

## Training pathways: analysis of the transition from compulsory two-year generic postgraduate medical training (the Foundation Programme) onto specialty or general practitioner training

### Background and objectives

The General Medical Council (GMC) has been working with others in undergraduate and postgraduate training to investigate how and why doctors move in and out of training.

The key findings shown here are taken from the first in a series of reports exploring how UK doctors move in and out of training following graduation from medical school towards completion of training.

Although numbers are stable, the trainee population is changing and our wider work on flexibility in training has identified a number of barriers affecting the training environment. We have known for a while that an increasing number of doctors do not progress directly to core or specialty training. This study focuses on what we know about the break after foundation training (F2).

### Method and population studied

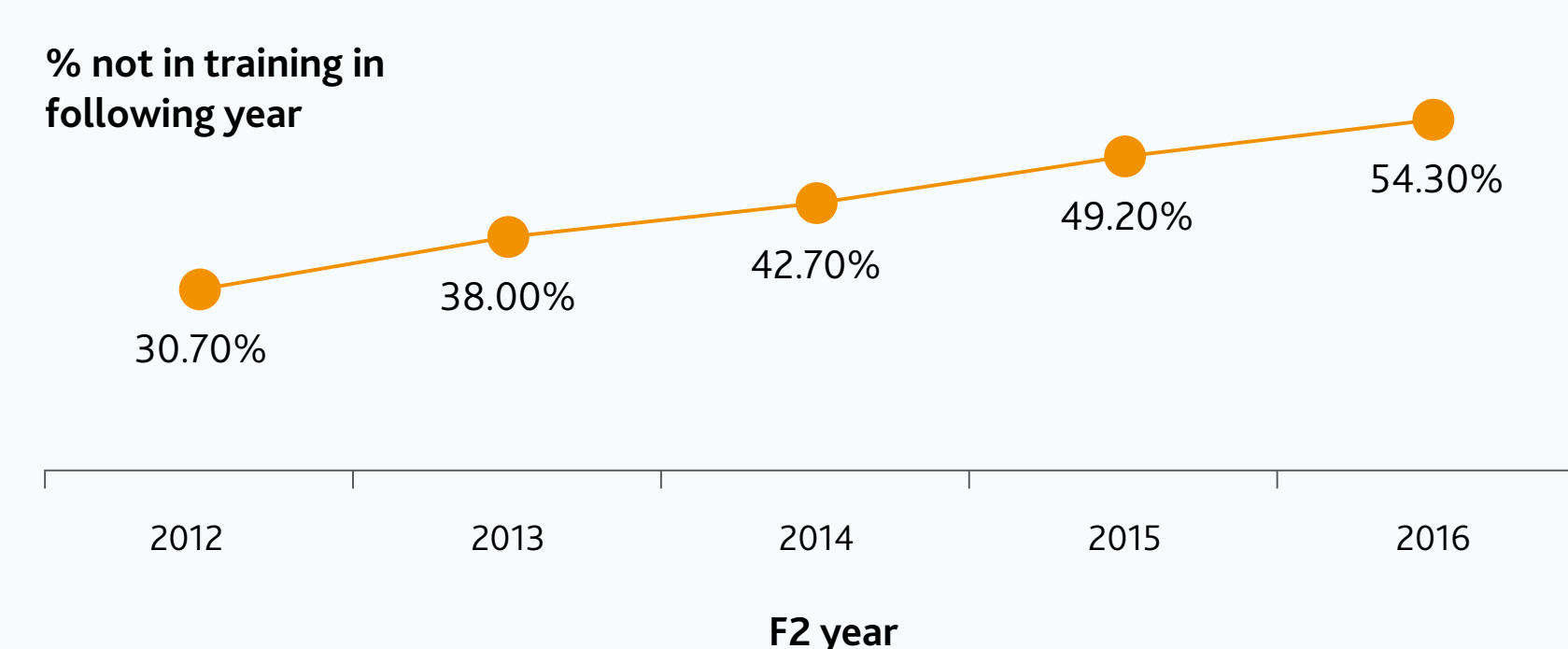
The study used two sources of data:

- 1 the national training survey (NTS) census data which shows whether doctors are in a training programme (2012–2017)
- 2 responses to the career intentions questions from the national training survey (2015–2017).

### Breaks are common

A break after foundation training is the most common option: the number of doctors taking a break after F2 rose from just under a third in 2012 to over half in 2016.

Proportion of doctors taking a break after foundation training



However, the majority of doctors (90%) have entered specialty or core training within three years of F2.

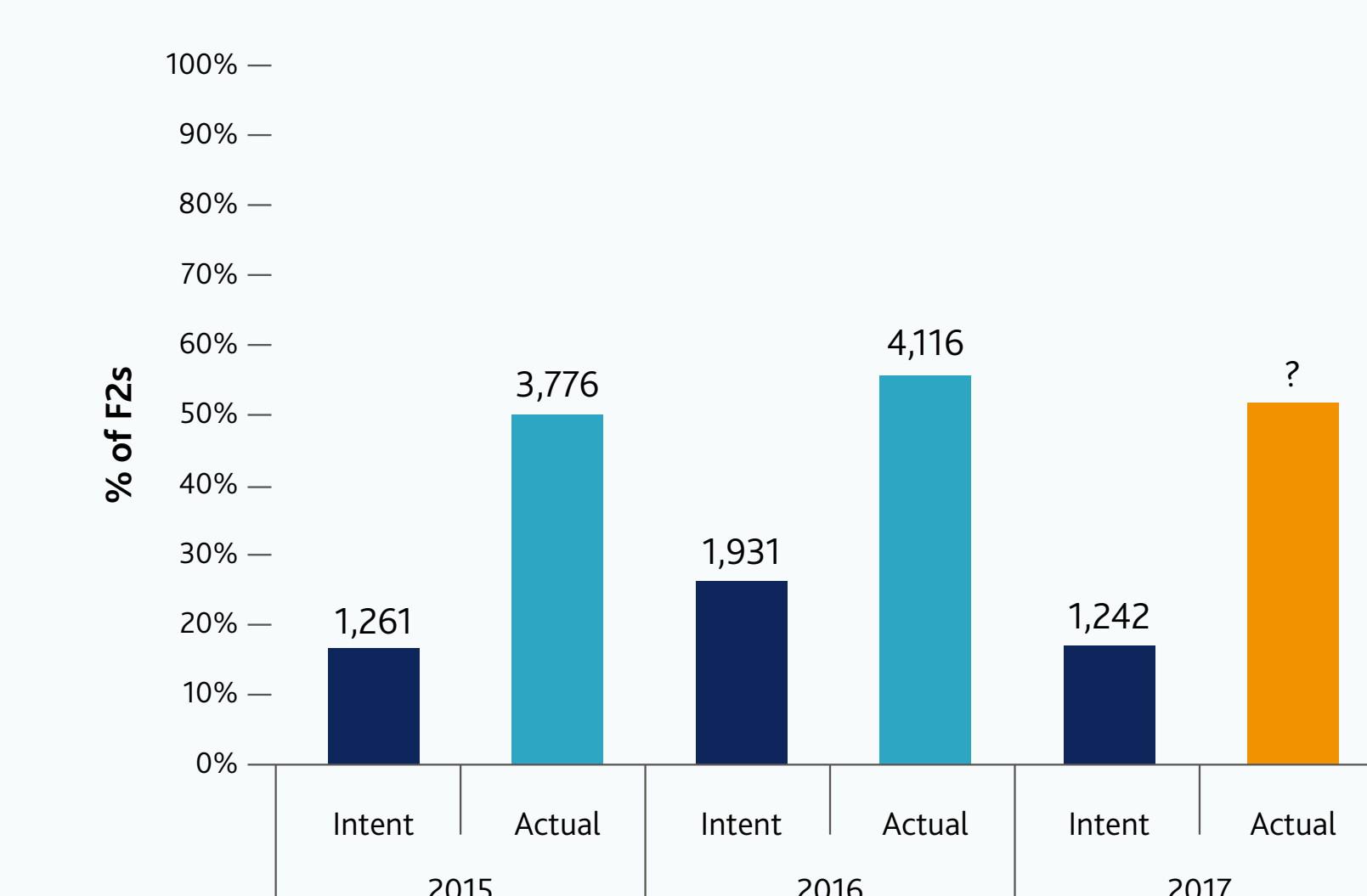
We know some may never return: 525 of the 2012 cohort have not returned to training by 2017. But we also know 124 of these have retained their license to practice, so it is possible they may yet return to training.

Some overseas doctors will have returned to their country of origin after completing their foundation training.

### Career intentions

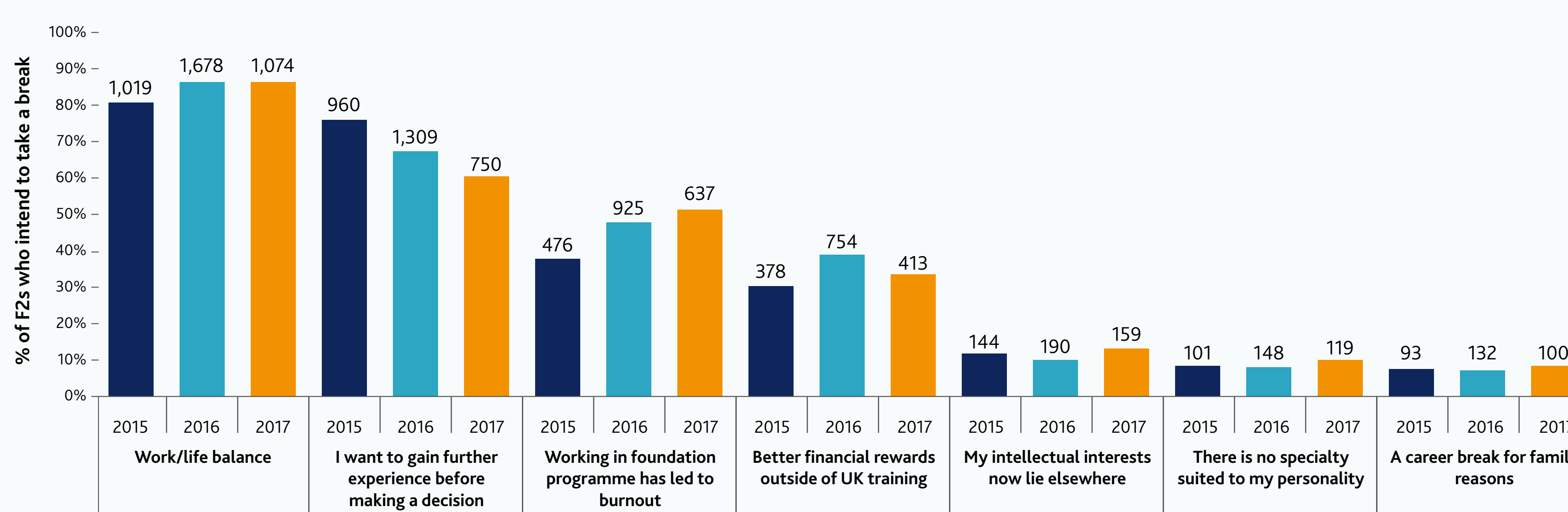
We ask doctors in training about their career intentions in the national training survey. More trainees take a break than state their intention to. The data also shows that fewer F2s have stated they intend to take a break after 2017.

Proportion of F2 doctors who stated their intention to take a break versus actual proportion of foundation doctors who took a break



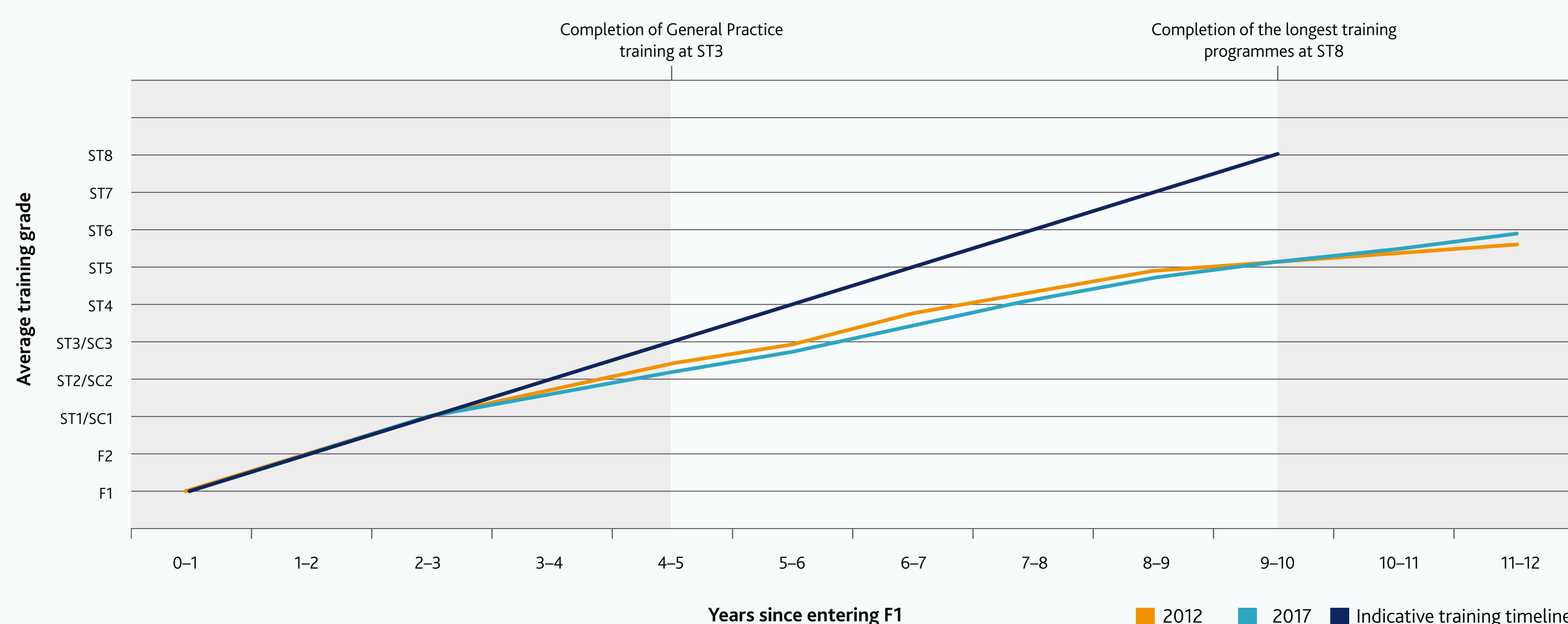
Trainees cite burnout, wanting a better work/life balance and wanting more experience before choosing a specialty as the main reasons for taking a break from training.

Reasons given by F2 doctors to take a break after foundation training



### Key findings

Training takes between one and four years longer than indicated in the curricula.



### Conclusions and next steps

These findings are a starting point for our research. Taking time out is common, particularly at the transition between foundation and specialty training, but we also know that the majority of doctors enter specialty training within three years of completing F2. The next phase of our study is qualitative, exploring the reasons, motivations and experiences of doctors who take a break in their training as well as the impact on their clinical, professional and personal skills.

We will also be looking at further quantitative data, including exploration of those who have never returned to training, progression at ARCP and recruitment into specialty training.