

## Compare roles in health

Not sure where to start with the hundreds of NHS careers? Use our compare roles section to get bite-size information on the entry requirements and training, pay and conditions, prospects and skills needed of up to three roles. If there is something that you think you could do, then get more in-depth information on the role.

Don't forget, you can also save your role comparisons by registering with us.

### • Cardiothoracic surgeon <sup>[1]</sup>

Cardiothoracic surgeons specialise in operating on the heart, lungs and other thoracic (chest) organs.

#### Training and qualifications required

Training usually starts with a five year first degree in medicine. Then there are two routes available. You can either complete two years of core training (CT1–2) and five years of specialty training (ST3–7), or seven years of specialty training (run through training at ST1–7).

#### Expected working hours and salary range

Doctors may work up to 48 hours a week. The working hours may sometimes extend beyond the normal working day including early mornings, evenings and on call. The basic salary ranges from £29,384 to £34,012. Once you start your specialty training as a cardiothoracic surgeon employed by the NHS, you can expect to earn a salary of at least £40,257, which can increase to between £84,559 and £114,003 as a consultant.

#### Desirable skills and values

You'll need excellent communication skills and be emotionally resilient, have a calm temperament and the ability to work well under pressure. You'll have the capacity to lead multidisciplinary teams and have excellent problem-solving and diagnostic skills. As a cardiothoracic surgeon, you'll have: a high degree of manual dexterity; superb hand-eye co-ordination; excellent vision; visuospatial awareness and the physical stamina to cope with the demands of surgery.

#### Prospects

There are currently approximately 400 cardiothoracic surgeons working in the NHS in England. In 2020, there were between 5.86 and 9.92 applications for every specialty training place. You'll have the opportunity to specialise in cardiac, thoracic or congenital surgery. You could teach medical or postgraduate students or get involved in research.

## Related roles

- [Cardiologist](#) <sup>[2]</sup>
- [Emergency medicine](#) <sup>[3]</sup>
- [Respiratory medicine](#) <sup>[4]</sup>
- [Knowledge and library services](#) <sup>[5]</sup>

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## Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/surgery/cardiothoracic-surgery> [2]  
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