

# Medical microbiology and virology (doctor)

Microbiologists and virologists diagnose, treat and prevent the spread of infection, making a major contribution to clinical infection management.

Both roles demand excellent clinical skills as well as first-class laboratory knowledge.



## Life as a microbiologist

You'll provide advice on the likely causes and suggest the best test to diagnose a patient suspected of having an infectious disease. The testing you'll do may involve the identification of parasites under a microscope, the use of biochemical tests to identify colonies of bacteria or the use of molecular tests to identify organisms (or even specific genes), which may govern an organism's behaviour.

You'll be expected to interpret tests results and recommend appropriate further investigation and antibiotic treatment.

It'll be your responsibility to ensure the delivery of prompt and accurate test results for patients. In cases where antimicrobial drugs are required, you'll provide advice concerning the choice of such drugs and the duration of treatment.

The side effects of treatment along with the potential risk of encouraging further infections (some of which may be antibiotic-resistant) must be considered in tandem with any medical problems or allergies the patient might have. In doing so, you'll play a major role in controlling the spread of infectious diseases, including the spread of hospital-based 'super-bugs' such as MRSA.

In your role, you'll also contribute to the protection of public health by monitoring the patterns of infectious diseases.

You'll usually work with clinical colleagues, GPs and laboratory staff rather than with patients directly. You'll be hands-on and expected to perform:

- traditional culture techniques such as microbiological stains
- measuring antibody response to infection

- detection of microbial antigens
- nucleic acid amplification (polymerase chain reaction)

## Life as a virologist

Your role will focus on viral infections, and your time will be divided between laboratories and clinics as well as working on hospital wards and in the wider community.

You'll manage HIV/AIDS and other blood-borne infections such as hepatitis B and C. But the role of a virologist is rapidly evolving, and increasingly your challenge will be to manage the spread of emerging viruses like Covid-19 and combat the threat from bioterrorism and the use of agents like smallpox.

You'll usually work directly with clinical colleagues, GPs and laboratory staff rather than with patients directly. You'll be hands-on and expected to perform:

- antigen detection techniques
- high-throughput nucleic acid extraction techniques

## How much can I earn?

You'll first earn a salary when you start your [foundation training](#) <sup>[1]</sup> after medical school. Find out details of current salary ranges for foundation and specialty training, [SAS doctors](#) <sup>[2]</sup> and consultants on the ['Pay for doctors'](#) <sup>[3]</sup> page.

## 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

## 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.

**"I'm passionate about my job because I believe in the importance of what I'm doing – promoting the rational use of antibiotics and of diagnostic tests. I love the breadth and variety that the specialty provides, and the fact that I'm learning new things every day."**

**Read Jonathan's story** <sup>[4]</sup>.

## **What are my chances of starting a career as a microbiologist or virologist?**

There are approximately 444 microbiologist and 11 virologists working in the NHS in England.

## **How to become a microbiologist or virologist**

After medical school, you'll join the paid two-year foundation programme <sup>[5]</sup> where you'll work in six placements in different settings.

After your foundation programme, you can apply for paid specialty training <sup>[6]</sup> to become a microbiologist or virologist, which will take a minimum of four 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 microbiologist or virologist can take you**

There are no sub-specialties in microbiology and virology but there are many opportunities to undertake research.

- **Live vacancies**

## Find a vacancy

Enter your location or postcode

Show results within

Search

- **Locum Consultant in Medical Microbiology and Virology (2 PAs)**

London, WC1N 3JH

Salary:

£109725.00 to £145478.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant in Medical Microbiology and Virology \(2 PAs\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[7]</sup>

- **Dermatology Doctor**

Swindon, SN3 3RB

Salary:

£550.00

Type:

Bank

Employer:

CHEC

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Dermatology Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[8]</sup>

- **Dermatology Doctor**

Wandsworth, SW18 4WW

Salary:

£550.00

Type:

Bank

Employer:

CHEC

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Dermatology Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[9]</sup>

- **Specialty Doctor**

Leeds, LS12 3QE

Salary:

£70901.00 to £99216.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[10]</sup>

- **ENT Doctor**

Worthing, BN11 3BN

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Bank

Employer:

CHEC

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for ENT Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[11]</sup>

- **Dermatology Doctor**

London, SE14 6BL

Salary:

£550.00

Type:

Bank

Employer:

CHEC

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Dermatology Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[12]</sup>

- **ENT Doctor**

Canterbury, CT1 1BN

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Bank

Employer:

CHEC

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for ENT Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[13]</sup>

- **Dermatology Doctor**

Slough, SL1 2EJ

Salary:

£550.00

Type:

Bank

Employer:

CHEC

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Dermatology Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[14]</sup>

- **Dermatology Doctor**

Slough, SL1 2EJ

Salary:

£550.00

Type:

Bank

Employer:

CHEC

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Dermatology Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[15]</sup>

- **Specialist Doctor**

Coxheath, ME17 4AH

Salary:

£59175.00 to £95400.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialist Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[16]</sup>

- **Specialist Doctor**

Coxheath, ME17 4AH

Salary:

£59175.00 to £95400.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialist Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[16]</sup>

- **Dermatology Doctor**

Leicester, LE1 2BU

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

CHEC

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Dermatology Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[17]</sup>

- **Speciality Doctor**

Lichfield, WS14 9LH

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

St Giles Hospice

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Speciality Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[18]</sup>

- **Specialty Doctor**

London, SE5 8UH

Salary:

£59175.00 to £95400.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[19]</sup>

- **Dermatology Doctor**

Canterbury, CT1 1BN

Salary:

£550.00

Type:

Bank

Employer:

CHEC

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Dermatology Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[20]</sup>

- **Speciality Doctor**

Workington, CA14 2AL

Salary:

£105000.00 to £115000.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Humankind Charity

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Speciality Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[21]</sup>

- **Dermatology Doctor**

Worthing, BN11 3BN

Salary:

£550.00

Type:

Bank

Employer:

CHEC

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Dermatology Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[22]</sup>

- **BASMU Doctor**

Plymouth, PL6 8DH

Salary:

£61825.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for BASMU Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[23]</sup>

- **Specialty Doctor**

Brunel Road, , RG7 4AB

Reading, , RG30 2DX

Crowmarsh Wallingford, OX10 6SL

Salary:

£59175.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Sue Ryder

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[24]</sup>



- **Stroke Specialist Doctor**

Chertsey, KT16 0PZ

Salary:

£83945.00 to £95275.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Ashford & St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Stroke Specialist Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#)

[25]

- **Specialty Doctor - Anaesthetics**

Victoria Road, Macclesfield, SK10 3BL

Salary:

£59175.00 to £95400.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

East Cheshire NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Doctor - Anaesthetics job \(opens in a new window\)](#) [26]

- **Ophthalmology Specialty Doctor**

Sidcup, DA14 6LT

Salary:

£59175.00 to £95400.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Ophthalmology Specialty Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) [27]

- **Specialty Doctor Anaesthetics**

Hastings, TN37 7RD

Salary:

£61542.00 to £99216.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Doctor Anaesthetics job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[28]</sup>

- **Ophthalmology- Specialty doctor**

Reading, RG15AN

Salary:

£59175.00 to £95400.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Ophthalmology- Specialty doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[29]</sup>

- **Specialty Doctor - Paediatrics**

Swindon, SN3 6BB

Salary:

£59175.00 to £95400.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Doctor - Paediatrics job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[30]</sup>

- **Breast Specialty Doctor**

London, NW32QG

Salary:

£61542.00 to £99216.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Breast Specialty Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[31]</sup>

- **ST1 Paediatric Bank Doctor**

Warrington, WA5 1QG

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Bank

Employer:

Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHSFT

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for ST1 Paediatric Bank Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[32]</sup>

- **Trust Doctor in Anaesthesia**

Leeds, LS9 7TF

Leeds, LS13EX

Salary:

£61825.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Leeds Teaching Hospitals

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Trust Doctor in Anaesthesia job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[33]</sup>

- **Speciality Doctor- Riverwood Ward**

Bebington, CH63 4JY

Salary:

£59175.00 to £95400.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Speciality Doctor- Riverwood Ward job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[34]</sup>

- **Specialty Doctor General Surgery**

Hastings, TN37 7RD

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Doctor General Surgery job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[35]</sup>

- **Bank On Call Doctor**

North East, DL1 2LN

Salary:

£325.00 to £450.00

Type:

Bank

Employer:

Cygnet Health Care

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Bank On Call Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[36]</sup>

- **Specialty Doctor in Psychiatry**

St Helens, WA9 3DE

Salary:

£59175.00 to £95400.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Doctor in Psychiatry job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[37]</sup>

- **Specialty Doctor in Rheumatology**

Bristol, BS10 5NB

Salary:

£59175.00 to £95400.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

North Bristol NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Doctor in Rheumatology job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[38]</sup>

- **Foundation Fellowship Programme Doctor**

Southampton, SO16 6YD

Salary:

£38831.00 to £52656.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

University Hospital Southampton NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Foundation Fellowship Programme Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[39]</sup>

- **Specialty Doctor – Ward 3**

London, SW17 0YF

Salary:

£59175.00 to £95400.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

South West London and St Georges Mental Health NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Doctor – Ward 3 job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[40]</sup>

- **Specialty Doctor - Stroke Medicine**

Torquay, TQ2 7AA

Salary:

£59175.00 to £95400.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Doctor - Stroke Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[41]</sup>

- **Resident Doctor Critical Care**

Birmingham, B15 2FQ

Salary:

£72000.00 to £84000.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

HCA Healthcare UK

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Resident Doctor Critical Care job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[42]</sup>

- **Specialty Doctor in ENT**

Wakefield, WF14DG

Salary:

£61542.00 to £99216.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

The Mid Yorkshire Teaching NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Doctor in ENT job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[43]</sup>

- **Registrar Doctor in Haematology**

Chlesea, SW3 6JJ

Salary:

£61825.00 to £70425.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Registrar Doctor in Haematology job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[44]</sup>

- **Fixed Term Specialty Doctor**

Farnham, GU9 7XG

Guildford, GU2 7WW

Camberley, GU15 4LZ

Salary:

£59175.00 to £95400.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Phyllis Tuckwell Memorial Hospice Ltd

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Fixed Term Specialty Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[45]</sup>

- **Registrar Doctor in Haematology**

Chlesea, SW3 6JJ

Salary:

£61825.00 to £70425.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Registrar Doctor in Haematology job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[44]</sup>

- **Fixed Term Specialty Doctor**

Farnham, GU9 7XG

Guildford, GU2 7WW

Camberley, GU15 4LZ

Salary:

£59175.00 to £95400.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Phyllis Tuckwell Memorial Hospice Ltd  
[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Fixed Term Specialty Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[45]</sup>

- **Specialty Doctor - Obs & Gynae**

Steeton, BD20 6TD

Salary:

£59175.00 to £95400.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Airedale NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Doctor - Obs & Gynae job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[46]</sup>

- **Specialty Doctor – Adult Inpatients**

Liverpool, L9 1EP

Salary:

£59175.00 to £95400.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Doctor – Adult Inpatients job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[47]</sup>

- **Specialty Doctor - Ophthalmology (MC75)**

Watford, WD180HB

Salary:

£61542.00 to £99216.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Doctor - Ophthalmology \(MC75\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[48]</sup>

- **Consultant Medical Microbiologist**

Romford, RM7 0AG

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Medical Microbiologist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[49]</sup>

- **Associate Practitioner - Virology**

Bristol, BS10 5NB

Salary:

£23875.00 to £25394.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

UK Health Security Agency

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Associate Practitioner - Virology job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[50]</sup>

- **Trust Doctor (ST4+) in Paediatrics**

Guildford, GU2 7XX

Salary:

£65048.00 to £73992.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Royal Surrey NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Trust Doctor \(ST4+\) in Paediatrics job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[51]</sup>

- **Specialty Doctor in Forensic Psychiatry**

Gloucester, GL1 3WL

Salary:

£59175.00 to £95400.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Doctor in Forensic Psychiatry job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[52]</sup>

- **Specialty Doctor in Palliative Medicine**

Swindon, SN4 9BY

Salary:



Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Prospect Hospice

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Doctor in Palliative Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[53]</sup>

- **Speciality Doctor Obstetrics and Gynaecology**

Whitehaven, CA28 8JG

Salary:

£61542.00 to £99216.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Speciality Doctor Obstetrics and Gynaecology job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[54]</sup>

- **Specialty Doctor in Liaison Psychiatry**

Harrogate, HG27SX

Salary:

£61542.00 to £99216.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Tees Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Doctor in Liaison Psychiatry job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[55]</sup>

- **Specialty Doctor Orthopaedic (Upper Limb)**

Newport, PO30 5TG

Salary:

£59175.00 to £95400.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Isle of Wight NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Doctor Orthopaedic \(Upper Limb\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[56]</sup>

- **Speciality Doctor in Plastic Surgery**

Harlow, CM20 1QX

Salary:

£59175.00 to £95400.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

The Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Speciality Doctor in Plastic Surgery job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[57]</sup>

- **GP Partner or Salaried Doctor**

Olney, MK46 5QG

Salary:

£11500.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Primary Care Careers

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for GP Partner or Salaried Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[58]</sup>

- **Speciality Doctor in Paediatrics- Developmental**

BANGOR, LL57 2PW

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Speciality Doctor in Paediatrics- Developmental job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[59]</sup>

- **Treatment Doctor / Surgeon - 7.5 hours**

Reading, RG1 4QA

Salary:

£101000.00 to £151000.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS)

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Treatment Doctor / Surgeon - 7.5 hours job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[60]</sup>

- **Specialty Doctor in Forensic Psychiatry**

Dartford, DA2 7AF

Salary:

£61542.00 to £99216.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Doctor in Forensic Psychiatry job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[61]</sup>

- **COMMUNITY PAEDIATRICS SPECIALTY DOCTOR (THURROCK)**

Grays, Essex, RM16 2PX

Salary:

£61542.00 to £99216.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

NELFT North East London Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for COMMUNITY PAEDIATRICS SPECIALTY DOCTOR \(THURROCK\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[62]</sup>

- **Further information**

These organisations have further information about being a microbiology and virology doctor, particularly as your career progresses. Take a look.

[British Infection Association](#) <sup>[63]</sup>

[European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases](#) <sup>[64]</sup>

[Royal College of Pathologists](#) <sup>[65]</sup>

[Training in Infection](#) <sup>[66]</sup>

[UK Clinical Virology Network](#) <sup>[67]</sup>

[The Pathological Society of Great Britain and Ireland](#) <sup>[68]</sup>

## Other roles that may interest you

- [Infectious diseases](#) <sup>[69]</sup>

- [Chemical pathology](#) <sup>[70]</sup>
- [Haematology \(doctor\)](#) <sup>[71]</sup>
- [Histopathology \(doctor\)](#) <sup>[72]</sup>

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## Links

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