

Anaesthesia

Anaesthetists are the largest group of hospital-based specialists and give anaesthetics for surgical, medical and psychiatric procedures.

They facilitate pain-free childbirth, resuscitate acutely unwell patients, run chronic pain services and lead [intensive care](#) ^[1] units.

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Life as an anaesthetist

It's your responsibility to choose the appropriate anaesthetic for your patient. Typically, you'll offer four stages of patient care for a routine anaesthetic:

- preparation – you'll assess your patient's fitness for anaesthesia and agree on an anaesthetic plan
- induction – you'll initiate the anaesthesia
- maintenance – you'll continue the anaesthesia while monitoring your patient's condition, including checking the activity of the heart, blood pressure, oxygen and carbon dioxide levels, breathing, body temperature, depth of anaesthesia and the body fluid balance
- recovery – you'll reverse the anaesthesia and support the patient's recovery

Most of your time will be spent in operating theatres, but anaesthetists perform numerous roles in many different areas of a hospital. On any given day, you'll facilitate pain free childbirth, resuscitate acutely unwell patients, run chronic pain services and lead [intensive care](#) ^[1] units.

You can expect to work in areas such as:

- obstetric units
- critical care services for [intensive care](#) ^[1] and high dependency patients
- resuscitation services
- emergency departments
- chronic pain management

- acute pain teams
- dentistry
- perioperative ^[4] clinics
- research
- psychiatry – for patients receiving electro-convulsive therapy ^[5] (ECT)
- radiology – anaesthesia for CT scans ^[6] and MRI ^[7], especially in children
- inter-hospital transfers of critically ill patients

You'll also work closely with patients, understanding their condition and treatment. It's your responsibility to care for a patient for the duration of their operation. Being prepared for the unexpected can be exciting but also challenging at times.

Dr Sarah Plummer

Consultant anaesthetist

Seeing patients wake up safely and with good pain relief after any surgery always makes my job worthwhile.

[Read Sarah's story.](#) ^[8]

How much can I earn?

You'll first earn a salary when you start your foundation training ^[9] after medical school. Find out details of current salary ranges for foundation and specialty training, [SAS doctors](#) ^[10] and consultants on the '[Pay for doctors](#)' ^[11] 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 as an anaesthetist?

In 2020, there were 1,479 applications for 569 places for anaesthetic specialty training.

How to become an anaesthetist

- After medical school, you'll join the paid two-year foundation ^[12] programme ^[12] where you'll work in six placements in different settings.?
- After your foundation programme, you can apply for paid specialty training ^[13] to become an anaesthetist which will take a minimum of 7 or 8 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 an anaesthetist can take you

You could:

- specialise or conduct research in areas such as pain medicine

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

• Find your degree in medicine

Region

- Any - ▼

Type of qualification

- Any - ▼

Full or part time

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King's College London, University of London

[View course](#) ^[14] Opens in a new window

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- Study mode
 - Full-time
- Duration of the course
 - 5 Years
- Leading to a career in
 - Medicine
- Contact details
 - +44 (0) 207 848 7000
- Region
 - London
- Admissions address
 - Strand
 - London
 - WC2R 2LS
 - United Kingdom

Extended Medical Degree Programme

King's College London, University of London

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- Qualification
 - Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery - MB BS
- Study mode
 - Full-time
- Duration of the course
 - 6 Years
- Leading to a career in
 - Medicine

- Contact details
+44 (0) 207 848 7000
- Region
London
Admissions address
Strand
London
WC2R 2LS
United Kingdom

Medicine Graduate/Professional Entry Programme

King's College London, University of London

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- Qualification
Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery - MB BS
Study mode
Full-time
Duration of the course
4 Years
Leading to a career in
Medicine
- Contact details
+44 (0) 207 848 7000
- Region
London
Admissions address
Strand
London
WC2R 2LS
United Kingdom

Medicine

University of Manchester

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- Qualification
Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery - MB ChB
Study mode
Full-time
Duration of the course
5 Years
Leading to a career in
Medicine
- Contact details
study@manchester.ac.uk ^[18]
+44 (0)161 275 2077

- Region
North West
- Admissions address
University Recruitment And Adm
Oxford Road
Manchester
M13 9PL
United Kingdom

Graduate Entry Medicine

University of Sheffield

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- Qualification
Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery - MB ChB
- Study mode
Full-time
- Duration of the course
4 Years
- Leading to a career in
Medicine
- Contact details
study@sheffield.ac.uk ^[20]
- Region
Yorkshire and The Humber
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Western Bank
Sheffield
S10 2TN
England
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- **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Preston, PR2 9HT

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Anaesthetist job \(opens in a new window\)](#)

[22]

- **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Wrexham, LL11 7TD

Salary:

£106000.00 to £154760.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

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[23]

- **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Birmingham, B152QD

Salary:

£130000.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Practice Plus Group

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[24]

- **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Crewe, CW1 4QJ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

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[25]

- **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Whitehaven, CA28 8JG

Salary:

£93666.00 to £126281.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust

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[26]

- **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Whitehaven, CA28 8JG

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust

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[27]

- **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Shepton Mallet, BA4 4LP

Salary:

£99275.00 to £147700.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Practice Plus Group

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[28]

- **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Dorchester, DT1 2JY

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

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[29]

- **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Wigan, WN1 2NN

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Wrightington Wigan & Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

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[30]

- **Consultant Anaesthetist**

Ipswich, IP4 5PD

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust

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[31]

- **Locum Consultant Anaesthetist**

Whitehaven, CA28 8JG

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust

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

[32]

- **Locum Consultant Anaesthetist**

Coventry, CV2 2DX

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust

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

- **Locum Consultant Anaesthetist**

London, E1 1FR

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Locum

Employer:

Barts Health NHS Trust

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

- **Locum Consultant Cardiothoracic Anaesthetist**

Stoke on Trent, ST4 6QG

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

University Hospital of North Midlands NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Cardiothoracic Anaesthetist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[35]

- **Fixed Term Consultant Anaesthetist**

Bristol, BS10 5NB

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

North Bristol NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Fixed Term Consultant Anaesthetist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[36]

- **Consultant Anaesthetist in Obstetric Anaesthesia**

Hull, HU3 2JZ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Anaesthetist in Obstetric Anaesthesia job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[37]

- **Consultant Anaesthetist in General Anaesthesia**

Hull, HU3 2JZ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Anaesthetist in General Anaesthesia job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[38]

- **Locum Consultant Anaesthetist - Interest in Chronic Pain**

Slough, SL2 4HL

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Anaesthetist - Interest in Chronic Pain job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[39]

- **Further information**

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

[The Royal College of Anaesthetists](#) ^[40]

[The Association of Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland](#) ^[41]

[Association of Cardiothoracic Anaesthetists](#) ^[42]

[The National Institute of Academic Anaesthesia](#) ^[43]

And hear from people already working as an anaesthetist:

Starting in anaesthetics (BMJ) [44]

The secret life of an anaesthetist (The Guardian) [45]

About anaesthesia (HEWM) [46]

Dr Zulfi Sadiq, anaesthesia (HEEM) [47]

Other roles that may interest you

- Emergency medicine [48]
- Acute internal medicine [49]
- General surgery [50]
- General practitioner [51]

Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/anaesthesia?page=2>

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