

Working life (paediatric cardiology)

This page provides useful information about the roles and responsibilities of paediatric cardiologists, where they work, who they work with and what they feel about their role.

"The work is extremely varied as every child is different. The working week usually includes a mix of hospital ward rounds, outpatients' clinics and time spent in the operating theatre." (Paediatric cardiology consultant).

Paediatric cardiologists work very closely with their patients' families as part of their daily work. Explaining complex procedures and reassuring concerned parents is an important and vital part of the job.

Paediatric cardiologists work in regional centres staffed by three or more consultant paediatric cardiologists. The centres may be part of paediatric hospitals or major cardiothoracic centres.

There are 13 congenital cardiac units in the UK, and this specialty is teaching hospital-based (usually in large centres, which also have adult cardiac services, although some services are based within children's hospitals). Services in all centres have strong links with other teaching and district general hospitals in their locality. Most centres hold numerous joint outreach clinics at their linked hospitals. Patients are mostly children with congenital heart disease.

The on-call commitment in paediatric cardiology can be onerous and can sometimes include nights if a sick patient is admitted during the night or needs post-operative physician care. Most trainees work a shift pattern to include evenings and weekends. The working hours are generally longer than in most other medical specialties.

Teaching medical students and trainees is an important part of the job. Opportunities for research are excellent and there is often the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues around the world and to attend conferences in the UK and sometimes abroad.

The EU [Working Time Directive](#) ^[1] limits the working week to 48 hours. It is also possible to work part-time once you are consultant, or to train on a less than full-time ^[2]basis (conditions apply).

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**Who you will
work with?**

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Paediatric cardiologists work as part of large multidisciplinary teams.

They work with:

- ⊙ cardiac anaesthetists
- ⊙ cardiac physiologists
- ⊙ cardiologists
- ⊙ cardiothoracic surgeons
- ⊙ fetal medicine consultants
- ⊙ neonatologists and paediatricians
- ⊙ nurses
- ⊙ cardiac radiologists
- ⊙ radiographer
- ⊙ obstetricians
- ⊙ pathologists
- ⊙ psychologists
- ⊙ medical secretaries and administrative staff

Attractions and challenges of the role

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There is high job satisfaction in this specialty – diagnosing and treating infants and children with a fascinating range of heart conditions is very rewarding. The opportunity to treat fetal cardiac problems is also extremely satisfying. Parents are very grateful for your dedication and hard work during worrying times.

Major technological advances in the treatment of patients with congenital heart disease, have led to much-improved outcomes and improvement in long-term care. So the chances of being able to help your young patients are very good.

Many of the patients require lifelong follow-up, leading to a rewarding long-term relationship with patients and their families. You might work with patients from fetal life right through to adulthood.

Your patients are often small, and indeed tiny in the case of a fetus, which can be a challenge. The work also has its emotional demands and occasionally the outcome is not as positive as was hoped. This can be stressful and draining, and so it is important

to aim for a good work-life balance.

Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/paediatrics/paediatric-cardiology/working-life>

Links

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

[2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/working-health/information-doctors/less-full-time-training-doctors>