior to your return, please refer to the LTFT Foundation Programme procedure.

FAQ's

Q) Who do I need to inform I am pregnant?

A) In addition to your Foundation School you will need to inform your employer, we also recommend you inform your local Foundation Programme Director and Educational Supervisor.

Q) How much training will I need to complete on my return?

A) This will depend on how much time you are having off and how much of your training you have already completed. This can be discussed on an individual basis with the Foundation School Manager.

Q) I am unable to return to training full time, what are my options?

A) You can apply to return to training less than full time (LTFT) if this is something you would like to do then you must inform your foundation school a minimum of 3 months prior to your return and they will advise your further.

Q) What percentage Less than Full Time can I return to do?

A) If your application for LTFT is approved then the percentage will need to be agreed with your Foundation School in the first instance and then your employer. You can submit your request and this will be taken into consideration. In order to minimise the disruption to rotations Foundation trainees in Wales will usually be expected to work at 50% or job share.

Q) Can I come back to the same post/rotation I have left?

A) Yes. We will reserve the same post/rotation that you left and in the same rotation order. The same rotation will only be reserved for one additional year. Should you find yourself in a position that you do not complete your Foundation Year 1 or 2 post during this time and require additional training, your situation will be looked at on an individual basis.

Q) Does my maternity leave impact on my continuous service with the NHS?

A) As maternity leave is statutory then this does not count as a break in service. If once you return you become out of phase and there is a gap between you finishing Foundation and moving on to specialty then as long as this is less than 3 months then there should not be an issue however we advise individuals to get clarification from their employers HR department.

Q) Can I take more than 12 months off?

A) You can take between 2 weeks and 12 months off. If you wish to take longer than this then you would need to withdraw from the Foundation Programme as we can only allow a maximum of 12 months off.

Q) Do I have to re-do my assessments even if I have already completed them?

A) If you leave a post before completing it in full, you will need to repeat the whole post and this will include all of the assessments and any F2 study days.

Q) Who can I speak to regarding my pregnancy?

A) If you want any support then you can speak to the Foundation School, your Educational Supervisor, Foundation Programme Director and Local Postgraduate Centre. For careers support you can contact the Deanery Careers team.