

## Real-life story - Emily Sinkinson

Emily's experience as a healthcare assistant on a neurology ward sparked her interest in being a clinical physiologist.

### Emily Sinkinson

#### Clinical physiologist (neurophysiology)

##### Employer or university

Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust

##### Salary range

£20k-£30k

I am currently working on an audit of the diagnostic value of 'ambulatory' EEGs.

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**How I got into  
the role**

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I always wanted to work in the healthcare sector and previously worked as a healthcare assistant on a neurology ward. While I was there, I got to see what a clinical physiologist does and decided to do a clinical physiology [1] degree.

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**What I do**

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As part of a team, I perform a number of different tests in the department and on the wards and I observe colleagues in theatre.

The tests vary from electroencephalography (EEG) to measure brain activity and diagnose epilepsy to visual evoked potentials that test the optic nerve and visual pathway. I also carry out somatosensory evoked potentials to measure the peripheral sensory nerves and identify conduction blocks in the spinal cord.

One thing I love about the job is that every day is different. It's important to be caring, compassionate and good at multitasking.

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## **The best bits and challenges**

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The best bits of the job for me are the interaction with the patients, coming across rare or complicated cases and being able to carry out research projects and audits. I am currently working on an audit of the diagnostic value of 'ambulatory' EEGs which provide a continuous recording for up to 72 hours. I am also doing a small research project on patients who are referred for EEGs specifically designed to help diagnose non-epileptic attack disorder (NEAD).

I've had a great experience so far. As well as working on my NEAD research project, I have been able to conduct audits and train physiology [1] students. All of that experience has consolidated and expanded what I learned as a student myself and helped me develop the other more specialist skills required to be a clinical physiologist.

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## **Life outside work**

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I run and swim for clubs which is a great stress relief and both involve communicating with lots of people of all ages and abilities which has helped me with my career too.

Maintaining a healthy work-life balance is fairly easy as a physiologist. We rarely need to work overtime, so usually work 37.5 hours a week.

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**Career plans  
and top tips for  
others**

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I'd advise anyone considering any sort of health role to get some experience in community care work. It's the most flexible kind of healthcare work, is easy to get in to and you get to see a mix of people with a range of problems that you will most certainly encounter during your career. It will also enable you to expand your communication skills which are essential in any healthcare setting.

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#### **Links**

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