

# Palliative medicine

Doctors in palliative medicine provide holistic [1], quality-of-life care to patients with serious, advanced and progressive illnesses that cannot be cured.

You'll provide expertise and support to colleagues, particularly those treating patients with complex conditions.



## Life as a doctor in palliative medicine

Doctors in palliative medicine play an important and wide-ranging educational role, advising colleagues, families and other healthcare professionals while helping to ensure high standards of care.

Most of your patients will have advanced or progressive cancer, although increasingly palliative medicine doctors treat patients with a range of conditions such as heart failure, renal failure and neurological conditions.

It is essential to possess a deep understanding of the pathology and management of these conditions, which creates opportunities to develop a sub-specialty. You will need expertise in the pharmacological management of a range of problems and an understanding of drug interactions and side effects.

You'll be an essential part of specialist palliative care services, for clinical expertise, quality improvement, education, research management and research.

You can expect to work in hospitals, hospices and in the community with home visits being common. In some settings, such as specialist inpatient units, you'll have responsibility for the medical management of a patient. However, in most hospital settings, you'll play an advisory role alongside nurses who deliver most of the patient care.

At all times, you'll provide care that:

- strives to achieve the best quality of life for the patient for as long as possible
- involves managing and anticipating pain and other symptoms
- addresses the psychological, social and spiritual needs of the patient

- facilitates multi-professional support to provide joined-up care across care boundaries, enabling care at home and fewer avoidable admissions towards the end of life
- supports anticipatory planning with patients and professionals including advance planning in the last year of life
- supports end of life care that meets the needs and wishes of the individual and family
- supports the patient's family and significant others during the patient's illness and their bereavement

Common procedures and interventions include:

- [paracentesis](#) <sup>[2]</sup> (drawing off fluid from a natural cavity of the body)
- use of portable [ultrasound](#) <sup>[3]</sup>
- specialist pain techniques including management of [epidural](#) <sup>[4]</sup> infusions (a local anaesthetic procedure for blocking pain) occasionally in conjunction with a pain specialist
- management of central lines
- management of non invasive ventilation
- management of tracheostomies

## How much can I earn?

You'll first earn a salary when you start your [foundation training](#) <sup>[5]</sup> after medical school. Find out details of current salary ranges for foundation and specialty training, [SAS doctors](#) <sup>[6]</sup> and consultants on the [Pay for doctors](#) <sup>[7]</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

In addition, doctors in palliative medicine need to demonstrate:

- a high level of personal credibility as a clinician
- adaptability and resilience
- compassion, empathy, a flexible outlook and a sense of humour

- interests such as enhancing the quality of life for patients with life-limiting illnesses and improving end of life care and developing multicultural awareness
- well-developed skills in bedside clinical assessment (especially in settings and situations when routine investigations would not be appropriate)
- expertise in managing difficult pain, physical symptoms and psychological distress
- excellent decision-making in the context of changing and distressing situations using sound knowledge of ethical considerations

## 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.

## How to become a doctor in palliative medicine

After medical school, you'll join the paid two-year foundation programme <sup>[8]</sup> where you'll work in six placements in different settings.

After your foundation programme, you can apply for paid specialty training <sup>[9]</sup> to become a doctor in palliative medicine, which will take a minimum of six 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 doctor in palliative medicine can take you

You could:

- specialise or conduct research
- teach medical students or postgraduate students in training
- get involved in research at universities, the NHS or private sector

- **Live vacancies**

# Find a vacancy

Enter your location or postcode

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- **Consultant In palliative Care Medicine**

Cottingham, HU16 5JQ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant In palliative Care Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[10]</sup>

- **Specialty Doctor - Palliative Medicine**

Dorchester, DT1 2SL

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Weldmar Hospicecare

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

- **Palliative Care Administrator**

Radford, NG7 3GW

Salary:

£24169.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Nottingham CityCare Partnership CIC

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

- **Consultant in Paediatric Medicine WAI in Palliative Care**

Sheffield, S10 2TH

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Paediatric Medicine WAI in Palliative Care job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[13]</sup>

- **Specialty Doctor in Palliative Medicine**

Newcastle upon Tyne, NE7 7DN

Salary:

£59175.00 to £95400.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

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

- **Senior Pharmacist - Palliative Care**

Wolverhampton, WV10 0QP

Salary:

£55690.00 to £62682.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Senior Pharmacist - Palliative Care job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[15]</sup>

- **Care Coordinator (Palliative Care and Dementia)**

Waterlooville, PO7 5XP

Salary:

£13.48

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Portsmouth Group Practice

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Care Coordinator \(Palliative Care and Dementia\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[16]</sup>

- **Bank Specialist Palliative Care INW**

London, W10 6DZ

Salary:

£77.79

Type:

Bank

Employer:

Central London Community Health Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Bank Specialist Palliative Care INW job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[17]</sup>

- **Locum Consultant in Palliative Care**

Mountain Ash, CF45 4BZ

Salary:

£121264.00

Type:

Locum

Employer:

Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant in Palliative Care job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[18]</sup>

- **Clinical Pharmacist with Directorate (Palliative Care)**

Newport, NP20 2UB

Salary:

£56514.00 to £63623.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Clinical Pharmacist with Directorate \(Palliative Care\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[19]</sup>

- **Specialty Doctor/Clinical Fellow in Palliative Medicine**

Romford, RM4 1QH

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Saint Francis Hospice

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

- **Administrative Lead for Safeguarding and Palliative Care**

March, PE15 0TG

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Fenland Group Practice

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Administrative Lead for Safeguarding and Palliative Care job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[21]</sup>

- **Advanced Clinical Practitioner - Community Specialist Palliative Care**

Chester, CH2 4DG

Salary:

£55690.00 to £62682.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Advanced Clinical Practitioner - Community Specialist Palliative Care job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[22]</sup>

- **Palliative Medicine Consultant**

Salisbury, SP2 8BJ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust

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

- **Consultant Palliative Medicine**

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 Palliative Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[24]</sup>

- **Palliative Care and Symptom Control CNS - Band 7**

West End, W1G 6BW

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

The London Clinic

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Palliative Care and Symptom Control CNS - Band 7 job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[25]</sup>

- **CONSULTANT IN PALLIATIVE MEDICINE**

Stoke on Trent, ST4 6QG

Salary:

£109725.00 to £145478.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospital of North Midlands NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for CONSULTANT IN PALLIATIVE MEDICINE job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[26]</sup>

- **Consultant in Palliative Medicine**

London, SE5 9RS

Salary:

£109725.00 to £145478.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Palliative Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[27]</sup>

- **Consultant in Palliative Medicine**



Cambridge, CB2 0QQ

Salary:

£109725.00 to £145478.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Cambridge University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Palliative Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[28]</sup>

- **Consultant in Palliative Medicine**

London, E13 8SL

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Barts Health NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Palliative Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[29]</sup>

- **Consultant in Palliative Medicine**

Margate, CT9 4AN

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Palliative Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[30]</sup>

- **Consultant in Paediatric Palliative Medicine**

Sheffield, S10 2TH

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Paediatric Palliative Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[31]</sup>

- **Community Consultant in Palliative Medicine**

London, W10 6DZ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Central London Community Health Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Community Consultant in Palliative Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[32]</sup>

- **Medicines Management Pharmacy Technician Palliative Support**

Penarth, CF64 2XX

Salary:

£30420.00 to £37030.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Medicines Management Pharmacy Technician Palliative Support job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[33]</sup>

- **Training Programme Director for Palliative Medicine (KSS)**

Horley, RH6 7DE

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Secondment

Employer:

NHS England

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Training Programme Director for Palliative Medicine \(KSS\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[34]</sup>

- **Childrens Palliative Clinical Lead**

Worcester, WR5 3EZ

Salary:

£46000.00 to £52000.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Acorns Children's Hospice Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Childrens Palliative Clinical Lead job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[35]</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>[36]</sup>

- **Consultant in Critical Care Medicine**

Peterborough, PE3 9GZ

Salary:

£109725.00 to £145478.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Critical Care Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[37]</sup>

- **Consultant in Adult Intensive Care Medicine**

Dartford, DA2 8DA

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Adult Intensive Care Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[38]</sup>

- **Consultant in Paediatric Critical Care Medicine**

Bristol, BS2 8BJ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust (UHBW)

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Paediatric Critical Care Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[39]</sup>

- **Locum Consultant in Critical Care Medicine**

Peterborough, PE3 9GZ

Salary:

£109725.00 to £145478.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant in Critical Care Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[40]</sup>

- **Specialist Doctor in Elderly Medicine**

Wakefield, WF14DG

Salary:

£100870.00 to £111441.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

The Mid Yorkshire Teaching NHS Trust

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

- **Specialist Doctor in Stroke Medicine**

Wakefield, WF14DG

Salary:

£100870.00 to £111441.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

The Mid Yorkshire Teaching NHS Trust

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

- **Specialty Doctor in Stroke Medicine**

Redhill, RH1 5RH

Salary:

£61542.00 to £99216.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust

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

- **Specialty Doctor in Emergency Medicine**

King's Lynn, PE30 4ET

Salary:

£61542.00 to £99216.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn NHSFT

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

- **Fixed Term Consultant in Intensive Care Medicine**

Boston or Lincoln, PE21 9QS

Salary:

£109725.00 to £145478.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust

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

- **Training Programme Director for Intensive Care Medicine**

Reading, RG1 7EB

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Secondment

Employer:

NHS England

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Training Programme Director for Intensive Care Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[46]</sup>

- **CESR Senior Clinical Fellow Intensive Care Medicine**

Guildford, GU2 7XX

Salary:

£65048.00 to £73992.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Royal Surrey NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for CESR Senior Clinical Fellow Intensive Care Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[47]</sup>

- **Trust Doctor in Emergency Medicine (ST1)**

Ashford, TN24 0LZ

Salary:

£49909.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Trust Doctor in Emergency Medicine \(ST1\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[48]</sup>

- **Trust Grade Doctor in Elderly Medicine**

London, W6 8RF

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Trust Grade Doctor in Elderly Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[49]</sup>

- **Medicines Management Pharmacy Technician - Primary Care**

Ashington, NE63 0NG

Salary:

£31049.00 to £37796.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Medicines Management Pharmacy Technician - Primary Care job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[50]</sup>

- **Locally Employed Doctor in Emergency Medicine ST4+**

Carlisle, CA2 7HY

Salary:

£61825.00 to £70425.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust

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

- **Senior Locally Employed Doctor in Respiratory Medicine**

Manchester, M23 9LT

Salary:

£61825.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Senior Locally Employed Doctor in Respiratory Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[52]</sup>

- **Further information**

These organisations have further information about being a doctor in palliative medicine, particularly as your career progresses. Take a look.

[Royal College of Physicians](#) <sup>[53]</sup>

[Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh](#) <sup>[54]</sup>

[Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow](#) <sup>[55]</sup>

[The Association for Palliative Medicine of Great Britain and Ireland](#) <sup>[56]</sup>

[The National Council for Palliative Care \(NCPC\)](#) <sup>[57]</sup>

And hear from people working as palliative care doctors:

[A palliative medicine consultant \(BMJ\)](#) <sup>[58]</sup>

[Dr Richard Berman, consultant in palliative medicine \(RCP\)](#) <sup>[59]</sup>

[Dr Fiona Finlay – ST6, palliative medicine](#) <sup>[60]</sup>

## Other roles that may interest you

- [Medical oncology](#) <sup>[61]</sup>
- [General practitioner](#) <sup>[62]</sup>
- [Geriatric medicine](#) <sup>[63]</sup>
- [Respiratory medicine](#) <sup>[64]</sup>

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