



Faculty of
Dental Surgery

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND

Application pack for the RCS Orthodontic Therapy course in Yorkshire & Belfast 2026-2027

This pack provides you with all the information you require to apply for a place on the orthodontic therapy course held in Yorkshire and Belfast.

1. Outline of Orthodontic Therapy Course
2. Personal specification for the student orthodontic therapist
3. Personal specification for the trainer
4. The Role of the Trainer
5. Clinical setting requirements [describing the requirements of the practice or hospital setting]
6. The Course Directors

Places will be allocated by competitive entry. As part of the process of being appointed to the course there will be a workplace inspection to ensure the local facilities are appropriate for the clinical training. This will be similar to the process of assessing dental practices for Vocational Training.

The cost of the course is £13,500 and is non-refundable.

Course outline

This course has been developed to train individuals as Orthodontic Therapists.

The General Dental Council has stated that individuals can register and work as orthodontic therapists following completion of an approved course and successfully obtaining a Diploma in Orthodontic Therapy or equivalent. The FDS RCS England Orthodontic Therapy Courses have both been approved by the General Dental Council as appropriate courses for training Orthodontic Therapists.

What is the format of the course?

The 1-year course is comprised of 2 parts:

- An initial 4-week core course and then 8 additional study days.
- Workplace training in an approved orthodontic practice or hospital orthodontic practice. The local specialist orthodontist or hospital consultant will act as the workplace trainer

The student will train as an orthodontic therapist under the close supervision of the local workplace trainer. After completion of the course, including satisfactory workplace reports, successful completion of assessments, and clinical activity, the student can apply to sit for the Diploma in Orthodontic Therapy examination.

Who is eligible?

Full details of the personal specifications for the student and trainer are enclosed. However, in brief, the minimum requirements stated by the General Dental Council are that the student can be a dental nurse with a recognized qualification, a qualified dental hygienist or dental therapist, or a dental technician with appropriate clinical experience. The local trainer must be on the orthodontic specialist list.

Cost of course

The cost of the course is **£13,500**.

There are **12** places available for the Yorkshire Course and **8** places for Belfast.

What is the format of the core course?

The core course is run by the course directors:

Simon Littlewood and Trevor Hodge are course directors for Yorkshire
Karl Grimes is the course director for Belfast.

The course involves teaching from a variety of consultants, orthodontic specialists, and orthodontic therapy tutors. The teaching will comprise of a mixture of seminars, lectures, problem-based learning, and projects covering the essential theoretical aspects of orthodontic therapy. In addition, clinical training will take place in the state-of-the-art Clinical skills lab. There will then be a further 8 study days throughout the year.



Personal specification for students

Factor	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	<p>One of the following qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The National Examining Board for Dental Nurses [NEBDN] National Certificate examination, plus 24 months experience ▪ The S/NVQ Level 3 in Oral Healthcare: Dental Nursing awarded by an approved NVQ or SVQ provider ▪ A Certificate of Proficiency in Dental Nursing awarded by a recognised Dental Hospital The Certificate of Higher Education in Dental Nursing offered by the School of Professionals Complementary to Dentistry, at the University of Portsmouth ▪ BTEC National Diploma Dental Technology ▪ SQA Higher National Certificate in Dental Technology ▪ Degree in Dental Technology ▪ City and Guilds Final Certificate in Dental Technology ▪ BTEC National Diploma in Science [Dental Technology] ▪ BTEC Diploma in Dental Technology ▪ SCOTVEC Higher National Certificate in Dental Technology ▪ Edexcel BTEC Higher National Certificate ▪ Army – Levels 1, 2 and 3 [Dental Technology] ▪ Qualifications awarded by the Technicians Education Council or Scottish Technicians Education Council ▪ Any qualification determined by the GDC to entitle the holder to register as a dental hygienist or dental therapist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Examining Board for Dental Nurses [NEBDN] Certificate in Orthodontic Dental Nursing



Skills and abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manually dextrous Good communicator Good IT skills – confident with the use of email and the internet and willing to work with databases online and use online learning platforms Works well in a team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiar with the use of digital photography Experience with PowerPoint presentations
Disposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to work under pressure Able to sustain the hard work throughout the course Caring approach to patients Evidence of a high degree of integrity in all professional areas and understanding of confidentiality Excellent team player 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open-minded and able to manage change Hard-working and high attention to detail Aware of own limitations and when to ask for assistance
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aware and committed to the requirements of the course Demonstrates a desire to learn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum of 2 years' experience in clinical orthodontics

Personal specifications for trainers

Factor	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registered on the Specialist List of the GDC in Orthodontics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registered Diploma or Membership in Orthodontics of one of the Royal Colleges or equivalent
Training skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willing to undertake appropriate preparation and training required to become and remain a trainer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience acting as a trainer
Audit and CPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proven commitment to postgraduate education and CPD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current participation in peer review, audit, or research
Commitment to course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willing to re-organize own daily routine and those of the practice to take account of the presence of a student orthodontic therapist Willing to supervise students for every patient, every visit Demonstrates a desire to train and an enthusiasm for orthodontic therapy training Be prepared to supervise an audit and other relevant projects during training Be able to monitor the student's progress within the clinical setting, assessing competencies and 	



	<p>overseeing appropriate patient caseload as specified by the course</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Be prepared to work closely with the course directors throughout the course	
Providing an appropriate training environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Prepared to ensure the training environment consistently meets the list of clinical setting requirements in the hospital or practice▪ Provide appropriate nursing and administrative support for a therapist. A nurse must be available to work with the student for every patient.▪ Support workplace inspection visit and willingness to respond to report▪ Works as part of a team within a well-run practice or hospital department	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Can demonstrate involvement in staff appraisal, training, and development▪ Is up to date on current best clinical practice
Skills and Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Good communicator▪ Good basic IT skills – confident with the use of email the internet and online databases – and prepared to assist students in these areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Familiar with the use of digital photography & working with online learning platforms▪ Experience with PowerPoint presentations
Disposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Willing to offer appropriate pastoral support to a student orthodontic therapist▪ Evidence of a high degree of integrity in all professional areas and understanding of confidentiality▪ Open to educational opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Leadership qualities▪ Motivational skills▪ Enthusiastic and positive
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Able to work as a trainer throughout the course▪ Aware and committed to the requirements of the course and guarantee to attend training and study days when required▪ Demonstrates a desire to learn	

Role of the trainer

This document briefly describes the commitments and roles of the local trainer and student orthodontic therapist.

Traditionally training for DCPs has been undertaken in a teaching hospital for the duration of the course. This course is different, with training taking place in both a teaching hospital, but also the workplace. As a result, the workplace trainer has certain obligations to fulfil, to ensure the GDC regulations for training and the course indemnity requirements are met.

This document will provide useful information for anyone considering becoming a trainer

Who is eligible?

A trainer will be a specialist orthodontist with high clinical and ethical standards. At the time of application and for the duration of his/her appointment as a trainer, he/she should be providing a wide range of treatment for both children and adults. The orthodontist must be committed to training and supportive of the student throughout the course.

What is the role of the trainer?

The trainer/student relationship is the fulcrum of the program. It should be remembered that many students will have never worked in a patient's mouth before and will require considerable support and encouragement during the year. Guidance will be needed at each visit as well as procedural checks. This is likely to be a requirement of the professional indemnity arrangements in training a student. The emphasis will be on developing an interchange that allows the trainer to form an awareness of the student's progress on the one hand, and the student to be able to call on the trainer's experience and guidance on the other.

What are the responsibilities of the trainer?

All prospective trainers will be required to undertake the orthodontic therapy RCS England *Training the Trainers* Course which will be organized by the Faculty of Dental Surgery of The Royal College of Surgeons of England.

1. In employing a student orthodontic therapist the trainer is required to:
 - (i) Take responsibility for the student's actions and so the student must agree to obey the trainer's directions.
 - (ii) Agree on hours of work in advance. It is expected that a trainee will normally work on average 35 hours a week, exclusive of lunch breaks, including any study day courses. The student will work 7-8 clinical sessions per week, [where a session is either a morning or an afternoon] for the year of training, with 2-3 sessions for study.
2. Upon appointment trainers would be expected to be able to demonstrate a commitment to continuing education and training and following appointment will be obliged to attend a *Training the Trainers Course*. This will seek to develop the skills required in the one-to-one teaching situation and generally to indicate methods of preparing the practice for a student, and of maintaining a satisfactory working relationship between trainer and student.
3. Provide the student with adequate administrative support and the full-time assistance of a suitably qualified dental nurse
4. The trainer [or a suitable equivalent] must be available for day-to-day guidance of the student. Under the indemnity agreements of the course, all patients seen by the student must also be checked by a specialist orthodontist.
5. The trainer must set aside one hour each week for a formal in-practice seminar. This must be in the normal practice working hours.

6. The trainer will require the student to attend the core course and the educational study day programme ensuring that the student's holidays do not lead to absence from this. Absence for reasons other than sickness will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances. More than one absence from the course may make it logistically impossible for the student to continue and be certified as having completed The FDS RCS England Orthodontic Therapy Course in the anticipated time frame. This will mean either a withdrawal from the course or an extension to training being required. In such situations the Course Directors will try and resolve the situation informally exploring solutions with the student and the workplace trainers. If this is not successful then a formal decision will be made by the Registrar of FDS RCS England. The College has the right to charge an additional course fee for any extension of training
7. The trainer will inform the course directors of any absence of the trainee from the practice.
8. The trainer will provide the student with satisfactory facilities so that a wide range of orthodontic practice is experienced and so that as far as is reasonably possible the student is fully occupied.
9. The trainer will assess and monitor the student's progress and professional development and provide feedback as necessary. He/she will also undertake to ensure that the student's logbook is kept up to date and that all the processes involved in ongoing assessment including liaison with the course directors, are undertaken.
10. The trainer will be asked to assist with the general progress of the course and its evaluation. This may mean setting time aside to be available for pre-arranged visits from other orthodontic therapy students during the course
11. Advise on the final certification of the student's satisfactory completion of the work detailed in the continuous assessment record and the course in general
12. Advise the course directors if the circumstances of either the trainer, the student, or the practice change in such a way as to alter the contract of employment between the trainer and the student.

What happens if there are problems with the Trainee?

The course directors will always try and attempt to solve problems and should be contacted promptly if they occur however the responsibility to provide the appropriate trainer input and training environment lies with the sponsor of the student who completes the dual application process. If either a trainer or workplace becomes unavailable for a student, and an alternative trainer or workplace has to be found, the original trainer should honour any arrangements that have been made regarding payment for the course fee plus continue to pay the salary of the trainee through the remainder of the training year

How am I appointed as a Trainer?

Accompanying this pack is an application form for you and the proposed student orthodontic therapist to complete. Once these forms are completed & submitted, a shortlisting will take place and then a workplace virtual inspection of the practice or hospital department will be arranged by a practice assessor. All appropriate documentation will be requested in advance of this inspection. The potential trainers will be required to attend on the interview day to allow for discussing the training process with the course directors. After the student interviews a final offer of a place on the course is made to the successful candidates. The appointment will be subject to satisfactory references, an occupational health assessment if appropriate, and a workplace inspection report.

The student orthodontic therapist

The following is a list of obligations of the student orthodontic therapist. The trainer will need to ensure that the student fulfills all these obligations:

1. Attend the practice or hospital department for the agreed hours and perform such clinical duties as appropriate for patient care and personal learning needs.
2. Determine personal learning needs in discussion with the trainer.
3. Maintain and keep up to date the logbook and be prepared to submit it for inspection when requested.
4. Take an active part both in weekly tutorials with the trainer and periodic progress reviews.
5. Attend all of the core courses and all study days organized during the training period; normally the only reason for not attending a study day will be sickness [prior written approval from the course directors must be obtained for absence from the core course and study days other than sickness].
6. Ensure that holidays do not lead to absence from the study days.
7. If you experience an illness or other serious personal difficulty, which prevents you from attending study days or completing the course in the time allocated then you will need to discuss any extenuating circumstances and possible extensions to your studies providing evidence to support this as necessary.
8. Complete a set project during the training period.
9. Adhere to all the course rules and regulations.

Clinical setting requirements

The FDS RCS England Orthodontic Therapy Course will involve a 4-week core course and 8 study days and workplace training in an appropriate hospital orthodontic or orthodontic practice clinical setting. This provides a list of the hospital or practice requirements for the orthodontic therapy course. These areas will be assessed on the workplace inspection.

A Safe practice environment

- Compliance with all necessary legislation including Health and Safety
- Infection control demonstration
- Appropriate medical emergency drug kit
- Examination of drug kit and emergency oxygen supply
- Date and evidence of CPR training

B Equipment and instrumentation

- Identified clinical space for student orthodontic therapist
- Appropriate quality and quantity of contemporary orthodontic instrumentation and materials
- Light cure systems
- Access to radiographic equipment for panoramic and lateral cephalometric radiographs
- Access to digital photography
- Appropriate storage and retrieval system for study casts
- Availability of appropriate orthodontic educational resources e.g. books; videos; journals

C Support staff and practice organisation

- Nursing support identified for student therapists for every patient
- Appropriate administrative and secretarial support
- It is key the student works as an orthodontic therapist, and does not undertake previous roles they had undertaken in the workplace.
- Availability of practice literature and patient information leaflets for orthodontic treatment
- Good quality clinical records [photos, study models, and radiographs]
- Appointment book – sufficient time for procedures and treatment of non-medical emergencies [guidelines to be provided]
- Clinical audit/peer review undertaken
- Clinical governance in place

D The practice as a training environment

- Proximity of trainer – every patient will need to be seen by the trainer
- Colleagues other than the trainer prepared to be involved if required
- Range of work [variety of malocclusions and treatment approaches in common use]
- Use of a laboratory providing appliances to an appropriate standard



The course directors

Simon Littlewood - Leeds Director

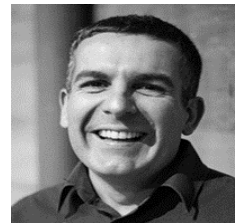
BDS FDS[Orth]RCPS MDSc MOrthRCS FDSRCSEng



Simon is a Consultant Orthodontist at St Luke's Hospital, Bradford, and at the Leeds Dental Institute. He also works in private practice. He has previously been Honorary Secretary of the British Orthodontic Society, elected Board member of the Faculty of Dental Surgery, Director of Professional Development for the British Orthodontic Society and was also previous chair of examiners for the MFDS Exam and ISFE in orthodontics exam. His clinical interests include high-quality adult orthodontics and his research interests include randomized controlled clinical trials, orthodontic bonding, and retention and relapse. He has recently been awarded "Life Membership" of the British Orthodontic Society in recognition of his outstanding contributions to British orthodontics. He has always had a strong commitment to teaching and training

Trevor Hodge - Leeds Director

BDS, MFDS, MPhil, MOrthRCS, FDS[Orth]RCS FDSRCSEng



Trevor works as a Consultant Orthodontist at the Leeds Dental Institute as well as in part-time private practice. He was previously head of department at the University of Leeds. He is actively involved in the training of postgraduate Orthodontic Specialist Registrars and in the clinical management of complex cases with a particular interest in the treatment of adult patients especially those requiring a combination of orthodontics and surgery and/or restorative dentistry. He is also the lead for cleft lip and palate care in the orthodontic department at Leeds Dental Institute. He has received several awards for his outstanding clinical work and is previous Chair of the British Orthodontic Conference. He is well-known for the high quality of his clinical work and commitment to high quality training.

Karl Grimes - Belfast Director

BDS, MFDS (RCPSG), MOrth (RCPSG), DClinDent, FDS (Orth), MSc.



Karl is a Consultant Orthodontist working in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust in Northern Ireland. He also works in specialist practice. He completed his specialty training at the Royal London Hospital and Ashford and St Peters hospital in 2018. During this time, he successfully passed the Membership in Orthodontics examination and completed his Doctorate in Clinical Dentistry through Queen Mary, University of London. He undertook his Post-CCST training in Northern Ireland gaining the Fellowship in Dental Surgery in Orthodontics. In 2022, he completed a Masters in Clinical Education through Queens University Belfast.