



**Health Education England**

**HEALTH EDUCATION ENGLAND  
NORTH WEST**

**DENTAL THERAPIST FOUNDATION  
TRAINING PROGRAMME**

**INFORMATION FOR EDUCATIONAL  
SUPERVISORS AND PRACTICES**

# What is the DTFT Programme?

## Programme Overview

The HEE NW Dental Therapist Foundation Training Programme is designed for newly qualified Dental Therapists to ease the transition from undergraduate level to the working world and to experience NHS Primary Dental Care.

Newly qualified Dental Therapists who meet the Person Specification can apply to be part of the Foundation Therapist Programme. Participation in the DTFT Programme is only confirmed once a Dental Therapist is appointed to a position in a Training Practice.

The programme is funded by HEENW who will also provide a trainer grant to the ES. Dental Therapists will be employed by the practice for a maximum of 3 days per week, working alongside the ES.

There will be a study day programme which takes place on the first Wednesday of every month. Regular two-weekly tutorials will also be provided by the Educational Supervisor during normal clinical hours.



***“Dental Therapists are registered dental professionals who carry out certain items of dental treatment direct to patients or under the prescription from a dentist”  
(GDC Scope of Practice)***

## Facts on Finance

### Trainer Grant:

£6,149 for the 12 month programme.

### Therapists Salary:

The FT will be employed by the practice on £107 per day; half days are paid at £53.50 for a maximum of 4 hours with the addition of employer on costs of £16.91 per day (this includes the Employers NI and pension contribution).

## What does an FT do?

Dental Therapists prove to be a valuable asset in most practices as they can carry out a wide range of routine dentistry if trained and competent including:

- History and examination
- Periodontal exam, indices and charts
- Diagnose and treatment plan within competence
- Prescribe, take and interpret dental radiographs
- Give appropriate advice and preventive oral care
- Non-surgical periodontal treatment
- Apply topical treatments and fissure sealants
- Give infiltration and inferior dental block analgesia
- Carry out direct restorations on primary and secondary teeth
- Place pre-formed crowns on primary teeth
- Place temporary dressing and re-cement crowns
- Carry out pulpotomies on deciduous teeth
- Extract deciduous teeth under LA
- Take impressions

Further details can be found in the GDC Scope of Practice guidance document.

# What are the benefits of the DTFT Programme?

The principles behind the Therapy Foundation Course are not dissimilar to those of the foundation dental course and I could not recommend it more highly to either practice teams or to therapists. There is a huge ream of exciting benefits that come to the practice. *James Hobkirk, Deansgate Dental*

More knowledgeable/up-to-date at periodontal disease treatment including pocket charting & scaling. Seeing good outcomes at recalls. *Tasmia Khan, The Lodge Dental Surgery*

From a principal's perspective financially, it makes sense as the costs of staffing apart from a nurse are covered and the output they generate can be kept by the practice. *James Hobkirk, Deansgate Dental*

We have found the greatest benefit to have been that newly qualified people bring fresh ideas and help to keep us fully up to date with latest practice.

*Martin Kenyon, Lytham St Annes*

Smarter, more efficient use of the dentist's time *Sean Hasnain, Rusholme Dental Practice*

Enthusiastic new clinicians coming into the practice bringing the latest training and knowledge. *Stuart Garton, The Dental House,*

The main benefit is allowing a good balance of therapists and dentists working together, something we have always been keen to promote. We find the patient journey is often improved by correctly utilizing the therapist's skills. *Michael Best, Bateman and Best Dental*

If you were planning to involve a therapist as a permanent team member you could view it as a year-long job interview and to see if they are the right member for your team; you can also help to guide them in the way of your own practices work ethos and protocols. *James Hobkirk, Deansgate Dental*

\* All quotes taken from a survey of existing DTFT practices

# ES Requirements

## You must:

- Be an experienced dentist with high clinical and ethical standards.
- Have been working in NHS primary care for at least four years as a performer.

## You will be expected to:

- Provide a dedicated surgery and suitably experienced / registered nurse for the FT for a maximum of 3 days per week for 12 months to treat adults and children under the NHS.
- Be available in your practice when the FT is in practice to advise and assist.
- Provide a one hour tutorial twice each month during clinical practice hours.

## Role of an Educational Supervisor

As the title suggests, the principal duty of the ES is to teach, both within the formal context of the one to one tutorial and in the broader framework of teaching by example.

The ES is in the best position to assess the FTs needs. Through the various processes of assessments and tutorials these needs can be identified, discussed and hopefully satisfied. The best ES will not apply the 'Do as I do' philosophy, but encourage their FT to develop their own personal skills and attitudes. This is an active process which requires the ES to develop their own personal skills and attitudes and to possess certain qualifications.

## We would expect our ESs to have:

- A willingness to teach
- An ability to communicate successfully
- A high level of self-awareness
- Perception towards the feelings of others
- An enthusiastic approach

***“You do have to be prepared to give of your time and have an open-door policy, which can be hard work in a busy practice, but it’s so worthwhile.”***

***— James Hobkirk,  
Deansgate Dental  
Practice, Manchester***



# ES Obligations

## Educational Supervisors are expected to:

- Employ the FT under the terms of the agreed contract and before he/she starts work to deposit a copy of the signed contract of employment with the Dental Team and to obtain prior to and during the appointment the approval of the HEENW to any variations to the contract of employment.
- Work in the same premises as the FT for not less than 2 days a week.
- Provide the FT with adequate administrative support and the assistance of a suitable experienced dental nurse.
- Conduct an initial interview to identify the FTs strengths and weaknesses to draw up a development plan.
- Be available for guidance in both clinical and administrative matters and provide help on request where necessary.
- Prepare and conduct regular 2 weekly tutorials within normal practice hours (such tutorials to be of at least one hour's duration and recorded in the portfolio). Tutorials should not take place during lunch or before / after clinical hours.
- Allow and require the FT to attend the study day course programme and ensure that holidays do not lead to absence from the study day.
- Provide satisfactory facilities including an adequate supply of hand-pieces and instruments, sufficient to allow them to be sterilized between patients.
- Provide relevant training opportunities so that a wide range of NHS practice is experienced and so that, as far as is reasonably possible, the FT is fully occupied.
- Assess and monitor the FTs progress and professional development using the Postgraduate Dental Education Portfolio (PDP) and any other material provided for this purpose, to give feedback and to liaise with the Adviser as necessary.
- Ensure that the FTs PDP and the processes involved in assessment are documented and kept up to date.
- Participate in ES training when necessary.
- Set time aside to be available for Adviser visit(s), as required.
- Provide appropriate dental reference material for the use of the FT within the practice (Journals, CD ROMs, Books, etc.).
- Advise on the final certification of the FTs completion of training. Inform the PGDD (in writing) if the circumstances of either yourself as the ES, the FT or the practice change in such a way as to alter the contract of employment between yourself and the FT.

***“I would always suggest speaking to an existing foundation trainer; ensuring all policies, risk assessments and SOP’s are available, strong, and of high quality. I would also suggest being readily available and helpful toward your foundation dental therapist—who will often help you as much as you help them!”***

***— James Hobkirk, Deansgate Dental***

# FT Obligations

## Dental Foundation Therapist's are expected to:

- Work as an employee for the duration of the Foundation Training Programme under the terms of the agreed contract.
- Take up the DTFT placement once accepted, enter into all agreed contract of employment with the ES and abide by its terms in all respects.
- Participate in an initial PDP interview to identify your strengths and weaknesses and work with the ES to draw up a development plan (PDP is the Professional Development Portfolio in Dental Foundation Training).
- Work under the direction of the ES and seek advice and help on clinical and administrative matters where necessary.
- In the interest of good patient care and the good management of practice, draw the ES's attention to any problems encountered immediately they become apparent.
- Attend regular fortnightly tutorials within normal practice hours (such tutorials to be of at least one hour's duration and recorded in the PDP). Tutorials should not take place during lunch or before / after clinical hours.
- Diligently attend the Study Day course programme and ensure that holidays do not lead to absence from the study course.
- Co-operate with the ES and the practice so that you make the most of the facilities and opportunities provided, particularly training opportunities, so that a wide range of NHS practice is experienced and so that, as far as is reasonably possible, you are fully occupied.
- Work with the ES to ensure that your progress and professional development are assessed and monitored, using the Professional Development Portfolio (PDP) and any other material provided for this purpose; and to ensure that the relevant documentation is kept up to date.
- Undertake any specified activities as part of the assessment process within Foundation Training.
- Act as a full and committed member of the dental practice team, participating in practice meetings, following proper practice protocols and co-operating with practice staff in all respects.
- Take out professional indemnity cover and practice according to the General Dental Council and other relevant professional guidelines.
- In the event of disagreement or dispute with the ES, cooperate with HEENW to resolve the matter expeditiously.

The professional relationship between ES and FT will be that of Provider/Performer. The Provider is both legally and professionally responsible for the FT. The ES also has vicarious liability for the actions of the FT. ESs are required to satisfy themselves of the competence and suitability of their FTs to carry out the work, by means of structured assessment.

***This list of obligations may appear somewhat daunting, but at the risk of being repetitive, it has to be said that the 'Kingpin' of Foundation Training is the ES. The duties are undoubtedly many. The most important obligation, however, which will be rewarded by a feeling of success, self-esteem, and the pleasure of seeing a colleague achieve a goal, is commitment.***

***— Health Education England NW***

# Tips and guidance

## Tips and guidance from current ESs:

- Have lots of patience with the new FT — need a lot of time to learn.
- Recommend 2-week induction where FT observes, uses computer, gets to know staff and becomes acclimatised to the practice. Start with x2 patients per session. Must have a qualified nurse.
- Ensure that FT becomes familiar with computer system and writes their own notes – important skill to learn.
- Provide a range of materials for them to decide what to use.
- Keep ES book light so that he/she is available to support FT
- Call FT through to observe a learning opportunity i.e. tricky cavity prep
- Everyone has different strengths and weaknesses and for a newly qualified therapist they often have yet to find out what these are. At the start it is important to allow the new therapist plenty of time to find their feet and to develop their confidence. We have found the best ways to achieve this are to ensure a generously spaced diary is planned that can then be modified as the therapist develops.
- Another element has been to ensure that the dentists in the early months refer the more straightforward restorations on appropriate patients to the FT, the Programme runs for a year so there is plenty of time to steadily introduce more complex and challenging cases. This helps to keep stress levels down and we have found increases the rate at which the therapists improve and grow in confidence.

## COVID-19:

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the current Dental Foundation Therapists have gradually returned to their training practices following relevant guidelines, practice risk assessment and SOPs.

Despite the limitations, FTs are continuing to gain experience and contribute to their training practices in many ways. There are many skills which a FT can utilise which do not involve the use of AGPs such as triaging and assessing patients, oral hygiene instruction, preventive advice including diet advice and smoking cessation), periodontal treatment (including indices/pocket charts and the use of hand scalers), provisional restorations, deciduous extractions, Hall crowns, fluoride varnish applications and radiographs.

In addition, FTs have been involved in practice audits/meetings, tutorials/CPD, patient educational videos, clinical observations and targeted prevention advice via telephone for high dental needs patients.



## FT Redeployment Experiences

One of our FTs from the September 2019 Cohort, Nia Harris, has shared her experiences while employed at the Nightingale Hospital in Manchester, where she was redeployed as a Family Liaison Officer.

Please follow this link to view the video:

[Dental Trainees Redeployment Experiences during COVID-19](#)

# Contacts and Additional Info

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## Website

<https://www.nwpgmd.nhs.uk/dental-foundation-therapist-training-scheme>

*“As TPM, my main role is to ensure that FTs are provided with the support they need to successfully complete the one-year programme. The TPM acts as port of call for any queries which the FT and ES may have at any time during the programme. They will also be involved in monitoring progress of the FT via the e-portfolio and organisation of the study element of the programme. Contact is also made with practices at least twice during the year.*”

*A good outcome is a Dental Therapist who feels more confident, skilled and knowledgeable about the working world of dentistry. Excellent training practices with ESs who nurture, mentor and provide the FT with many learning opportunities, are the cornerstone of the programme’s success.*

*If you are interested in learning more about becoming involved in the DTFT programme, please do not hesitate to get in touch via the links above.”*

**—Tracy Thompson, DTFT TPM**