

Learning more about paediatrics - for foundation doctors

[Recruitment & Careers team](#)

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Paediatrics is an exciting and varied specialty, and every day is different. If you're in foundation training and considering a career in paediatrics, here is some advice to help you explore our specialty further.

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Why choose paediatrics?

Paediatrics is a rewarding specialty in which you make a huge impact in the lives of children, young people and their families.

Be a generalist or a specialist - it's your choice. And you can explore the range of [sub-specialties](#). There are plenty of opportunities for research in all training pathways.

We have a series of online careers workshops especially for foundation doctors, usually on Wednesday evenings - keep an eye on [our events listing](#). And don't worry if you miss seeing them live - you can also [catch up on our YouTube playlist](#).

You can look at #choosepaediatrics on social media to find out why people choose paediatrics and what they love about the specialty.

How to get paediatric experience

First, you can try to get a paediatric post during your foundation training.

Can't get a paediatric rotation? Don't worry! Many candidates who apply to paediatric specialty training haven't had one and it can be difficult to get one depending on where you are training. This won't count against you - so try to gain experience based on how set you are on applying. If you know it is the specialty for you, don't panic about getting a rotation in your Foundation years.

Remember, we are looking for applicants who have a good understanding of what it takes to be a paediatrician and who can demonstrate that at interview - you don't need huge amounts of specific knowledge or experience.

Some ideas for getting additional experience:

- Use your experience working with children in other specialties, such as general practice, emergency medicine and paediatric surgery. You'll learn valuable transferable skills.
- Try to get on a taster week in paediatrics through your foundation school. You'll experience the working day of a paediatrician.
- Volunteer with children and young people's clubs, such as those helping people with disabilities or learning difficulties. You'll develop your communication skills and rapport with children.
- Ask a paediatrician to be your mentor. We find that paediatricians are friendly and approachable! They'll be happy to answer your questions about the specialty. You may be able to shadow them at work, or get involved in a project, such as a clinical audit or research. To find a mentor, speak with the College Tutor at your local hospital's paediatric department.
- Incorporate a paediatric aspect into your post. For example, if you're working in emergency medicine, you could do an audit on children's care.
- Apply for one of our [Foundation Doctor prizes](#). Prize winners get a free day at our annual conference
- This year our conference goes online, with informative lectures from prestigious speakers - [find out more and register for the free events](#). You can also explore our [ePoster gallery](#).
- Find [paediatric courses](#) - such as in life support or safeguarding. They're an insight into the specialty, and great for your application.

Prepare for your application to specialty training

You can apply in November to December, traditionally of your F2 year, unless you choose to take time out before starting your specialty training. Successful candidates start paediatric training after completing their foundation years, usually from August or September the following year.

Our [guidance for applying to Level 1](#) paediatric specialty training gives a detailed overview of the application and interview process - do take time to read it carefully before applying.

Make sure you carefully consider the selected portfolio (maximum of 12 sides of A4) that you'll be bringing to your interview. Along with the Reflective Practice station, you have a great opportunity to prepare both stations in advance and use this to your advantage. Be creative and think carefully about the role of a paediatrician and the skills it takes to do the role well.

Consider taking time out before specialty training

Some doctors take 12 months between completing foundation training and entering their chosen specialty training. Often, this involves working internationally.

If you decide to do this, it won't negatively impact your application. In fact, the unique experiences and skills can be helpful, and you can use your experience to reduce your training time in Level 1 paediatrics - go to the Level 1 recruitment pages for [more information on fast-tracking](#).

Explore options in academic training

Academic Clinical Fellowships (ACF) in paediatrics are available across the UK. These are three-year posts, and equivalent to level 1 paediatrics. Trainees spend 75% of their time doing clinical work and 25% of time doing research or educational training.

The normal end point of ACF training is a higher degree, such as a PhD. Academic trainees can then continue in academic training or choose to complete clinical training in paediatrics.

Recruitment to ACF positions is via the National Institute for Health Research. The RCPCH is not directly involved with the recruitment to these posts.

[Find out more about academic training](#)

Become an RCPCH member (it's free!)

Finally - why not [join the College](#)? Foundation doctor membership is free of charge, and you'll enjoy access to a wide range of specialist information, UKAPS eBulletins and discounts such as our events and scientific journal.

Contact us

[Contact us on this form](#)