

# Clinical neurophysiology

Clinical neurophysiologists investigate and diagnose disorders of the nervous system including a range of conditions affecting the functioning of the muscles (neuromuscular disease).



## Life as a clinical neurophysiologist

You'll use computer, electronic and magnetic techniques to investigate the function of the brain and spinal cord and peripheral nerves and muscles. You'll diagnose conditions such as epilepsy, motor neurone disease (MND) and Parkinson's disease. You will work closely with neurologists and neurosurgeons.

You'll provide supervision and clinical support to technical staff in your department, on the wards, in intensive care <sup>[1]</sup> units (ICUs) and in operating theatres. Most days involve undertaking clinics to diagnose and monitor a range of conditions using electronic techniques.

Neurologists and neurosurgeons will refer patients to you but you'll also see patients from other areas including general medicine, paediatrics and psychiatry.

You'll mainly work within normal working hours although many departments provide an out-of-hours service for emergencies and you may have to do some on-call work at weekends.

## 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 clinical neurophysiology?

In 2020 there were 31 applications for 10 specialty training places. There are currently 106 consultants working in the NHS in this specialty.

## How to become a neurophysiologist

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 clinical neurophysiologist, 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 in neurophysiology can take you

You could:

- specialise or conduct research in areas such as epilepsy surgery or Parkinson's disease
- teach medical students or postgraduate students in training
- get involved in research at universities, the NHS or private sector

## • **Live vacancies**

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## • **Further information**

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

[Royal College of Physicians](#) <sup>[7]</sup>

[Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh](#) <sup>[8]</sup>

[Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow](#) <sup>[9]</sup>

[British Society for Clinical Neurophysiology](#) <sup>[10]</sup>

[International Federation of Clinical Neurophysiology – European Chapter](#) <sup>[11]</sup>

And hear from Sarah about working as a clinical neurophysiology doctor.

[Dr Sarah Finlayson, specialty registrar in clinical neurophysiology](#) <sup>[12]</sup>

## Other roles that may interest you

- Neurologist [13]
- Rheumatology [14]
- Ophthalmology [15]
- Neurosurgeon [16]

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