

## A Week in the Life...

**Consultant Plastic Surgeon Mr Paul Banwell has a demanding career running an award-winning NHS skin cancer department, a busy private practice, launching a cutting-edge skincare website, all at the same time as trying to maintain that elusive work life balance. Here's a typical week in his life...**

### Monday

"Always a busy start to the week, I usually get up about six o'clock on a Monday and take my kids to school. I then head off to the Queen Victoria Hospital, East Grinstead, where I do a ward round and then attend a consultants' meeting with my colleagues."

The hospital is the birthplace of plastic surgery in the UK – it was where Sir Archibald McIndoe treated badly burned or injured aircrew during the war. This was when the innovation and modern development of reconstructive plastic surgery first took place.

Plastic surgery now encompasses a huge range of clinical practice including skin cancer, breast reconstruction, cleft lip and palate, upper and lower limb trauma, hand surgery, head and neck cancer reconstruction, burns and, of course, cosmetic surgery. Mr

Banwell has a major involvement in skin cancer.

"In actual fact I am the Director of the Melanoma and Skin Cancer Unit (MASCUC) at the hospital which treats thousands of skin cancer patients every year. It was in Australia that I was exposed firsthand to the immense problem of skin cancer but interestingly the problem is just as big over here! I am also actively involved on a national level in ensuring that standards in skin cancer care are maintained."

When asked about other aspects of his work with the NHS, Mr Banwell also commented on the issue of rationing within the NHS: "For many years we have been performing breast reductions, tummy tucks and correction of breast asymmetry but unfortunately funding for these procedures is being withdrawn and many patients

are now having to seek private consultations instead."

Continuing on with his day: "After my meeting, I then hold a busy clinic with my team which lasts about three hours and we will see over 30 patients with a variety of conditions.

"Eating on the run, I might fit in a few short meetings or catch up on admin before the afternoon multidisciplinary skin cancer team meeting for Kent where all the skin cancer experts – from plastic surgeons, oncologists, dermatologists, radiologists and skin cancer care nurses – discuss the most complex cases in the region (usually 40 to 50 patients each week).

"In the evenings I usually hold a private evening clinic until going home to eat and catch up on the latest episode of *Spooks!* I then have to work through the 200 plus emails I receive in a day before going to sleep at midnight."



### Tuesday

"Tuesday is an early start as I get up about 5.30 to go to the gym. My guilty pleasure is a ten minute cappuccino break after training before I head down to the South Coast for the day.

"Some of my time is spent doing research. I am lucky to be a visiting Professor at Harvard University and have been doing research for years. My main interest now is in skin cancer, anti-ageing and skincare."

## wednesday

"Wednesdays are my main private practice day but before I start I take the kids to school.

"This is a hugely busy day and is very enjoyable as I get to meet a wide variety of people. Every week I will see patients hoping to have cosmetic surgery and we take the time to explore their wishes and expectations. This will vary from breast augmentation to labiaplasty, as well as non-surgical treatments such as chemical peels, dermaroller, fillers and Botox.

"Interspersed are patients referred up from local GPs with skin cancer. If I am lucky, my practice manager, Janine, or my PA, Kim, will give me half an hour lunch break – pure luxury!

"Once a month we have a practice meeting and catch up but the afternoon is protected for personal time and I watch my children's sports matches at school."

## Thursday

"After another early start at the gym I go down to the South Coast again. The drive allows me to catch up on phone calls too. In the morning, I have a general plastic surgery clinic and then I am operating again in the afternoon.

"I must point out that I am fortunate to have an excellent team of secretaries, both NHS

### The work/life balance

"I thrive on work, but I think it is also vital to have a good work/life balance. I still believe that we work too hard in the UK as doctors compared to say our colleagues in Australia but perhaps this will change some day. The most important thing is that we remain happy and healthy!"



“ I am fortunate to have an excellent team of secretaries to help manage me ”

and private, to help manage my working week. It can be a massive juggling act and often we need to change things last minute if an emergency crops up. They are highly efficient so I'm just told what to do, where to go and at what time. I hate to be late for anything."

## Friday

"I look forward to Fridays as not only is it the end of the week but I operate all day on the NHS and see lots of complex skin cancer cases where the cancer might have spread to the lymph nodes.

"Every Friday evening I am the on-call consultant for the NHS hospital. This is usually not too onerous but it does limit my social life as I am not allowed to have a glass of sauvignon (Cloudy Bay is my favourite)."

## saturday

"On Saturdays I do more cosmetic surgery or I hold a private clinic performing cosmetic procedures. I like to unwind in the afternoon by watching my son and daughter play sport and then relax with friends and family.

"I am in the process of updating my own website ([www.paulebanwell.com](http://www.paulebanwell.com)) and

also launching a new skincare website ([www.skininstituteuk.com](http://www.skininstituteuk.com)) so there has been lots of work to do and throughout the week and at the weekends I have been fitting in meetings with my web designer, Blow Media, either face to face or by Skype.

"I get invited to lecture abroad regularly and I also run a chemical peel course for doctors – all these things have to be squeezed in somehow too!"

## sunday

"On Sunday I do ward rounds and visit all my patients to check on their progress. Then I spend time with my family. Running, gardening, playing with the chickens and my children are all par for the course."

### CS&AG

For more information on Mr Paul Banwell and all the procedures he performs, visit [www.paulebanwell.com](http://www.paulebanwell.com) or call 0845 2600 261

He has also just launched his new website, The Skin Institute ([www.skininstituteuk.com](http://www.skininstituteuk.com)). The Skin Institute provides a full range of non-surgical solutions including exclusive Australian brand, Rationale Skin Care