Guidance for Applicants to the Paediatric Cardiology ST4 Specialty Training programme in 2026

Introduction

NHS England - Wessex Recruitment Team (formally Wessex Deanery) is coordinating national recruitment to Paediatric Cardiology ST4 posts for commencing from August 2026. National Recruitment will cover all Paediatric Cardiology ST4 posts in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The process will incorporate recruitment into Specialty Training (NTN) posts at ST4 level.

Please read this guide alongside the '**Applicant guidance**' which is available on the Specialty Training website: https://medical.hee.nhs.uk/medical-training-recruitment/medical-specialty-training

Key Dates

Date	Event	Notes
Wednesday 19 November 2025	Advertisements Published	*Adverts will be placed on the NHSE-Wessex website*
10.00 Thursday 20 November 2025	Applications open	*Applications will only be accepted by completion of the application form via the Oriel recruitment system https://www.oriel.nhs.uk/Web*
16:00 Thursday 11 December 2025	Applications close	*Applications will close promptly at 16:00 noon. Late applications will not be considered*
Until Friday 2 January 2026	Longlisting	*All applications will be assessed for eligibility against the person specification. Applicants may be contacted at any time to clarify information conveyed in the application*
Monday 12 January – Friday 6 February 2026	Shortlisting	*All applications will be scored by three Paediatric Cardiologists to set criteria*
By Friday 20 February 2026	Shortlisting score and outcome released	*Applicants will receive notification of the outcome of the shortlisting process.*
By Friday 27 February 2026	Invitation to Interview	*Successful applicants will be asked to book an interview slot*
Thursday 12 and Friday 13 March 2026	Interviews	*Interviews will be held virtually*
By 17.00 Tuesday 14 April 2026	Initial offers released	*Offers will be released through the Oriel recruitment system*
13:00 Wednesday 22 April 2026	Holding deadline	*Successful applicants may accept, decline, or hold an offer. A decision must be made within 48 hours of the offer being made. All held offers must be accepted or rejected by this deadline*

Contacting the Recruitment Team

All queries should be directed to the Recruitment Team via email:

England.PaediatricCardiologyRecruitment.WX@nhs.net

- The Team will endeavour to respond to your queries within 48 hours.
- The office opening hours are **09:00 – 17:00, Monday – Friday**

Any applicant who wishes to submit an appeal or complaint in respect of their application throughout the recruitment process is advised to contact the Recruitment Team via the email address above.

The MDRS Complaints Policy should be adhered to. Please refer to the Medical Specialty Training website: https://medical.hee.nhs.uk/medical-training-recruitment/medical-specialty-training/complaints/mdrs-complaints-policy

Appeals must clearly identify which of the above grounds applies and provide evidence supporting the claim.

The appeal will be reviewed by a panel independent of the original decision-makers. The panel's decision will be final. Please note that after offers for national training numbers have been made, no appeals can be heard.

It is kindly requested that applicants do not directly contact SAC members or Consultants formally involved in national recruitment after the recruitment process commences on 19/11/2025.

Raising concerns about the recruitment process that fall outside of the national complaints policy

Should you wish to raise any concerns about the recruitment process that falls outside of the national complaints policy e.g. fraudulent submissions by other applicants please contact england.mdrs.confidential@nhs.net where you can raise such concerns.

This email address should not be used in order to raise a complaint which bypasses the process detailed in the national complaints policy.

Applying for a Vacancy

Applications for all posts in Paediatric Cardiology will be completed via the Oriel recruitment portal only. The portal can be accessed at https://www.oriel.nhs.uk/Web

The system requires pre-registration which can be completed immediately.

Fitness to Practice

Any applicants who answer yes to **any** of the fitness to practise declarations on their application form must complete a form (which can be downloaded from the resource bank on the specialty training website) and submit it to: England.PaediatricCardiologyRecruitment.WX@nhs.net marked **"Fitness to Practice – Confidential"**

Support for Reapplication to a Specialty Training Programme

Applicants applying to a Specialty Training Programme who have previously been removed or resigned from **any** specialty training programme or core programme, even if this is different to the specialty they are applying to enter will need the support of their previous Head of School/Programme Director **and** Postgraduate Dean in order to apply.

Applicants must ask their previous LETB/Deanery, Head of School/Programme Director and Postgraduate Dean to complete a '*2026 Support for Reapplication to a Specialty Training Programme'* form, available to download from the Medical Specialty Recruitment website: https://medical.hee.nhs.uk/medical-training-recruitment/medical-specialty-training/documents-to-support-your-application

Applications will not be considered without a fully completed and signed form, which must be submitted at the time of application. Applicants requiring the support of a previous Head of School/Programme Director and Postgraduate Dean are advised to apply for this early and have it uploaded with their application.

If you are applying from a training programme, it will be assumed that you have had support to reapply previously and you will not need to submit a form.

Applying to continue specialty training in the same specialty in another region

Applicants who are already in a Paediatric Cardiology training programme and are applying to Paediatric Cardiology in another area/region must declare this on their application form.

At the time of application, a '*Support for reapplication of specialty training in a different region'* form must be completed, approved by the current Training Programme Director/Head of School and submitted at the time of application to England.PaediatricCardiologyRecruitment.WX@nhs.net
Failure to provide this information will result in the application being rejected.

Applicants considering applying for the same specialty training programme in another region should communicate this to their existing Training Programme Director/Head of School at the earliest opportunity. Specialty training vacancies available for recruitment are confirmed well in advance of interviews/selection centres taking place. Early conversations with existing training programmes could allow for provisional plans to be put in place to replace the trainee, should they be successful in their application.

Longlisting

At this stage of recruitment, the content of the application will not be assessed by any criteria other than the Specialty Training person specification. The applications of candidates who do not satisfy the essential criteria for the posts being advertised will be removed. This process will be completed centrally by NHS England - Wessex Recruitment Team.

Queries at the longlisting stage will be limited to clarification of information provided on the application form. Applicants may be contacted prior to the closing date for application if there is a query concerning the information submitted. In this case clarification or additional information must be provided within the timeframe set in the email request.

Core Competences – Evidence of experience must be provided in order to satisfy the essential criteria in the person specification.

Applicants from a Paediatrics route:

For applicants who are currently in or who have undertaken a UK Training Programme:

- Applicants must have completed ST3 training in Paediatrics as evidenced by ARCP Outcome 1 and achieved all parts of MRCPCH. For trainees on the Progress+ curriculum, completion of ST3 evidenced by ARCP outcome 1 meets this requirement.

For applicants who have not completed a UK training programme (or not currently in one):

- Applicants must provide an Alternative Certificate with their application form (Certificate of Completion of Progress+ Paediatric ST3 Capabilities: 2025 version) which is available to download from our website.

For applicants who are on the GMC Specialist Register for Paediatrics:

- Applicants must provide an Alternative Certificate with their application form (Certificate of Completion of Progress+ Paediatric ST3 Capabilities: 2025 version) which is available to download from our website.

Applicants from a Physician route please refer to the person specification.

Please ensure that you document MRCPCH, MRCP and equivalence on your application form.

Immigration

With effect from 6 October 2019, all medical practitioners are on the Shortage Occupation List. This means that with the exception of all applicants to Public Health, all specialty recruitment applicants will be exempt from the Resident Labour Market Test; there will be no restriction on their appointment.

Shortlisting

Each application will be scored by three Consultants independently. The scores will then be subjected to scrutiny by the recruitment team for evidence of anomalies. The process of scrutiny has been deployed for some years by this specialty and is confidently felt to be highly valid.

The score assigned will be used to produce a shortlist rank. At this point the shortlist score and outcome of shortlisting will be released to applicants, along with the cut off score for shortlisting to be invited to interview. Applicants will either have a status of 'Interview' or 'Shortlist unsuccessful'. There will be a short window for applicants to appeal their shortlisting score. The Clinical Recruitment Leads will review these appeals. It is possible that a shortlisting score could be adjusted down as well as up following the submission of an appeal. Following the appeal process the adjusted shortlisting score will be final.
Interview slots and booking will not be released until after the appeals process has concluded.

Preferences

Applicants will be asked to express preferences for training centres through the Oriel recruitment system around the time of interviews. These preferences will be used in conjunction with the ranking derived from interviews at the assessment centre to determine the offers of training posts. The number of posts available in each training centre will be published alongside the preference list. It is important that applicants follow the online guidance pertaining to equally weighted preferences, and those training centres at which they would not consider accepting a post.

Interviews

All interviews will be conducted online. Applicants should not use headphones during their online interview.

The interviews will take place on Thursday 12 and Friday 13 March 2026. Applicants invited to attend an interview will be able to book a convenient slot.

The ST4 online interview will consist of:

- Suitability for appointment based on a series of structured questions put to all candidates, which may take into account career history and training, personal qualities and dealing with specific challenges seen in the specialty.
- Assessment of clinical acumen and experience in Paediatric Cardiology based on clinical scenarios, which will consist of a stem question and further subsidiary questions.

Please note the specific areas mentioned above may change between applications opening and the actual interview. However, full details will be given to applicants who are invited to attend an interview.

The four nation Postgraduate National Recruitment Programme Board has issued a position statement on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) during interviews for postgraduate training programmes, including medical specialty training.

Please refer to the position statement for more details: https://medical.hee.nhs.uk/medical-training-recruitment/medical-specialty-training/position-statement-on-the-use-of-artificial-intelligence-%28ai%29-during-interviews

Lay Representatives

There will be Lay Representatives who will be observing interviews to ensure fair process is being followed. They will be asked to have their camera turned off and microphone muted for the duration of the interview. The administrator will let you know during the document checking process if a Lay Representative will be present for your interview.

Outcome of Assessment Centre – Offer of a Training Post

Offers will be made by NHS England - Wessex for all posts across the United Kingdom. The ranking of candidates determined by interview at the assessment centre will be tabled against preferences for posts, to determine offers.

Offers will be made through the Oriel Recruitment system, with a response required via the Oriel portal. Candidates will have 48 hours to accept, hold, or decline an offer. Failure to respond will result in an offer being withdrawn and the post being offered to another candidate.

Offers may be "held" until **13.00 Wednesday 22 April 2026**, by which time they must be acted upon.

Further Information

For any further information or queries please refer to the Paediatric Cardiology Recruitment website or contact the Recruitment Team at England.PaediatricCardiologyRecruitment.WX@nhs.net

The person specification for Paediatric Cardiology ST4 is available from the Specialty Training website:

https://medical.hee.nhs.uk/medical-training-recruitment/medical-specialty-training/person-specifications/person-specifications-2026/paediatric-cardiology-st4-2026

The JRCPTB curriculum for Paediatric Cardiology training is available at:

https://www.thefederation.uk/training/specialties/paediatric-cardiology