RCSEd Response to
Adam Williams, ASiT President and
Mustafa Rashid, BOTA President

BMJ Open: Less-than-full-time training in surgery: a cross-sectional study
evaluating the accessibility and experiences of flexible training in the
surgical trainee workforce

The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh Council read your publication ‘Less-than-full-time training in surgery: a cross-sectional study evaluating the accessibility and experiences of flexible training in the surgical trainee workforce’ and wish to support your recommendations.

The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (RCSEd) has fully supported the introduction of flexible training programmes and has an Equality and Diversity Lead on our Council to support our Fellows and Members. The College has for approximately six years offered a pro-rata reduction on subscriptions on application for less-than-full-time (LTFT) trainees.

In the last 12 months, we have enhanced our support for all of our Fellows and Members on maternity and paternity leave by offering a pro-rata reduction on their subscription. We have also introduced a new, reduced subscription for those in their first year of Fellowship. More recently, the College has led on ensuring the JCST training fee for the entire training programme is no higher for LTFT trainees than that being paid by those training full-time. JCST supports this initiative in principle and currently the CEOs of the four Colleges are looking at options for its delivery.

The College has always had a section on LTFT training on its website and is working to improve the information provided when our new website is launched later in the year. We have links to the useful information on the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges website and the Medical Women’s Federation, particularly in regard to returning to work. As you will be aware, the organisation of LTFT training programmes is the responsibility of the Deaneries/HEE and the College does not have a direct role, but we are keen to provide support for those wishing to explore this option. We are piloting Professional Excellence Groups to mentor junior doctors and new consultants.

The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh agrees there is no place for bullying or harassment in medicine and is keen to support a change in NHS culture. We have debated this as part of a Council short-life working group and have commissioned a further short-life working group to discuss implementation of our recommendations.

Mr Michael Lavelle-Jones
President, The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh