

Working life (ED)

This page provides useful information about the roles and responsibilities of endocrinologists, where they work, who they work with and what they feel about their role.

“As a specialist trainee in endocrinology and diabetes, I worked in district general hospitals for my first two years of training. This provided me with a good grounding in common endocrinology and diabetes and general medical conditions. I took time out of training to pursue a period of research into the accurate identification of rare genetic subtypes of diabetes to enable more personalised diabetes management for patients. Towards the end of this research, I had my daughter and decided to complete the remainder of my clinical registrar training at less-than-full time. I now do a slot-share with a colleague.” **Registrar in Endocrinology and Diabetes.**

How your time is spent

Typically, specialists work in both diabetes and endocrinology although some specialists work predominantly in one rather than the other. They work with all age ranges. Many also contribute to acute or general medicine inpatient care.

Increasingly, complex endocrine diseases, and especially endocrine tumours are being managed in large referral centres. As the specialty is predominantly outpatient based, an average working day will comprise one or more hospital outpatient clinics. A specialist may see 40 to 50 patients in a day. A typical day may also include a multidisciplinary team (MDT) meeting and ward work to manage specialty referrals or to care for inpatients with general medical problems. Most units have active audit, journal review and research meetings specifically related to the specialty.

Diabetologists usually see newly diagnosed patients with diabetes, patients with type 1 diabetes, those with diabetic complications, and patients with diabetes in certain circumstances (e.g. pregnancy). Endocrinologists working in a specialist centre are likely to see a different range of patients and to participate in multidisciplinary clinics such as:

- pituitary
- thyroid
- oncology [1]
- reproductive
- general endocrine

Time is also spent on service improvement, education/ teaching and management tasks.

Working hours and on-call

Normal working hours generally apply to outpatient work. Diabetes services are increasingly delivered in the primary care [2] setting, often with the specialist working alongside the general practitioner. Many specialists in endocrinology and diabetes contribute to acute or general medicine in their trusts. This involves doing out-of-hours work as a matter of routine. Around 65% of consultants say they are routinely on-call at weekends.

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Who you will work with?

Endocrinologists and diabetologists work alongside:

- specialist nurses
- dieticians [3]
- podiatrists [4]
- vascular surgeons [5]
- nephrologists
- obstetricians [6]
- ophthalmologists [7]
- medical secretaries [8] and administrative staff [9]

They also work closely with other specialists including:

- pituitary, thyroid and other endocrine surgeons
- specialist nurses
- geneticists [10]
- paediatricians
- oncologists [11]

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Attractions and challenges of the role

Reaching the correct diagnosis and formulating an appropriate long-term management plan to improve the quality of life of patients can be very stimulating. It is also rewarding to provide high-standard continuous care over many years for patients with diabetes or other chronic endocrine conditions. Supporting and enabling self-management of chronic conditions is essential. Achieving symptom relief and often cure of patients with endocrine disorders is particularly rewarding.

Multidisciplinary team working is an enjoyable part of the job as is contributing to service enhancements such as obesity management and management of lipid disorders [12] and osteoporosis.

Prioritising patient care to minimise complications and managing those complications when they occur can be challenging. It can also be difficult managing a large work load and keeping within budget.

Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/medicine/endocrinology-and-diabetes/working-life>

Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Oncology>

[2] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Primary_care

[3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/dietitian>

- [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/chiroprapistpodiatrist>
- [5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/surgery/vascular-surgery>
- [6] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/obstetrics-and-gynaecology>
- [7] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/ophthalmology>
- [8] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/administration/medical-secretary-personal-assistant>
- [9] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/operational-management/administrative-management>
- [10] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/medicine/clinical-genetics>
- [11] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/medicine/medical-oncology>
- [12] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Lipid_disorders