Paediatric surgery

Paediatric surgeons work with young patients – from premature and unborn babies to children and young adults up to the age of 19.

You'll have a very varied and sometimes unpredictable workload including surgery, attending outpatient clinics and hospital ward rounds and looking after both your young patients and their families.

Life as a paediatric surgeon

You'll carry out more general forms of surgery such as abdominal, trauma or transplantation surgery, as well as specialist procedures such as neonatal [1] surgery, often for congenital abnormalities. You might also perform complex surgery on children with disabilities to improve their quality of life.
Just over 10% of operations on children are carried out by paediatric surgeons with the majority being performed by other specialist surgeons in fields such as orthopaedic, plastic and ENT (ear, nose and throat) surgery.

Some consultants have an interest in fields such as paediatric orthopaedics or neurosurgery, but they come from these surgical training routes, rather than paediatric surgery. You’ll work in partnership with these colleagues, either in dedicated children’s hospitals or in paediatric surgical units within larger hospitals.

You’ll also attend outpatient clinics and ward rounds where you’ll meet your patients and their parents or carers. An important part of your work will be reassuring and advising concerned parents and carers which can be rewarding as well as emotionally demanding.

Your clinical workload will mainly cover day cases. The amount of emergency surgery and on-call work you’ll do is relatively low compared to other specialties.

How much can I earn?

You’ll first earn a salary when you start your foundation training [2] after medical school. The basic salary ranges from £32,398 to £37,303. Once you start your specialty training in the NHS, you can expect to earn a salary of at least £43,923, which can increase to between £93,666 and £126,281 as a consultant.

How about the benefits?

- make a difference
- flexible and part-time working
- high income early in your career
- work anywhere in the world
- excellent pension scheme
- good holiday entitlement
- NHS discounts in shops and restaurants

Must-have skills

- excellent communication skills to manage a wide range of relationships with colleagues, and patients and their families
- emotional resilience, a calm temperament and the ability to work well under pressure
- teamwork and the capacity to lead multidisciplinary teams
- problem-solving and diagnostic skills
- outstanding organisational ability and effective decision-making skills
- first-class time and resource management for the benefit of patients
- a high degree of manual dexterity
- superb hand-eye co-ordination, excellent vision, and visuospatial awareness
- physical stamina to cope with the demands of surgery
Entry requirements?

Your first step is medical school. Typically, you’ll need excellent GCSEs and three A or A* passes at A level including chemistry for a five-year undergraduate degree in medicine. Many medical schools also ask for biology and others may require maths or physics.

If you already have a degree, you could study for a four-year postgraduate degree in medicine.

You’ll need to pass an interview and admissions test. You’ll be asked to show how you demonstrate the NHS values such as compassion and respect.

Some medical schools look to recruit a mix of students from different backgrounds and geographical areas, so your educational and economic background and family circumstances could be considered as part of your application.

"An early rotation in general surgery provided me with the opportunity to help with operations. I loved the work and also enjoyed working alongside such dedicated and hard-working colleagues and decided to pursue a career in surgery."

Read Kathryn’s story [3].

What are my chances of starting a career in paediatric surgery?

In 2021, there were 205 paediatric surgeons working in the NHS in England. In addition, there were 80 applications for 12 specialty training places.

How to become a paediatric surgeon

After medical school, you’ll join the paid two-year foundation programme where you’ll work in six placements in different settings.

After your foundation programme, you can apply for paid specialty training to become a paediatric surgeon, which will take a minimum of eight years.

You may be able to train part time, for example for health reasons or if you have family or caring responsibilities.

Where a career as a paediatric surgeon can take you

You could:

- specialise or conduct research in areas such as neonatal surgery, paediatric urology, and paediatric oncology [6].
• teach medical students or postgraduate students in training?
• get involved in research at universities, the NHS or private sector

Live vacancies

Find a vacancy

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○ Senior Locally Employed Doctor in Paediatric Surgery
  Manchester, M13 9WL
  Salary: £55329.00
  Type: Fixed-Term
  Employer: Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust
  Apply now on NHS Jobs for Senior Locally Employed Doctor in Paediatric Surgery job (opens in a new window) [7]

○ Clinical Fellow in Paediatric Spinal Surgery
  Sheffield, S10 2TH
  Salary: £43923.00 to £63152.00
  Type: Fixed-Term
  Employer: Sheffield Children’s NHS Foundation Trust
  Apply now on NHS Jobs for Clinical Fellow in Paediatric Spinal Surgery job (opens in a new window) [8]

○ Locum Consultant Plastic, Paediatric & Reconstructive Surgery
  Morriston, SA6 6NL
  Salary:
£105401.00
Type: Fixed-Term
Employer: Swansea Bay University Health Board
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Plastic, Paediatric & Reconstructive Surgery job (opens in a new window) [9]

Clinical Fellow in Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgery

OXFORD, OX3 9DU

Salary: £63152.00
Type: Fixed-Term
Employer: Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Clinical Fellow in Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgery job (opens in a new window) [10]

Senior Clinical Fellow in Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgery

London, WC1N 3JH

Salary: £44171.00 to £57570.00
Type: Fixed-Term
Employer: Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Senior Clinical Fellow in Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgery job (opens in a new window) [11]

Consultant Urological Surgeon – Pelvic Surgery

Bristol, BS10 5NB

Salary: £93666.00 to £126281.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: North Bristol NHS Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Urological Surgeon – Pelvic Surgery job (opens in a new window) [12]

Consultant General Surgeon (Breast Surgery)
Barnsley, S75 2EP

Salary: £93666.00 to £126281.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant General Surgeon (Breast Surgery) job (opens in a new window)

Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon (Knee Revision Surgery)

Oswestry, SY10 7AG

Salary: £93666.00 to £126281.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon (Knee Revision Surgery) job (opens in a new window)

Paediatric Audiologist

Carshalton, SM5 1AA

Salary: £40701.00 to £48054.00
Type: Fixed-Term
Employer: Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Paediatric Audiologist job (opens in a new window)

Paediatric Echocardiographer

London, SE1 7EH

Salary: Negotiable
Type: Permanent
Employer: Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Paediatric Echocardiographer job (opens in a new window)
**Paediatric Radiographer**

Southampton, SO14 2AA

Salary: £28407.00 to £34581.00

Type: Permanent

Employer: University Hospital Southampton NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Paediatric Radiographer job (opens in a new window) [17]

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**Paediatric Audiologist**

Widnes, WA8 3LZ

Salary: £28407.00 to £34581.00

Type: Permanent

Employer: Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Paediatric Audiologist job (opens in a new window) [18]

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**Paediatric Sister**

Aylesbury, HP21 8AL

Salary: £43742.00 to £50056.00

Type: Permanent

Employer: Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Paediatric Sister job (opens in a new window) [19]

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**Paediatric Manager**

Grimsby, DN33 2BA

Salary: £43742.00 to £50056.00

Type: Permanent

Employer: Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Paediatric Manager job (opens in a new window) [20]
Consultant Trauma & Orthopaedic Surgeon - Revision Hip & Knee Surgery

Carlisle, CA2 7HY

Salary: £93666.00 to £126281.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Trauma & Orthopaedic Surgeon - Revision Hip & Knee Surgery job (opens in a new window) [21]

Locum Consultant Surgeon in Upper Gastro-Intestinal Surgery

Birmingham, B9 5SS

Salary: £93666.00 to £126281.00
Type: Fixed-Term
Employer: University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Surgeon in Upper Gastro-Intestinal Surgery job (opens in a new window) [22]

Paediatric Audiology Lead

Bedford, MK42 9DJ

Salary: £50952.00 to £57349.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: Bedfordshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Paediatric Audiology Lead job (opens in a new window) [23]

Paediatric Hearing Rehabilitationist

Cambridge, CB2 0QQ

Salary: £43742.00 to £50056.00
Type: Permanent
Employer:
    Cambridge University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Paediatric Hearing Rehabilitationist job (opens in a new window) [24]

Paediatric Resuscitation Practitioner

Coventry, CV2 2DX

Salary:
    £35392.00 to £42618.00
Type:
    Permanent
Employer:
    University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Paediatric Resuscitation Practitioner job (opens in a new window) [25]

Paediatric Theatre Practitioner

Brighton, BN2 5BE

Salary:
    £28407.00 to £34581.00
Type:
    Permanent
Employer:
    University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust (279)
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Paediatric Theatre Practitioner job (opens in a new window) [26]

Consultant Paediatric Haematologist

Nottingham, NG7 2UH

Salary:
    £93666.00 to £126281.00
Type:
    Permanent
Employer:
    Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trusts
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Paediatric Haematologist job (opens in a new window) [27]

Paediatric Resuscitation Practitioner

Coventry, CV2 2DX

Salary:
£35392.00 to £42618.00
Type: Permanent
Employer:
University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Paediatric Resuscitation Practitioner job (opens in a new window) [28]

Further information

These organisations have further information about being a paediatric surgeon, particularly as your career progresses. Take a look.

British Association of Paediatric Surgeons [29]
Royal College of Surgeons [30]
Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh [31]
Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow [32]

Other roles that may interest you

- Paediatrician [33]
- General surgery [34]
- Dermatology [35]
- Clinical bioinformatics health informatics [36]

Source URL: https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/surgery/paediatric-surgery

Links
[1] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Neonatal
[6] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Oncology