

Frequently asked questions on paediatric rheumatology training:

1. If I want to be a tertiary specialist in Paediatric Rheumatology, do I have to apply for National Grid training?

- UK trainees need to apply for a Grid post under national competition.
- Overseas trainees need to prove equivalent training for entry on to specialist register via article 14 at PMETB.

2. What do I need to do if I am interested in Paediatric Rheumatology, either at tertiary level or as an interest with general paediatrics?

- Fill in an 'Expression of Interest' form available on the Trainees area of BSPAR website (www.bspar.org.uk), and send it to the Chair of CSAC (currently Prof. Helen Foster; h.e.foster@ncl.ac.uk) or training advisors (Dr Liza McCann; liza.mccann@rlc.nhs.uk or Dr A. Ramanan; Athimalaipet.Ramanan@UHBristol.nhs.uk).
- Direct any questions regarding grid training to the CSAC Chair or training advisors.
- Discuss your career intentions in a timely manner with CSAC rheumatology Training Advisors or the CSAC Chair. This can be done at annual trainee meetings, or alternatively, the trainee can contact advisors by e-mail or telephone for advice at other times. Trainees are strongly encouraged to discuss their career intentions with CSAC Training Advisors or the CSAC Chair before submitting an application for national grid training.
- Contact trainee representatives: currently Akhila Kavirayani (akhilamk@yahoo.com) and Flora McErlane (flora.mcerlane@rlc.nhs.uk or flora@littler3.freemove.co.uk) so that you will be included in all e-mails regarding training and trainee meetings. Whilst Flora is on maternity leave, Clare Pain will be covering as CSAC trainee representative and can be contacted on clarepain@doctors.org.uk or clare.pain@rlc.nhs.uk.

3. How long is the training for tertiary level paediatric rheumatology?

- Training is a minimum of 2 years full time equivalent.
- At present, completion of training is based on local RITA assessments and completion of the paediatric rheumatology syllabus. However, this is in the process of changing to competency-based assessment, thus length of training for some candidates may vary.

4. Where are the training centres for paediatric rheumatology in the UK?

- Currently there could be opportunities for training (including National Grid training) at the following UK centres: Birmingham, Bristol, Glasgow, Great Ormond Street, Leeds, Liverpool, Newcastle, and Nottingham.
- Paediatric rheumatology experience can also be obtained at other centres (eg. Manchester, Oxford, Sheffield, East Anglia, Belfast,

Cardiff) but at present, these centres are not accredited for Grid training.

- There are paediatric rheumatology clinics in every region; contact your paediatric rheumatology training advisors for more information.

5. Do I have to move centres in order to train in paediatric rheumatology under the national grid?

- Yes. You will have to work in 2 centres in order to have balanced opportunities for adequate training of paediatric rheumatology.
- At time of application to the national grid, we will not be able to inform you of your placements / timetable from start of national grid training until completion of CCT. This will be planned based on individual needs. There are no fixed rotations. See selection process below.
- If for personal reasons you are unable to move across the UK, an attempt will be made to allow training in 2 centres that are commutable, for example Liverpool / Manchester or Nottingham / Birmingham.
- Some trainees have experienced problems with CRB checks being complete when moving from one deanery to another as part of a national grid rotation. Trainees are advised to check that CRB certificates are up to date.

6. When in my career should I apply for national grid training?

- Trainees must have at least 2 years whole time equivalent training left before CCT at time of start of GRID training, although ideally, they should have 3 years left prior to CCT. In some cases, previous training experiences can be accredited retrospectively. For advice on specific circumstances, discuss with CSAC Chair or Training Advisors.
- Refer to the *Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) The National Training Number Grid Scheme: User's Guide* (available on BSPAR trainees' page link).

7. What is the grid application process?

- Refer to the RCPCH user's guide for national grid training and the timetable for grid applications; both available via links on the BSPAR website trainee page.
- You can apply for the National Grid when you will have completed 24 months of core training by August of the year of application (allowance will be made for those who started in September with conversion to MMC).
- You must be able to complete the required National Grid training by the time of your agreed CCT date. In practice, this means you must have 2 years left of your training at time of starting the National Grid.

- You do not need any prior paediatric rheumatology training to apply to the National Grid. You do however need to demonstrate that you have shown an interest in the speciality.
- Posts once offered cannot usually be deferred (unless for a research OoPE upon agreement) and candidates must be prepared to take up their post within a year of the grid post commencing.

8. What is the GRID selection process?

- Your application form and interview will be scored according to competence and you will be ranked consequently against other applicants. Provided that all candidates are above the standard needed to be accepted for grid training, this ranking will be sent to the Deanery responsible for grid applications.
- The Deanery will decide which candidate goes to which centre according to ranking and choices that you have made (see below).
- To increase your chance of being allocated a GRID centre in any given year, it is best to offer as many options as possible for the centres available. If you only offer acceptance of one or two centres, and there are 2 candidates ranked above you, you will not be allocated a centre on that given year.
- You will be able to receive feedback from the CSAC chair or Training Advisors after the process in order to determine if you reached the standard for GRID application.
- If a candidate refuses a post after being offered, they may have prevented another trainee going to their place of preference. This practice is strongly discouraged.

9. What choice will I have with national grid centres at application to the GRID scheme for paediatric rheumatology?

- At time of advert of the National Grid in Paediatric Rheumatology, a list of possible centres will be publicised. For up to date information prior to interview regarding centres available, contact the CSAC chair or Training Advisors.
- At time of interview, you will be expected to rank your preferences for centre.
- If there is a centre that you are not prepared to go to, you must not put it as one of your choices.
- Trainees will be ranked during the national grid process (as above), provided that they are felt suitable for national grid training. The deanery matches ranked candidates according to their preferred choices. The trainee that is ranked the highest will get his / her first choice of centre and so on, until all candidates who are above the required level are allocated a post.

10. What choice will I have with centres for my second year of GRID training?

- A decision regarding training in your second or third year will be made by the CSAC Chair and Training Advisors on an individual basis depending on availability of centres and individual needs. You can discuss this with the Training Advisors during annual 'MAVIS' assessments or informally at other times.
- Due to the unpredictable nature of posts being available, it is not always possible to determine a long time in advance where you will be moving to. Priority is always given to a trainee in post in any given centre. Thus, if training is prolonged beyond a year in a centre (due to maternity or requirement for further training to achieve competencies or clinical research for example), a placement will not be available for another trainee at this centre. This is necessary as centres are accredited for a certain number of grid trainees and this balance needs to be maintained to ensure that training is not compromised.
- Moves to other centres for educational needs must be agreed by local training advisors.

11. How will I know where consultant posts will be available?

- Unfortunately, although there are many areas that need more tertiary level consultant paediatric rheumatologists, there is no absolute guarantee of a job at the exact time of completion of training.
- Some trainees have worked abroad (eg. Canada) or carried out some research pending job adverts. Other trainees have chosen to return to general paediatrics for their final year of training in order to keep options open, allowing them to apply for a general paediatric job with an interest, as well as for a tertiary level paediatric rheumatology job. All trainees are advised to keep up their general paediatric skills (on call) throughout their training.

12. If I do not want to apply for the national grid, can I still do paediatric rheumatology?

- You can still practice paediatric rheumatology as an interest in the context of a general paediatric job. There is no formal training syllabus for this, but you need the competencies for the specific job that you are going to undertake.
- Providing paediatric rheumatology care in the future across the UK will rely on managed care networks, and therefore there will be opportunities for tertiary specialists and general paediatricians with an interest to work together across a region.
- In order to increase chances of getting a consultant job that allows you to have responsibility for rheumatology, you are advised to keep other interests that will complement rheumatology; for example, care of other chronic conditions, adolescent care, immuno-suppression, disability etc. For more information, contact the Chair of CSAC / Training Advisors / Trainee Representatives.

13. Can I do research as part of my training?

- A full time research post is not essential, but is often encouraged. Applications can be made to local deaneries for OOPE (out of programme experience) for research. Opportunities for this vary in different deaneries, and candidates should approach their Regional Academic Paediatric Lead and Regional Advisor.
- There are opportunities for 1 year funding for those wishing to pursue an academic career (MD or PHD) through the ARC Barbara Ansell Fellowships. Candidates wishing to do this are advised to apply early in their training, since applications close to time of CCT are usually refused. Application is not allowed for those post-CCT.
- For more information on research opportunities, talk to Helen Foster (Clinical Senior Lecturer in Rheumatology, Newcastle and CSAC Training advisor - academic lead) or Lucy Wedderburn (Senior Lecturer Paediatric and Adolescent Rheumatology, London).

14. How will I be assessed?

- Current training assessment depends on training reports / RITA assessments, completion of a reflective portfolio and documentation of rheumatology activity within the context of a log book based on the rheumatology syllabus. The syllabus and log book template are available on the BSPAR website and should be kept prospectively from the time of interest in paediatric rheumatology.
- At the present time, work is being done on establishing training methods based on achievement of competencies. There will be a framework for training and learning including a comprehensive set of learning objectives and assessment of competencies required.
- The tools for assessing competencies are as yet undecided, but are likely to be standardised for all specialities in paediatrics. There are most likely to be multiple methods of assessment including portfolio (evidence of reflective learning rather than number based), multiple source feedback (360° appraisal), observation of clinical practice, and possibly knowledge testing.
- Until competency based assessment is finalised, all trainees should keep a reflective portfolio and log book.

15. How do I find the time to keep my log book up to date?

- Keeping a log book and reflective portfolio is difficult within a busy job, but has to be done. The following tips have been suggested by trainees:
- Adapt it for yourself – make it useful.
- Option of using alternative template – look at other trainees log books for ideas.

- Ensure entries are done in such a way so that your practice is reflective.
- Keep it up to date prospectively by allocating a period of time that suits you.
- You could ask your educational supervisor to check your portfolio on a 3 monthly basis and give feedback.
- Ensure that you keep your log book on a pass-word protected computer and back it up.
- When transporting your log book / portfolio in a file or on memory pen / disc, ensure that it does not include any identifiable patient details (name / hospital number) in order to ensure patient confidentiality.
- Different trainees adapt different ways of maintaining log books including documenting notes in a PDA, asking the secretary for copies of their clinic letters so that you can use them to enter details in their log book, keeping clinic lists with learning notes on them to jog your memory about patients, or noting details as you dictate your clinic letters.

16. How do I keep up to date in paediatric rheumatology?

- All trainees should endeavour to attend BSPAR meetings. The spring meeting (1 day) is held within the RCPCH meeting at York. The autumn BSPAR meeting (2 days) rotates each year to different paediatric rheumatology centres in the UK. The BSPAR research meeting (1 day) rotates to different paediatric rheumatology centres once yearly around July. Trainees are welcome at all meetings and presentations are encouraged. Check BSPAR website for dates and venues.
- A Paediatric Rheumatology Trainees meeting rotates to different venues around the UK, organised by an individual trainee. This 2 day meeting takes place in November / December each year and is generally found to be very beneficial to trainees. All trainees are encouraged to attend. In addition to its educational value, it allows trainees to socialise and get to know each other. Informal 'MAVIS' assessments by Training Advisors take place at the same time as this meeting, providing an opportunity for trainees to ask advice from the CSAC chair and training advisors regarding their individual training needs.
- Trainees are welcome to join the Paediatric Rheumatology European Society (PreS). In addition to an annual meeting, there is a Young Investigators Meeting that is free of charge before the main meeting each year. This provides a good opportunity to present work or learn about research projects ongoing throughout Europe. Check the PreS website available by link from the BSPAR website.
- Trainees are welcome to join the Pediatric (North American) Rheumatology Bulletin Board by registering at www.prheum.com. This provides access to worldwide communications within the paediatric rheumatology group,

including discussion of difficult cases. Placements or secondments are often advertised through this network. It is free to join.

- Trainees can have free access to the pediatric rheumatology online journal by logging at www.pedrheumonlinejournal.org
- Trainees are advised to look at the following journals: Rheumatology (Oxford journals); Journal of Rheumatology; Annals of Rheumatic Diseases, Arthritis & Rheumatism.