

# "This specialty isn't confined to one organ or area of the body and so you treat the whole patient."

Dr Beeching's interest in tropical medicine was sparked at school whilst studying biology and he went on to read medicine at the University of Oxford. Dr Beeching is a clinical academic, and his work is an interesting combination of teaching and research with clinical work.

## Dr Nick Beeching

### Consultant in Infectious Diseases and Tropical Medicine

#### Employer or university

Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine and Royal Liverpool University Hospital

#### Salary range

Over £65K

Dr Nick Beeching

### How I got into the role

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Whilst at medical school I opted for an elective <sup>[1]</sup> in India and this fantastic experience helped me decide on tropical medicine and infectious diseases. After working in different junior doctor roles in the UK, Australia and New Zealand I completed specialist training, which took eight years altogether. I then worked as a consultant in Saudi Arabia for two years before coming to Liverpool.

My medical qualification included an intercalated degree and during my specialist training I also worked as a research registrar which gave me valuable experience for my future academic role. I also gained overall experience as a general physician, which is especially important for anyone wanting to work in this specialty.

## **What I do**

### **Expand / collapse**

I spend half the year looking after patients at the Royal Liverpool University Hospital. They can be admitted to one of our two specialist wards with any kind of infection – this might be with diarrhoea, pneumonia, TB, HIV or a high fever. We have a steady stream of patients who have contracted diseases from abroad, such as malaria, dengue fever, leishmaniasis, leprosy and other tropical infections.

Each day I conduct two ward rounds, one first thing in the morning and the other late in the afternoon. I work closely with the trainee doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other staff to review patients and decide on appropriate treatment. I also see newly admitted patients and others needing an immediate consultant review. Twice a week I see each patient for a more detailed review in our longer ward rounds. A once-weekly outpatient clinic is also part of my work, where I follow-up recently discharged patients and see new referrals.

Our unit always has a consultant available at the end of a phone 365 days a year, day and night to take local and national queries from other doctors about infectious diseases. I share this when I'm also on-call for the hospital – which means one week on and one week off for four-six months of the year (so up to 13 weeks a year on-call altogether). I can deal with most situations over the phone, and it's rare to take a call in the middle of the night. Once a month I'm on-call at the hospital over the weekend, which involves working both days until about 2 pm and then taking calls from home.

We work closely with the infection control team in the hospital, keeping the patients and staff safe from infections such as C difficile, norovirus and multi-resistant bacteria, and providing advice on antibiotics. We also isolate and look after new imported threats to the hospital such as Swine and Avian Flu.

The other half of my year involves working as a senior lecturer at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine. This involves postgraduate teaching for doctors, nurses and other professionals who are taking Diploma or Master's courses in Tropical Medicine and Travel Medicine. I also attend regional, national and international conferences, conduct around 70 lectures a year and undertake many research activities including supervising several PhD students.

## **The best bits and challenges**

### **Expand / collapse**

I love my job as it's intellectually stimulating and we see rare and interesting cases from countries all over the world. The clinical work is so varied and I am a member of a fabulous team of other health care professionals. This specialty isn't confined to one organ or area of the body and so you treat the whole patient. Most patients that I see have something diagnosable and curable which makes the work very satisfying. I regularly travel abroad to training workshops and conferences, and I also get to hear really interesting traveller's stories from my patients. I also love my teaching. The only challenge is fitting everything into a very busy day.

## **Life outside of work**

### **Expand / collapse**

Although I work long hours I also have time for an active social life outside work which involves playing sports and seeing friends and family.

## **Career plans and top tips for others**

### **Expand / collapse**

My next career move will probably be retirement, although I plan to continue my interest with this fascinating career.

### **Top tips**

- take an intercalated degree during medical school
- opt for an elective <sup>[2]</sup> overseas
- be prepared to take a year out and work abroad

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**Source URL:**<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/medicine/tropical-medicine/real-life-story-dr-nick-beeching>

### **Links**

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/going-university/studying-be-doctor/your-medical-training/electives-medical-school> [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Elective>