



Inter-Foundation School Transfers (IFSTs) 2023



England
Northern Ireland
Scotland
Wales



**UK Foundation
Programme**

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Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to provide information about how medical students/applicants and current foundation doctors can apply to transfer from one programme to another by applying for an inter-foundation school transfer (IFST).

The IFST process has been designed to support transfers across the programme in cases where individual circumstances have changed since the point of initial application/allocation to a 2-year foundation programme.

The process allows F1 doctors who are working as part of a two-year programme to apply for a transfer to take effect from the start of their F2 year. And for current medical school graduates/applicants who are applying to the foundation programme to apply for a transfer to take effect from the start of their F1 year in August. It is recognised that situations will arise outside of this process, therefore the option to apply for a transfer due to exceptional circumstances throughout the course of the training programme will continue to be available.

General Principles

- 1.1 The application for an inter-foundation school transfer is based on the premise that the applicant is no longer able to manage their training and their caring/health responsibilities in their allocated/current location.
- 1.2 The criteria for applying for a transfer between foundation schools are largely based on the criteria for applying for pre-allocation to a particular foundation school as part of the national foundation application process.
- 1.3 Transfers will normally take place either before the start of foundation training (F1) or at the start of the F2 year.
- 1.4 Applicants can only list one potential “receiving” foundation school, and this is the school where an approved application will be sent. Where two or more appropriate foundation schools have adjoining geographical borders, and either of them would be suitable to meet the applicant’s needs, it will be up to those schools to discuss and advise the applicant which is the most appropriate.
- 1.5 Approval for inter-foundation school transfers must be agreed by the local foundation school panel, based on the individual applicant’s needs. Applications submitted under exceptional circumstances need to be agreed between the originating and receiving foundation school panels.
- 1.6 Transfers will only take place if there is agreement that the applicant needs to transfer because of a change in their circumstances, which meets the nationally agreed criteria, and there is a place in the receiving foundation school.
- 1.7 Approval of an application for an inter-foundation school transfer does not guarantee a specific programme or space within the receiving foundation school as it is **dependent upon a vacancy being available**.

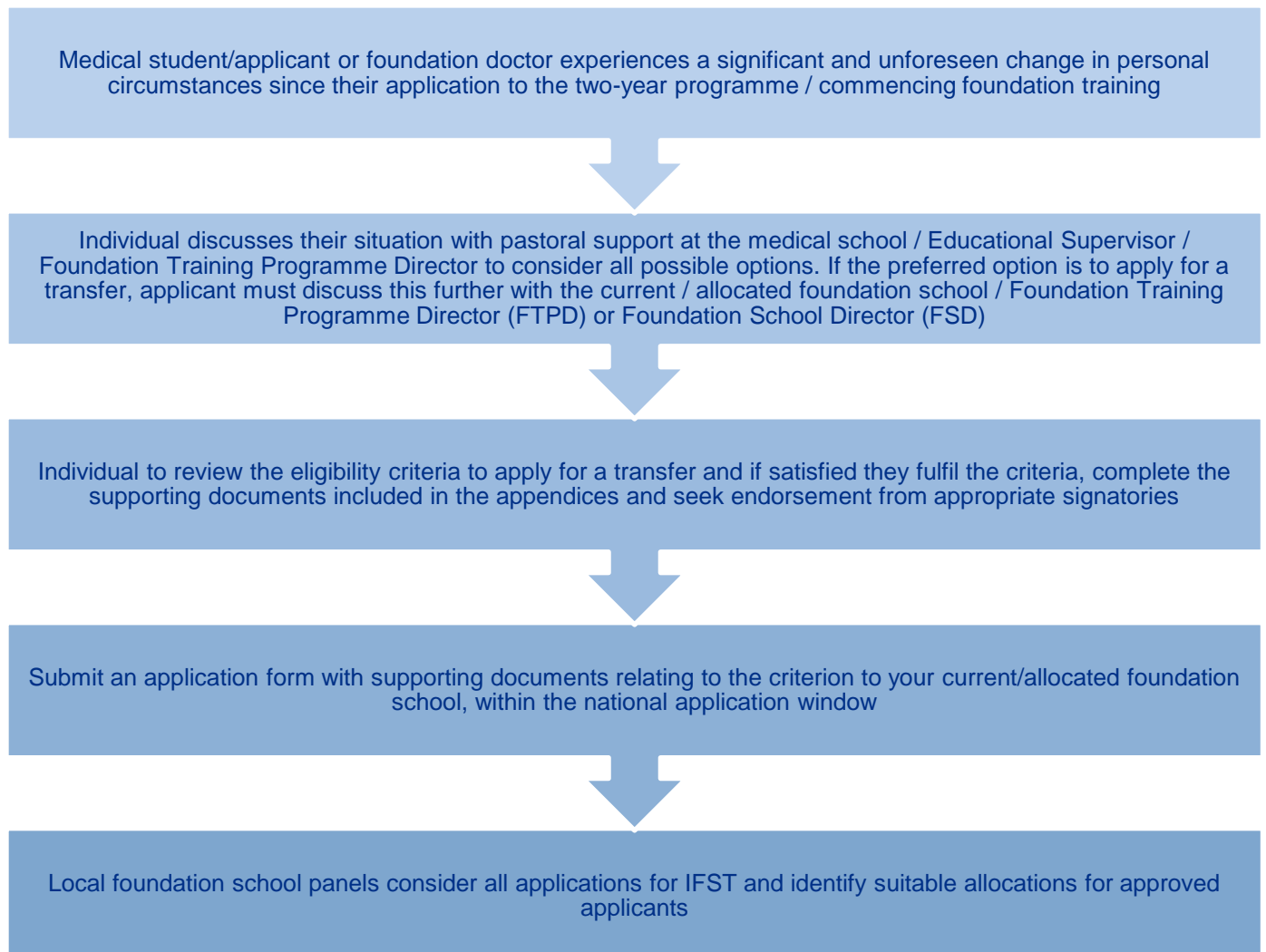
Medical Students/Applicants

- 1.8 Foundation schools will only consider applications for a transfer from medical students/applicants if they have been accepted for foundation training, allocated to a foundation school **and** their circumstances have changed since they originally applied.

Foundation Doctors

- 1.9 Applications for a transfer to another foundation school from a foundation doctor will only be considered if their circumstances have changed since **commencing** their foundation training.

Process Overview



National IFST Application Timeline

IFST applications for F1 and F2 programmes (beginning August 2023)	
Date(s)	Activity
Thursday 9th March 2023	Application submission window opens
Thursday 23 rd March 2023	Application window closes for all IFST applications (applies to all foundation schools)
Monday 27 th March – Friday 14 th April 2023	Foundation schools hold panels to review IFST applications and notify applicants of application outcome
Monday 24 th – Friday 28 th April 2023	IFST national appeals window
Wednesday 10 th May 2023	National review panels consider appeals
By Friday 12 th May 2023	Panel outcomes issued to applicants and foundation schools notified
August 2023	New rotations commence

Applications outside of this timeline should only be completed where personal circumstances have changed since the application/allocation window due to exceptional circumstances (refer to the next section of this guide).

Criteria

The inter-foundation school transfer (IFST) process has been developed to support doctors who have had an unforeseen and significant change in circumstances since initial application to the two-year training programme.

Any unforeseen and significant change in circumstances could relate to: -

- 1) Parental responsibilities
- 2) Primary carer responsibilities
- 3) Medical conditions
- 4) Unique circumstances

Where individuals meet more than one criterion, the onus is on the applicant/foundation doctor to decide which one they apply under, as this chosen criterion will be the one used for consideration as part of the application process for transfer. All applications must include supporting evidence specific to the criterion the applicant is applying under (please refer to appendices 2 – 5).

Criterion 1 – Parental Responsibilities

The applicant is a parent or legal guardian of a child or children under the age of 18 at the start of the training year who reside(s) primarily with them and for whom they have significant caring responsibilities, and their circumstances have changed since submitting their original application or commencing their training.

- Applicants must describe how their circumstances have changed and why they need to move to meet the caring responsibilities
- If the sole criterion is that the applicant (or their partner) has become pregnant since submitting their Foundation Programme application or since commencing their foundation training, this will not be regarded as a reason for an inter-foundation school transfer

The applicant is required to supply the following supporting evidence:

- 1) Copy of birth certificate(s) of the child(ren)
- 2) For legal guardians, a copy of the legal document that confirms your status for the child(ren) named in the birth certificate(s)
- 3) Supporting statement from an individual who has known the applicant for 2-years, has a relevant professional working relationship with the applicant **and** their child(ren), and be in a position to confirm that they have significant caring responsibilities for their child(ren)

Criterion 2 – Primary Carer Responsibilities

The applicant is the primary carer for someone who is disabled (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) and their circumstances have changed since submitting their original Foundation Programme application or commencing their foundation training.

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, and that the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her 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 / is likely to last for at least 12 months
- *normal day-to-day activities* include everyday things like eating, washing, walking, and shopping

People who have had a disability in the past that meets this 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. People with visual impairments are automatically deemed to be disabled.

Some conditions, such as a tendency to set fires or addictions to non-prescribed substances, are specifically excluded.

For an applicant to meet this criterion they would normally be expected to be caring for a partner, sibling, or parent. Applicants must be the primary carer for this person. If the person they are caring for is not their partner, sibling or parent, applicants will be expected to explain clearly and put a strong case as to why they have the role of primary carer. Applicants 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.

Applicants will be required to complete a care plan to demonstrate how they will combine the responsibilities of foundation doctor and primary carer and that local support resources have been fully considered.

Applicants will be required to supply the following supporting evidence:

- 1) Care plan
- 2) Supporting statement from GP / Social Services confirming the applicant's role as primary carer for this person

Criterion 3 – Medical Condition

The applicant has a medical condition or disability for which on-going follow up for the condition in the specified location is an absolute requirement.

Applicants must describe how their circumstances have changed and why they need to move and present clear arguments as to why follow up arrangements could not continue as present.

Applicants will be required to supply the following supporting evidence:

- A supporting statement/report by the current medical specialist treating the condition or occupational health physician in which they will be required to:
 - a. describe the current medical condition or disability
 - b. describe the nature of the on-going treatment and frequency
 - c. state why the follow up must be delivered in a specific location, rather than by other treatment centres in the UK

Criterion 4 – Unique Circumstances

If you consider that there are unique circumstances that require you to be in a particular environment whilst you undertake your Foundation Programme, you can apply for IFST under this criterion.

- Caring responsibilities that do not meet the requirements of criterion 2 (primary carer) are not considered to be unique circumstances
- Medical conditions (including mental health conditions) must be submitted under criterion 3 and not under criterion 4 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 criterions 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.

If sufficient mandatory evidence to support the application has not been provided the application will be rejected.

Eligibility

- There will be no further applications allowed if individuals have already had an application or appeal rejected in that training year
- Applicants must have experienced a change in circumstances relating to one of the four criteria detailed above after the initial FP application window and allocation to a foundation school (for F1) or after commencing their foundation programme
- Applicants must apply during the national IFST application window, with only truly exceptional circumstances being assessed out of the application window
- Applicants must be able to take up a new placement in a new region within the national timeframes (if the application is for an August F1/ F2 programme start). It is not usually possible to defer a transfer start date
- For foundation doctors who have already commenced training, IFST requests are subject to the trainee being in receipt of a satisfactory ARCP Outcome 1. Other outcomes will not be accepted, except for in exceptional circumstances and generally for applications considered outside of the national process
- Current foundation doctors cannot apply for an IFST if they are currently on long-term sick leave from their foundation programme
- Applicants are asked to disclose if they are currently the subject of a grievance, General Medical Council (GMC), criminal or any other investigation. If you indicate that you are subject to any of the above, you are required to provide additional information through the Fitness to Practice (FTP) Disclosure to support your application (appendix 2). Failure to disclose this information could result in the withdrawal of an application from the process
- In order for your IFST application to be considered, you must supply all of the supporting evidence specific to the criterion you are applying under. These are outlined in the 'Supporting Documents' section

Right to work and visas

Applicants for transfer must have the correct immigration status to be eligible for consideration. Transfers will only be permitted if they are compliant with UK Home Office rules and regulations.

Doctors/applicants who hold a Skilled Worker visa can only apply to transfer within the nation that is the lead sponsor of their visa. For example, if you are currently working in England and your visa is sponsored by Health Education England (HEE), you will **not be able** to transfer to Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales. The same applies to visa holders working in any of the four nations.

If you are a Skilled Worker visa holder looking to transfer between regions within a nation (where there is a single sponsor), a transfer can be permitted providing you meet all other criteria and there is a place available in the receiving school.

Applicants with a Skilled Worker visa would not need to apply for a new visa, however, foundation schools need to provide the individual's details to the overseas sponsorship team so that they can update their records. Contact details for the sponsorship teams in each of the four nations can be found on the [UKFPO website](#).

Before Applying

Medical students/applicants or foundation doctors who believe that they meet one or more of the criteria are **strongly advised to discuss their circumstances with their medical school or foundation school before completing the inter-foundation school transfer (IFST) application form**. The purpose of this discussion would be to help set a realistic expectation for potential applicants and to explain the necessary forms and supporting documents to be supplied.

- Foundation doctors should discuss their transfer application with their Educational Supervisor or Foundation Training Programme Director (FTPD) and/or Foundation School Manager if you are already in a foundation training programme
- Medical students/applicants should discuss their transfer application with their medical school pastoral support tutor and the Foundation School Director and/or Foundation School Manager from the allocated foundation school if you are an applicant for F1 and have not yet taken up your appointment

Having discussed alternative support arrangements with the foundation school and considered all options available to you, you should make an informed decision about whether you still wish to apply for a transfer. If you do decide to apply for a transfer, you should inform your Foundation School Director of this decision.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate that a significant change in personal circumstances has occurred that could not have been foreseen at the time of national application/allocation.

The change must be relevant to one of the four criteria specified: 1) parental responsibilities, 2) primary carer responsibilities, 3) medical condition, 4) unique circumstances.

- Changes in personal circumstances must have occurred before submitting an application for an IFST
- Applications cannot be based on expected or anticipated future events. This includes applications based solely on pregnancy
- Foundation schools will do their best to accommodate specific location requests but due to availability may not be able to offer a post or precise location requested

- **A vacancy must exist in order to enable a transfer to take place**
- It is important that you know the geographical area to which you would like to be transferred to and the training locations within that. You should only apply for a transfer to a region in which you would want to train.
- Applicants **should not** contact a potential receiving foundation school directly to ask if there are vacancies.

How to apply

- The application process will be coordinated by each foundation school in accordance with the national timeline to review IFST applications, and place applicants in new locations in time for the start of the training year. Applicants for F1 can only apply for an IFST once they have been allocated to a foundation school.
- Applicants should complete the IFST application form which is available on the UKFPO [website](#) and submit this with supporting documentation via email to their current/allocated foundation school within the national IFST application window.
 - **There is an IFST application form for each of the four criterion and these can be found under the [Forms and Guidance](#) page of the UKFPO website**
 - **Applicants should ensure that they use the correct form for the criterion that they are applying under**
 - **Applications must be submitted to the current/allocated Foundation School and not to the requested foundation school**
- It is the responsibility of the applicant to submit the correct information and supporting documents with all sections completed at the time of application and by the deadline specified in the national timeline
- In order for the application process to remain consistent, the transfer process must operate in accordance with the published timescales. Late applications will not be accepted under any circumstances
- Applicants can only apply under **one** of the four criteria. It is the responsibility of the applicant to select the most appropriate criterion to apply under depending on their personal circumstances
- Information provided at the application stage, including information supplied in additional supporting documents, should be completed to the best of the applicant's knowledge. If it subsequently transpires that any of the information provided is false or misleading, or that relevant information has been withheld, particularly in regard to eligibility and fitness to practice, an application may be disqualified, or a transfer withdrawn. It may also be appropriate to report any such incidents to the General Medical Council (GMC)
- For applications that are submitted outside of the national timelines due to exceptional circumstances, applicants should send their application with supporting documentation to their current or allocated foundation school by email. Foundation schools will only consider applications where all the required forms and supporting documentation have been submitted and are fully and accurately completed. Please refer to later sections of this guide for further information

Supporting Documents

- All applicants must complete the national application form, stating clearly the significant change in circumstances that has taken place since application/allocation, or since their commencement in their training programme
- Depending on the criterion under which you are applying, further supporting documents will also be required as mandatory pieces of evidence, at the point of submission. Please refer to appendix 1 for details of mandatory evidence required under each criterion
- It is your responsibility to ensure that you submit a complete application, with the required supporting statement(s) and any required pieces of evidence at the time of application. You are therefore advised to check that you have correctly completed and included all mandatory documents for the criterion you are applying under, along with your application form
- Any application that is not completed to the required standard and does not include the correct documents will be rejected
- If applicants submit evidence in a different format than intended (e.g. a GP's letter instead of one of the appendices/statements in the IFST form itself), then the alternative form of evidence must still explicitly cover all the points asked for in the appendix/statement

Appropriate Signatories

Supporting statements/documents must be signed by the appropriate signatory as outlined on the document. It will not be possible to accept alternatives.

All supporting statements/documents must be signed within six weeks of the application. Any forms dated beyond six weeks prior to the application will not be accepted.

Consideration of Applications

Local foundation schools will each convene a panel to consider IFST applications and identify suitable allocations for approved applicants.

All applications will be reviewed by the local foundation school team in the first instance. The purpose of this review will be to ensure applications have been completed correctly and that all the supporting evidence required has been provided. In the case of incomplete applications, or where additional supporting evidence is missing or incorrect, the local foundation school will inform applicants that their applications will not be taken forward.

Applications that are considered to have been completed fully and that include all of the necessary supporting documentation will be reviewed by a local foundation school panel.

Panels should comprise of at least three members, one of whom should be the Foundation School Director (or nominated representative). The review panels for IFST will be determined by the local foundation school.

The purpose of the review panels is to determine if the applicants meet the requirements for a transfer in accordance with the national eligibility criteria. Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application in line with the national timeline.

If the local panel does not approve an application for an inter-foundation school transfer, the applicant will be notified of the reason(s) why the application has not been approved. The local foundation school will advise the applicant of the appeals process and the date by which an appeal must be submitted.

Exceptional Circumstances

The expectation is for the majority of applications to be submitted in accordance with the national timeline. However, it is recognised that situations may arise after the close of the IFST application window and during the training year. Applications will be accepted where it can be demonstrated that the applicants' personal circumstances have changed since the close of the application window.

In cases where exceptional circumstances arise and need to be managed outside of the national timeline, the allocated and receiving foundation schools will work together to try and identify an appropriate transfer.

Applications will still need to be submitted using the national application forms and guidance and applicants will be required to demonstrate they meet the necessary criteria and present the supporting evidence for the criterion they are applying under. Decisions around transfer allocations will be made at local discretion by the Foundation School Directors.

Applications will still be dependent on capacity at the receiving foundation school regardless of the circumstances.

Allocations

The local foundation school will seek to place all applicants who have been approved for a transfer following their local review panels.

- In the event that there are more applicants approved for a transfer to a particular school than there are available places, applicants will be placed on a waiting list in case a place becomes available in time for the start of the F1 or F2 year. In oversubscribed foundation schools, medical students/F1 applicants will be allocated to available foundation programmes based on their initial application score
- Applicants will remain the responsibility of their current foundation school until a programme in the receiving foundation school has been confirmed
- Applicants are advised that it might not be possible for a transfer to take place if there are no places available

As the applicant is applying for an IFST due to changes in their circumstance (which make it impossible to manage their training and their circumstances in their allocated location), it is expected that the applicant will take up any programme offered to them by the receiving school. If the applicant decides not to take up the offered programme, the application will be terminated, and the applicant will be expected to stay in the current foundation school.

Applicants/foundation doctors **must** provide notice to their current/allocated employer/Trust once a transfer has been finalised and they have been allocated to a new employing organisation/programme. Prior to this, foundation doctors should let their current Trust and Foundation Programme Director know that they are applying for a transfer and awaiting the outcome.

Deferrals

Deferrals for inter-foundation school transfers (IFSTs) cannot be accommodated under any circumstances.

Less Than Full-Time (LTFT) Training

An applicant's less than full-time (LTFT) status cannot be guaranteed and a transfer to a LTFT programme will depend on capacity in the receiving foundation school/new region.

A trainee who is currently working LTFT will still be considered for a transfer to a full-time vacancy should one arise. The trainee will be expected to follow local procedures and fulfil the requirements necessary to work LTFT in the receiving foundation school / new region. This may require submitting a new application for LTFT in the new region.

Exceptional Circumstances

The local process for managing inter-foundation school transfers (IFSTs) has been introduced to provide a consistent, robust, and transparent process for allowing trainees to transfer between programmes across the United Kingdom (UK).

Where possible, we would encourage trainees to utilise this process and follow the local timelines set by each foundation school for fairness and continuity across the community of medical students and trainees. However, in cases where unforeseen situations occur outside of the local timeline, applications will be accepted and managed by foundation schools as the need arises. This is to ensure there is a flexible support mechanism in place for trainees in exceptional circumstances.

It is acknowledged that applicants' personal circumstances may change after the closing date for applications for IFST. Inter-foundation school transfers (IFST) will take place only if both foundation schools agree that the medical student/applicant or foundation doctor needs to transfer because of a change in their circumstances, which meets the nationally agreed criteria; and there is a place available in the receiving foundation school.

There may also be circumstances where trainees need to transfer foundation schools at short notice and due to exceptional circumstances. In these instances, applications should be submitted to the allocated foundation school and reviewed by the Foundation School Directors and decided upon at the discretion of the local foundation school.

The allocated / current and the receiving foundation schools must each set up a panel to consider any applications for inter school transfers.

Panels should comprise of at least three members, one of whom must be the Foundation School Director (or nominated representative). The review panels for IFST will be determined by the local foundation school.

Applicants should note that if the receiving foundation school does not have an appropriate foundation programme place available to accommodate the transfer, the applicant will be placed on a waiting list.

If either foundation school panel does not approve an application for an inter-foundation school transfer, the applicant will be notified of the reason(s) why the application was not approved. The foundation school panel which did not approve the application will advise the applicant of the appeals process and the date by which an appeal must be submitted.

Appeals Process

Appeals will only be considered on the grounds that the process has not been applied with appropriate diligence or due care, or that the decision was made in a prejudicial way.

- Appeals can only be considered on the basis of information supplied at the time of the original application
- A central appeals process will be coordinated by the UKFPO and the appeal window and deadline is included within the national timeline

Applicants should submit a request for an appeal to the UKFPO administrative team via appeals@foundationprogramme.nhs.uk by the national deadline. The request must include a full statement of the grounds of appeal and any evidence to support the appeal.

The UKFPO will convene a national appeals panel which will include senior members of the UKFPO, an independent Foundation School Director, Foundation School Manager, foundation doctor representative and a lay representative.

The national appeals panel will convene to review all appeals received.

The panel will consider the statement and evidence provided to decide whether the appellant has demonstrated that procedures have not been followed and that their application should have been approved. The appellant will be notified of the outcome of the panel within five working days. Both foundation schools will also be informed of the decision.

The decision of the appeals panel will be final, and the trainee will have **no further right to appeal**. No further correspondence will be entered into.

In the event that an appeal is upheld, the UKFPO will take the appropriate steps to try and find an appropriate training place with the requested foundation school in line with the initial request for transfer. Applicants are advised that the principles of the IFST process will still apply, and that all transfers are dependent on availability of training places in the receiving foundation school.

Approval of an appeal for an inter-foundation school transfer does not guarantee a specific programme within the receiving foundation school.

Contact Information

Inter-foundation school transfer enquiries: please contact your current / allocated foundation school in the first instance. Contact list can be found [here](#).

General enquiries: helpdesk@foundationprogramme.nhs.uk

Website: www.foundationprogramme.nhs.uk

Twitter: @UKFPO

APPENDIX 1 – Mandatory Evidence Required

The following section provides an overview of the supporting documents and/or statements required for applications under each criterion.

There is a separate IFST application form for each of the 4 different criterion which can be found on the UKFPO [website](#).

Criterion 1 – Parental Responsibilities

Applicants must provide the following evidence:

- IFST application form
- Copy of birth certificate(s) of the child(ren)
- For legal guardians, a copy of the legal document that confirms your status for the child(ren) named in the birth certificate(s)
- Supporting statement from an individual who has known the applicant for 2-years, has a relevant professional working relationship with the applicant **and** their child(ren), and be in a position to confirm that they have significant caring responsibilities for their child(ren). (The form for this statement is included within the IFST application form)

Criterion 2 – Primary Carer Responsibilities

Applicants must provide the following evidence:

- IFST application form
- Care plan
- Supporting statement from GP / Social Services confirming the applicant's role as primary carer for this person. The form for this statement is included within the IFST application form

Criterion 3 – Medical Condition

Applicants must provide the following evidence:

- IFST application form
- Supporting statement/report by the current medical specialist treating the condition or Occupational health physician in which they will be required to provide the below information. The form for this statement is included within the IFST application form
 1. describe the current medical condition or disability
 2. describe the nature of the on-going treatment and frequency
 3. state why the follow up must be delivered in a specific location, rather than by other treatment centres in the UK.

Criterion 4 – Unique Circumstances

Applicants must provide the following evidence:

- IFST application form
- A supporting statement by a professional that:
 1. Describes the current unique situation
 2. Explains why foundation training can only be carried out in a specific location rather than another location in the UK.
 3. 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.

The form for this statement is included within the IFST application form

APPENDIX 2 – Fitness to Practice (FTP) Disclosure

The current/allocated foundation schools seeks to inform receiving foundation schools of any applicant allocated to their region who has a positive fitness to practice declaration. This is to ensure the foundation schools are aware of any applicants with past or current issues that may require additional support during their training programme.

Foundation schools may decide to reject an application for an inbound IFST due to a positive fitness to practice declaration. Decisions will be made on a case by case basis.

Any information provided to the foundation school will be handled professionally and treated with the utmost confidence. Information regarding fitness to practice issues will be shared with relevant parties at the receiving foundation school on a need to know basis only.

Applicants should declare any fitness to practice issues to their allocated foundation school, by sending an email directly to the Foundation School Director and/or Foundation School Manager.

APPENDIX 3 – Examples of Unique Circumstances

Athlete

An applicant who is an athlete who is supported on the national programme. The requirements would be to remain in a particular location to continue their training. The application would need to be signed by the national coach and evidence as to why the applicant needs to be pre-allocated at the location requested and not elsewhere would need to be provided, as an athlete may be able to train at any athletics club. It would be acceptable if the application is part of a national training programme and the rest of the team are based in one location, for example.

Marine Corps

An applicant who is a member of the armed force reserves. The applicant intended to continue with this commitment whilst undertaking foundation training. The applicant therefore needs to access force training during the week and at weekends. The applications would need to be signed by the commanding office and evidence as to why the applicant needs to be at the location requested and not any other reservist training camp would need to be provided. For example, in Scotland, there is only one camp that is specifically for the marine corps.

Adapted House

An applicant who has a long-term disability which does not impact on their ability to work as a foundation doctor, and who would not request pre-allocation on the basis of health grounds, who lives in a house that has been fully adapted to support their needs. The applications would need to be signed by a professional from a housing department, social worker or medical practitioner, and there would need to be evidence that for this arrangement to be replicated elsewhere would be unreasonable.