

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. Find out details of current salary ranges for foundation and specialty training, [SAS doctors](#) ^[6] and consultants on the [Pay for doctors](#) ^[7] 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.

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 ^[8] where you'll work in six placements in different settings.

After your foundation programme, you can apply for paid specialty training ^[9] 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

Llanelli, SA14 8QF

Salary:

£110240.00 to £160951.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Hywel Dda University Health Board

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

- **Consultant Rheumatologist**

Barrow in Furness, LA14 4LF

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Trust

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

- **Consultant Rheumatologist**

Blackpool, FY3 8NR

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Rheumatologist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[12]

- **Locum Consultant Rheumatologist**

Leicester, LE1 5WW

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust

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

- **Rheumatology Consultant**

Nuneaton, CV10 7DJ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust

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

[14]

- **Rheumatology Consultant**

Salisbury, SP2 8BJ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust

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

[15]

- **Consultant in Rheumatology**

Hull, HU3 2JZ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

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

- **Consultant in Rheumatology**

Milton Keynes, MK6 5LD

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Milton Keynes University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

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

- **Advanced Clinical Pharmacist - Rheumatology**

Stevenage, SG1 4AB

Salary:

£55690.00 to £62682.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

East and North Hertfordshire Teaching NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Advanced Clinical Pharmacist - Rheumatology job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[18]

- **Specialist Physiotherapist - MSK/ Rheumatology**

Bristol, BS10 5NB

Salary:

£43742.00 to £50056.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

North Bristol NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialist Physiotherapist - MSK/ Rheumatology job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[19]

- **Lead Pharmacist - Rheumatology & MSK**

Westcliff-on-Sea, SS0 0RY

Salary:

£55690.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Lead Pharmacist - Rheumatology & MSK job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[20]

- **Specialty Registrar in Rheumatology**

London, W2 1NY

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Registrar in Rheumatology job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[21]

- **POST CCT Fellow in Rheumatology**

London, SE1 9RT

Salary:

£61825.00 to £70425.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for POST CCT Fellow in Rheumatology job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[22]

- **Senior Clinical Fellow in Rheumatology**

Coventry, CV22DX

Salary:

£65048.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Senior Clinical Fellow in Rheumatology job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[23]

- **Consultant in Rheumatology *Welcome Bonus 20K***

Ipswich, IP4 5PD

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Rheumatology *Welcome Bonus 20K* job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[24]

- **Consultant in Rheumatology and Acute Medicine**

Manchester, M22 9LT

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Rheumatology and Acute Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[25]

- **Consultant in Rheumatology and General Medicine**

Wakefield, WF1 4DG

Salary:

£109725.00 to £145478.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

The Mid Yorkshire Teaching NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Rheumatology and General Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[26]

- **Locum Consultant in Rheumatology and General Medicine**

Reading, RG1 5AN

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant in Rheumatology and General Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[27]

- **Training Programme Director for Rheumatology in KSS**

Horley, RH6 7DE

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Secondment

Employer:

NHS England

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Training Programme Director for Rheumatology in KSS job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[28]

- **Further information**

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

[Royal College of Physicians](#) ^[29]

[Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh](#) ^[30]

[Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow](#) ^[31]

[British Society for Rheumatology](#) ^[32]

Arthritis Research UK [33]

And hear from people working in rheumatology:

Dr Alan J Hakim, consultant in rheumatology and acute medicine (RCP) [34]

Dr Derek Baxter, consultant rheumatologist (RCPE) [35]

Dr Muhammad Farooq Kazmi – ST6, consultant rheumatologist (RCPE) [36]

Other roles that may interest you

- General internal medicine [37]
- Immunology [38]
- Rehabilitation medicine [39]
- Sport and exercise medicine [40]

Source URL: https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/medicine/rheumatology?career=nursing-guide&field_role=68&page=9

Links

[1] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Autoimmune_disease [2]
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