

Rheumatology

Rheumatologists are doctors who diagnose and manage chronic inflammatory conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis. Rheumatic conditions can affect people at any age.

Those under 16 are generally treated in paediatric rheumatology services, before starting to transition to care within adult rheumatology settings.



Life as a rheumatologist

You'll diagnose and manage musculoskeletal conditions including inflammatory and non-inflammatory disorders, which can affect people's bones, joints, muscles and soft tissues.

You'll treat people with:

- inflammatory joint disease, for example rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis
- degenerative joint disease, for example osteoarthritis
- autoimmune disease [1], for example lupus, scleroderma, myositis
- metabolic [2] bone disorders, for example osteoporosis
- crystal arthropathies, for example gout or pseudogout
- musculoskeletal infections

Rheumatologists work to improve the lives of children and adults with rheumatic and musculoskeletal disease. You'll spend quite a bit of time in outpatients speaking to and examining patients and undertaking investigations such as plain x-rays, ultrasound [3] scans and MRI [4] scans.

You'll see inpatient referrals from all over the hospital.

Many rheumatologists do practical procedures such as joint injections and/ or muscle biopsies.

How much can I earn?

You'll first earn a salary when you start your foundation training [5] 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

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.

What are my chances of starting a career as a rheumatologist?

There are approximately 699 rheumatologists working in the NHS in England. In 2020, there were 199 applications for 33 specialty training places.

How to become a rheumatologist

After medical school, you'll join the paid two-year foundation programme [6] where you'll work in six placements in different settings.

After your foundation programme, you can apply for paid specialty training [7] to become a rheumatologist, which will take a minimum of seven 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 rheumatologist can take you

You'll have the opportunity to develop sub-specialty interests such as:

- paediatric rheumatology
- metabolic [2] bone disease
- autoimmune multi-system connective tissue diseases

You may also have opportunities to conduct research or take on education and leadership roles.

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Consultant Rheumatologist

London, E11 1NR

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Barts Health NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Rheumatologist job (opens in a new window) [8]

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Consultant Rheumatologist

Birmingham, B15 2TH

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Rheumatologist job (opens in a new window) [9]

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Consultant Rheumatologist

Torquay, TQ2 7AA

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Rheumatologist job (opens in a new window) [10]

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Consultant Rheumatologist

Bodelwyddan, LL18 5UJ

Salary:

£91722.00 to £119079.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Rheumatologist job (opens in a new window) [11]

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Consultant Rheumatologist

Gobowen, 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 Rheumatologist job (opens in a new window) [12]

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Consultant Rheumatologist

Doncaster, DN2 5LT

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Doncaster & Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS FT

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Rheumatologist job (opens in a new window) [13]

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Consultant Rheumatologist

Bangor, LL57 2PW

Salary:

£91722.00 to £119079.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Rheumatologist job (opens in a new window) [14]

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Consultant Rheumatologist

Worthing, BN11 2DH

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust (279)

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Rheumatologist job (opens in a new window) [15]

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Consultant Rheumatologist

Brighton, BN2 5BE

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust (279)

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Rheumatologist job (opens in a new window) [16]

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Consultant Rheumatologist

Wrexham, LL13 7TD

Salary:

£91722.00 to £119079.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

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

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Consultant Rheumatologist

Blackpool, FY3 8NR

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

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

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Consultant Rheumatologist

Northampton, NN1 5BD

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Northampton General Hospital

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

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Locum Consultant Rheumatologist

Gillingham, ME7 5NY

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Medway NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Rheumatologist job (opens in a new window) [20]

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Rheumatology Consultant

Kettering, NN16 8UZ

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Kettering General Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Rheumatology Consultant job (opens in a new window) [21]

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Rheumatology Consultant

Basildon, SS16 5NL

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Rheumatology Consultant job (opens in a new window) [22]

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Rheumatology Consultant

Milton Keynes, MK6 5LD

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Milton Keynes University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Rheumatology Consultant job (opens in a new window) [23]

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Consultant in Rheumatology

Ipswich, IP4 5PD

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Rheumatology job (opens in a new window) [24]

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Admin Assistant Rheumatology

Harrogate, HG2 7SX

Salary:

£22816.00 to £24336.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Admin Assistant Rheumatology job (opens in a new window) [25]

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Pharmacy Technician - Rheumatology

Birmingham, B4 6NH

Salary:

£28407.00 to £34581.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Pharmacy Technician - Rheumatology job (opens in a new window) [26]

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Consultant in Rheumatology

Sutton-In-Ashfield, NG17 4JL

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Rheumatology job (opens in a new window) [27]

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Consultant in Rheumatology

London, W12 0HS

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Rheumatology job (opens in a new window) [28]

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Locum Rheumatology Consultant

Nottingham, NG7 2UH

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trusts

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Rheumatology Consultant job (opens in a new window) [29]

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Consultant in Rheumatology

Bournemouth, BH7 7DW

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Rheumatology job (opens in a new window) [30]

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Consultant in Rheumatology

London, W6 8RF

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Rheumatology job (opens in a new window) [31]

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Specialist grade Rheumatology

Nottingham, NG7 2UH

Salary:

£83945.00 to £95275.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trusts

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialist grade Rheumatology job (opens in a new window) [32]

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Rheumatology Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist

Frimley, GU16 7UJ

Salary:

£45753.00 to £52067.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Rheumatology Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist job (opens in a new window) [33]

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Training Programme Director Rheumatology

Birmingham, B2 4HQ

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Secondment

Employer:

NHS England

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Training Programme Director Rheumatology job (opens in a new window) [34]

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Specialist Rheumatology Podiatrist – Community

Christchurch, BH23 2JX

Salary:

£31365.00 to £37890.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialist Rheumatology Podiatrist – Community job (opens in a new window) [35]

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Band 6 Physiotherapist in Rheumatology

Weston-super-Mare, BS23 4TQ

Salary:

£35392.00 to £42618.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust (UHBW)

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Band 6 Physiotherapist in Rheumatology job (opens in a new window) [36]

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Senior Musculoskeletal & Rheumatology Physiotherapist/Osteopath

Burton on Trent, DE13 0RB

Salary:

£35392.00 to £42618.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Senior Musculoskeletal & Rheumatology Physiotherapist/Osteopath job (opens in a new window) [37]

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Static Occupational Therapist - Rheumatology and Pain

Cambridge, CB2 0QQ

Salary:

£35392.00 to £42618.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Cambridge University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Static Occupational Therapist - Rheumatology and Pain job (opens in a new window) [38]

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Consultant in Paediatric and Adolescent Rheumatology

Leicester, LE1 5WW

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Paediatric and Adolescent Rheumatology job (opens in a new window) [39]

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Consultant in Rheumatology and General Medicine

Reading, RG1 5AN

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Rheumatology and General Medicine job (opens in a new window) [40]

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Advanced Clinical Pharmacist - Rheumatology with EDC

Harlow, CM20 1QX

Salary:

£50952.00 to £57349.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

The Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Advanced Clinical Pharmacist - Rheumatology with EDC job (opens in a new window) [41]

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Band 8a - ADM for Rheumatology, Endocrine & Diabetes

Watford, WD18 0HB

Salary:

£52963.00 to £59360.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Band 8a - ADM for Rheumatology, Endocrine & Diabetes job (opens in a new window) [42]

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SENIOR BAND 6 HAND THERAPIST - HANDS AND RHEUMATOLOGY

Stevenage, SG1 4AB

Salary:

£35392.00 to £42618.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for SENIOR BAND 6 HAND THERAPIST - HANDS AND RHEUMATOLOGY job (opens in a new window) [43]

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Senior Health Care Support Worker- Trauma, Orthopaedics & Rheumatology

Plymouth, PL6 8DH

Salary:

£22816.00 to £24336.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Senior Health Care Support Worker- Trauma, Orthopaedics & Rheumatology job (opens in a new window) [44]

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**Further
information**

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

Royal College of Physicians [45]

Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh [46]

Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow [47]

British Society for Rheumatology [48]

Arthritis Research UK [49]

And hear from people working in rheumatology:

Dr Alan J Hakim, consultant in rheumatology and acute medicine (RCP) [50]

Dr Derek Baxter, consultant rheumatologist (RCPE) [51]

Dr Muhammad Farooq Kazmi – ST6, consultant rheumatologist (RCPE) [52]

Other roles that may interest you

- General internal medicine [53]
- Immunology [54]
- Rehabilitation medicine [55]
- Sport and exercise medicine [56]

Source URL:<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/medicine/rheumatology?StyleType=SmallFont&StyleClass=FontSize>

Links

- [1] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Autoimmune_disease
[2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Metabolic>
[3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Ultrasound> [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#MRI>
[5] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Foundation_training [6] <https://foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/>
[7] <https://specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk/> [8] <https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9259-24-1047>
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