

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](#) ^[2] (drawing off fluid from a natural cavity of the body)
- use of portable [ultrasound](#) ^[3]
- specialist pain techniques including management of [epidural](#) ^[4] 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](#) ^[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

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 ^[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 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

Show results within

Search

- **Consultant in Palliative 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 Palliative Care Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[10]

- **Palliative Care CNS**

Guildford, GU2 7RF

Salary:

£50000.00 to £50000.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Nuffield Health

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

- **Social Worker - Palliative Care**

Hillington, PE31 6BH

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Tapping House

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Social Worker - Palliative Care job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[12]

- **Palliative Care Discharge Facilitator**

Darlington, DL3 6HX

Salary:

£37338.00 to £44962.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

County Durham & Darlington NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Palliative Care Discharge Facilitator job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[13]

- **Palliative Care Social Worker**

Birmingham, B24 0DF

Birmingham, B29 7DA

Salary:

£29117.00 to £35445.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Birmingham Hospice

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Palliative Care Social Worker job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[14]

- **Trustee - Volunteer - Palliative Care**

Dorchester, DT1 2SL

Salary:

£1.00

Type:

Voluntary

Employer:

Weldmar Hospicecare

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Trustee - Volunteer - Palliative Care job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[15]

- **Palliative Care Support Worker**

Hereford, HR1 4HA

Salary:

£12.84 to £13.16

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

St Michael's Hospice

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Palliative Care Support Worker job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[16]

- **Palliative Care Social Worker**

Chester, CH2 4DG

Salary:

£39500.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Hospice of the Good Shepherd

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Palliative Care Social Worker job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[17]

- **Specialty Doctor in Palliative Medicine**

Basingstoke, RG24 9NB

Salary:

£53581.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

St Michael's Hospice (North Hampshire)

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Doctor in Palliative Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[18]

- **Specialty Doctor in Palliative Medicine**

Bolton, BL1 4QT

Salary:

£59175.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Bolton Hospice

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Doctor in Palliative Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[19]

- **Speciality Doctor in Palliative Medicine**

Preston, PR2 9HT

Salary:

£59175.00 to £95400.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Speciality Doctor in Palliative Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[20]

- **Consultant in Paediatric Palliative Care**

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 Palliative Care job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[21]

- **Locum Consultant in Palliative Care**

Mountain Ash, CF45 4BZ

Salary:

£116600.00

Type:

Locum

Employer:

Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant in Palliative Care job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[22]

- **Specialist Palliative Care Support Sister**

Middlesbrough, TS4 3BW

Salary:

£37338.00 to £44962.00

Type:

Secondment

Employer:

South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialist Palliative Care Support Sister job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[23]

- **Operational Support Manager (Therapeutics & Palliative Care)**

Sheffield, S5 7AU

Salary:

£29970.00 to £36483.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Operational Support Manager \(Therapeutics & Palliative Care\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[24]

- **Consultant in Palliative Medicine**

Southampton, SO16 6YD

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospital Southampton NHS Trust

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

- **Consultant in Palliative Medicine**

Farnham, GU9 7XG

Guildford, GU2 7WW

Camberley, GU15 4LZ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Phyllis Tuckwell Memorial Hospice Ltd

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

- **Consultant in Palliative Medicine**

Swindon, SN3 6BB

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

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

- **Consultant in Palliative Medicine**

SCARBOROUGH, YO12 5RE

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Saint Catherine's Hospice

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

- **Consultant in Palliative Medicine**

Carshalton, London, SM5 1AA

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust

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

- **Consultant in Paediatric Palliative Medicine**

Chelsea, SW3 6JJ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Paediatric Palliative Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[30]

- **Consultant in Adult Palliative Medicine**

Grimsby, DN32 9RP

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

St Andrews Hospice

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Adult Palliative Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[31]

- **Substantive Consultant in Palliative Medicine**

Oxford, OX3 7LJ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Substantive Consultant in Palliative Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[32]

- **Locum Consultant in Palliative Medicine**

London, NW1 2PG

Salary:

£99532.00 to £131964.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant in Palliative Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[33]

- **Locum Consultant in Palliative Medicine**

London, EC1A 7BE

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Barts Health NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant in Palliative Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[34]

- **Clinical Fellow/Trust Grade in Palliative Medicine for ED**

Edmonton, N18 1QX

Salary:

£49909.00 to £61825.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Clinical Fellow/Trust Grade in Palliative Medicine for ED job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[35]

- **Adv Spec Pharmacist - Project Lead (Palliative and End-of-Life Care)**

Liverpool, L69 3GF

Salary:

£62215.00 to £72293.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Adv Spec Pharmacist - Project Lead \(Palliative and End-of-Life Care\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[36]

- **Urgent Care Doctor**

London, NW8 9NH

Salary:

£85000.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

The Hospital of St John and St Elizabeth

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Urgent Care Doctor job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[37]

- **Salaried Urgent Care Doctor - Preston & Chorley**

Preston, PR2 9HT

Chorley, PR7 1PP

Salary:

£95025.00 to £105788.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Gtd Healthcare

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Salaried Urgent Care Doctor - Preston & Chorley job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[38]

- **Consultant in Critical Care Medicine**

Brighton, BN2 5BE

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust (279)

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Critical Care Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[39]

- **Consultant in Intensive Care Medicine**

Hastings, TN37 7RD

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Intensive Care Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[40]

- **Consultant in Intensive Care Medicine**

Salisbury, SP2 8BJ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Intensive Care Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[41]

- **Care Coordinator Medicine Management**

London, SE13 7SX

London, SE4 1JN

London, SE4 2LA

London, SE13 5AY

London, SE13 7NN

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

The Lewisham Care Partnership

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Care Coordinator Medicine Management job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[42]

- **Specialty Doctor- Occupational Medicine**

London, W6 8RF

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Doctor- Occupational Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[43]

- **Emergency Medicine Specialty Doctor**

Braddan, IM4 4RJ

Salary:

£53614.00 to £98969.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Manx Care

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

- **Specialist Doctor - Stroke / Medicine**

Barrow-In-Furness, LA14 4LF

Salary:

£96990.00 to £107155.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialist Doctor - Stroke / Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[45]

- **Consultant in Community Elderly Care Medicine**

Maidenhead, SL6 6DU

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Community Elderly Care Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[46]

- **Locum consultant In Elderly Care Medicine**

London, E13 8SL

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Barts Health NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum consultant In Elderly Care Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[47]

- **Post CCT Fellowship – Critical Care Medicine**

Middlesbrough, TS4 3BW

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Post CCT Fellowship – Critical Care Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[48]

- **Specialty Doctor in Elderly Care & Orthogeriatrics**

Reading, RG1 5AN

Salary:

£59175.00 to £95400.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Doctor in Elderly Care & Orthogeriatrics job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[49]

- **Intensive Care Medicine and Anaesthesia Clinical Fellow**

Reading, RG1 5AN

Salary:

£70425.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Intensive Care Medicine and Anaesthesia Clinical Fellow job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[50]

- **Consultant in Intensive Care Medicine and Anaesthetics**

Canterbury, CT1 3NG

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Intensive Care Medicine and Anaesthetics job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[51]

- **Locum Consultant Intensive Care Medicine & Anaesthetics CW**

London, SW10 9NH

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Intensive Care Medicine & Anaesthetics CW job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[52]

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

Cwmbran, NP44 8YN

Salary:

£43821.00 to £68330.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Senior Clinical Fellow in Intensive Care Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[53]

- **Specialty Doctor in Emergency Medicine**

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 in Emergency Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[54]

• 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](#) ^[55]

[Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh](#) ^[56]

[Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow](#) ^[57]

[The Association for Palliative Medicine of Great Britain and Ireland](#) ^[58]

[The National Council for Palliative Care \(NCPC\)](#) ^[59]

And hear from people working as palliative care doctors:

[A palliative medicine consultant \(BMJ\)](#) ^[60]

[Dr Richard Berman, consultant in palliative medicine \(RCP\)](#) ^[61]

[Dr Fiona Finlay – ST6, palliative medicine](#) ^[62]

Other roles that may interest you

- [Medical oncology](#) ^[63]
- [General practitioner](#) ^[64]
- [Geriatric medicine](#) ^[65]
- [Respiratory medicine](#) ^[66]

Source URL: https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/medicine/palliative-medicine?field_field_role=220&page=13

Links

[\[1\] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Holistic](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Holistic) ^[2]

<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Paracentesis> ^[3]

<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Ultrasound> ^[4]

<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Epidural> ^[5]

https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Foundation_training ^[6]

<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/career-opportunities-doctors/sas-doctors> ^[7]

<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/pay-doctors> ^[8]

<https://foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/> [9] <https://specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk/> [10]
<https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9252-25-0145> [11]
<https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/E0302-25-0679> [12]
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<https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9439-2526-0064> [14]
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<https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9188-25-0496> [26]
<https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/M0001-PHY0589> [27]
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<https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/B0286-25-0006> [32]
<https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9321-25-0510> [33]
<https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9333-25-0635> [34]
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<https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9290-25-0580> [44]
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<http://www.rcpe.ac.uk/> [57] <http://www.rcpsg.ac.uk/> [58] <https://apmonline.org/> [59] <http://www.ncpc.org.uk>
[60] <http://careers.bmj.com/careers/advice/view-article.html?id=20000524> [61]
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<https://www.rcpe.ac.uk/careers-resource/palliative-medicine> [63]
<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/medicine/medical-oncology> [64]
<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/general-practitioner> [65]
<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/medicine/geriatric-medicine> [66]
<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/medicine/respiratory-medicine>