

# Neurologist

Neurologists diagnose, treat and manage conditions affecting the brain and spinal cord, and disorders of the nerves and muscles that activate movement and transmit sensations from around the body to the brain.



## Life as a neurologist

You'll treat any disease that affects neurological function. For example, high blood pressure is a cardiac problem, but becomes a neurological issue if a sudden loss of blood to the brain causes a [stroke](#) <sup>[1]</sup>. This is a role with a great deal of variety, as there are more diseases in neurology than in most medical specialities.

You'll diagnose new patients with neurological problems and refer them for further investigations before following up and managing longer term problems such as epilepsy and Parkinson's disease. You'll also treat infectious diseases such as meningitis and diseases which result in weakness or sensory impairment.

Your work could involve seeing new and follow up patients in an outpatients' clinic, regional centre or hospital. You may also see patients in hospital on ward rounds and will probably spend time during the week at a regional centre in academic meetings with other neurological colleagues. You'll generally work sociable hours with a moderate on-call commitment.

You'll enjoy this role if you like complex problem solving. You'll treat a range of conditions, for example someone who presents with a headache, or patients with brain tumours or life-changing conditions such as motor neurone disease or Alzheimer's disease. Neurology is changing rapidly with advances in diagnosis, treatment and therapy for conditions such as multiple sclerosis (MS), making it an exciting choice of career.

## How much can I earn?

You'll first earn a salary when you start your [foundation training](#) <sup>[2]</sup> after medical school. Find out details of current salary ranges for foundation and specialty training, [SAS doctors](#) <sup>[3]</sup> and consultants on the [Pay for doctors](#) <sup>[4]</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.

## What are my chances of starting a career in neurology?

In 2020 there were 207 applications for 50 specialty training places.

## How to become a neurologist

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 neurologist, which will take a minimum of five 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 in neurology can take you

You could:

- specialise or conduct research in areas such as [stroke](#) <sup>[1]</sup> medicine, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis (MS), sleep medicine, pain management
- teach medical students or postgraduate students in training
- get involved in research at universities, the NHS or private sector

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#### ○ Consultant Neurologist

Taunton, TA1 5DA

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Somerset NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Neurologist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[7]</sup>

#### ○ Consultant Neurologist

London, WC1N 3BG

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Neurologist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[8]</sup>

- **Consultant Neurologist**

Westcliff on Sea, SS0 0RY

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust

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

- **Consultant Neurologist - 8PA's**

Bury St. Edmunds, IP33 2QZ

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Neurologist - 8PA's job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[10]</sup>

- **Locum Consultant Neurologist / Rehabilitation Medicine.**

Roehampton, SW15 5PN

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Neurologist / Rehabilitation Medicine. job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[11]</sup>

- **Further information**

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

[Royal College of Physicians](#) <sup>[12]</sup>

Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh [13]

Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow [14]

British Association of Stroke Physicians [15]

Association of British Neurologists [16]

And hear from people working as neurology doctors.

Dr Hedley Emsley, consultant in stroke neurology (RCP) [17]

Dr Neil Archibald, an ST7 trainee in neurology (RCPE) [18]

## Other roles that may interest you

- Cardiologist [19]
- Geriatric medicine [20]
- Neurosurgeon [21]
- Rehabilitation medicine [22]

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### Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Stroke> [2]  
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<https://foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/> [6] <https://specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk/> [7]  
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