

Analysis of Consultant Geriatric Medicine Job Adverts in England and Wales.

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BACKGROUND

The British Geriatrics Society (BGS) Flexible Workforce Statement supports national policy such as the NHS People Plan in promoting less than full time (LTFT) working. [1, 2] As LTFT training representatives on the BGS Trainees' Council we were interested to know how consultant work patterns are advertised. We analysed job adverts for Consultants in Geriatric Medicine over a two-year period to identify how many were LTFT, flexible or negotiable posts.

METHOD

- A freedom of information (FOI) request was submitted to NHS jobs for posts in Elderly Care Medicine (or had 'Geriatric' in title) between 01/04/2019 and 31/03/2021. The FOI data were filtered to include only Consultant posts, grouped regionally by training deanery and analysed using Excel.
- An email was sent to Training Programme Directors in August 2022 requesting the number of LTFT trainees. For non-responders a FOI request was submitted to the deanery.
- Data was extracted from the 2021 online Royal College of Physicians (RCP) Census to identify trends in LTFT consultant numbers. [3]

Region (Equivalent Deanery or Deanerics)	Total Jobs Advertised	Full Time	LTFT (% of all jobs)	Flexitime	Negotiable (% of all jobs)	Unspecified or Bank
East of England	171	165	0	1	0	5
London (North East and Central)	59	56	2 (3.4%)	1	0	0
London (North West)	45	44	1 (2.2%)	0	0	0
London (South East)	24	24	0	0	0	0
London (South West)	35	27	0	0	2 (5.7%)	6
Midlands (East)	44	41	0	0	1 (2.3%)	2
Midlands (West)	71	58	1 (1.3%)	4	3 (4.2%)	5
North East England (Northern)	68	64	0	0	2 (2.9%)	2
North West England	133	129	2 (1.5%)	0	0	2
South East England (KSS)	151	130	2 (1.3%)	0	1 (0.7%)	18
South West England (Severn)	48	27	2 (4.2%)	0	11 (22.9%)	8
South West England (Peninsula)	21	20	0	0	0	1
Thames Valley	42	42	0	0	0	0
Wales	43	40	3 (7%)	4*	0	0
Wessex	71	51	2 (2.8%)	1	7 (9.9%)	10
Yorkshire and Humber	57	47	6 (10.5%)	3*	1 (1.8%)	3
Total	1083	965	21 (1.9%)	7	28 (2.6%)	62

Table 1. Consultant job adverts by region (* explicitly full time).

RESULTS

- The FOI request returned 7589 jobs, of these 1083 were consultant posts. 965 (89%) were advertised as full time (≥ 10 programmed activities (PAs) or ≥ 37.5 hours). Twenty one (2%) were LTFT (2 to 9.25 PAs), of which 29% were permanent posts.
- Table 1 shows Yorkshire and the Humber had the highest proportion of LTFT posts (11%) and South West had the highest proportion of negotiable posts (23%).
- Of the 585 trainees in England (no data from Wales), 216 (37%) are LTFT. Table 2 shows this ranges from 23% in South East London to 50% in Severn and West Midlands. The number of substantive LTFT consultants increased from 6% in 2004 to 25% in 2021. [3]

LIMITATIONS

- Analysis was difficult due to the heterogeneity of language used to describe geriatric medicine jobs and what constitutes full or part time working.
- We had no access to details of the job adverts, application or appointment rates. This made it unclear whether each job was a fresh advert or re-advertising an unfilled post. The latter is likely given there are 1747 consultants working in the UK. [3]

Region (Equivalent Deanery or Deanerics)	Number of Trainees	Number of LTFT Trainees (%)	Work pattern of LTFT Trainees			
			50%	60%	70%	80%
East of England	52	13 (25%)	1	8	1	3
London (North East and Central)	37	10 (27%)	0	<5*	<5*	6
London (North West)	24	9 (38%)	0	3	0	6
London (South East)	30	7 (23%)	0	3	1	3
London (South West)	17	7 (41%)	0	2	0	5
Midlands (East)	20	7 (35%)	2	2	0	3
Midlands (West)	54	27 (50%)	0	16	2	9
North East England (Northern)	42	17 (40%)	0	9	0	8
North West England	84	24 (29%)	0	11	0	13
South East England (KSS)	40	18 (45%)	0	7	2	9
South West England (Peninsula)	21	8 (38%)	0	4	1	3
South West England (Severn)	32	16 (50%)	0	5	0	11
Thames Valley	31	15 (48%)	1	10	1	3
Wessex	35	14 (40%)	0	10	0	4
Yorkshire and Humber	66	23 (35%)	1	8	0	14
Total	585	215 (37%)	5	98	8	100

Table 2. Work patterns of trainees by region (* estimate from FOI data).

CONCLUSION

The number of LTFT job adverts was very low compared to the number of LTFT consultants and trainees, although there is regional variation. This is likely to reflect that funding usually comes for a full time post, which may still be negotiable to be flexitime or LTFT. Only 2.6% of jobs explicitly stated this and this may be a barrier for some people to apply. Including working pattern options in jobs adverts would help to promote access to flexible working for our workforce. Further avenues to consider are what LTFT opportunities exist for SAS grade and allied health professionals in our speciality.

REFERENCES

1. Flexible Working in Geriatric Medicine: A Workforce Statement from the British Geriatrics Society. March 2021. Accessed 14/10/2022. https://www.bgs.org.uk/sites/default/files/content/attachment/2021-03-23/LTFT%20Position%20Statement%20for%20website%20Mar%202021%20final_0.pdf
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