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# Cardiothoracic surgeon

Cardiothoracic surgeons specialise in operating on the heart, lungs and other thoracic (chest) organs.

They also diagnose and treat diseases of these organs.

picture of a surgeon

# Life as a cardiothoracic surgeon

You'll see the immediate and life-changing results of your work, but your role will be hugely demanding. Diseases that occur in a person's chest are common killers and you'll be managing life and death scenarios every day.

Cardiothoracic surgery is a relatively young speciality that has experienced rapid growth through the introduction of new technologies.

Before surgery you'll meet with patients and their families to discuss and explain procedures and offer reassurance. Being crystal clear, empathetic and warm is vital to the success of your role.

The main areas of cardiothoracic surgery are:

- cardiac surgery
- thoracic surgery
- congenital cardiac surgery
- heart and lung transplant surgery

Monitoring patients in intensive care [1] after surgery is a vital part of your work. Although cardiothoracic surgery is very safe, complications can occur and you'll need to be prepared to deal with a host of conditions including arrhythmias (heart-beat irregularity), post-operative bleeding, stroke [2], pleural effusion (fluid around the lungs), wound infection or thrombosis [3].

As well as performing surgery, you'll be involved in the treatment and management of many different conditions within your speciality. You'll need to attend outpatient clinics, multidisciplinary team meetings and ward rounds.

#### How much can I earn?

You'll first earn a salary when you start your <u>foundation training</u> [4] after medical school. Find out details of current salary ranges for foundation and specialty training, <u>SAS doctors</u> [5] and consultants on the 'Pay for doctors' [6] 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
- a high degree of manual dexterity
- superb hand-eye co-ordination, excellent vision, and visuospatial awareness
- physical stamina to cope with the demands of surgery

# **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.

"I had some great mentors who gave me the opportunity to operate on patients with supervision, and to look after very sick patients on the intensive care [1] unit after cardiac surgery."

#### Read Omar's story [7].

# What are my chances of starting a career as a cardiothoracic surgeon?

There are currently approximately 400 cardiothoracic surgeons working in the NHS in England. In 2020, there were between 5.86 and 9.92 applications for every specialty training place.

# How to become a cardiothoracic surgeon

After medical school, you'll join the paid two-year <u>foundation programme</u> [8] where you'll work in six placements in different settings.

After your foundation programme, you can apply for paid <u>specialty training</u> [9] to become a cardiothoracic surgeon, which will take a minimum of six or seven 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 a cardiothoracic surgeon can take you

Working as a cardiothoracic surgeon, you'll have the opportunity to specialise in cardiac, thoracic or congenital surgery.

As a cardiac surgeon, you'll perform various kinds of surgery including:

- coronary artery bypass surgery restoring blood flow to the heart by bypassing the narrowed coronary arteries
- heart valve surgery repairing and replacing narrowed or leaking heart valves
- aortic surgery replacing an enlarged or damaged blood vessel leaving the heart

If you choose to specialise as a thoracic surgeon, you'll perform a wide range of surgery including:

- surgery for lung cancer, tumours and cysts
- surgery on collapsed or infected lungs
- keyhole thoracic surgery (video assisted thoracoscopic surgery (VATS))
- chest-wall deformities (pectus surgery)

If you choose congenital cardiac surgery, you'll treat babies and children with heart diseases that have been present from birth. These conditions include:

- septal defects (a hole between two of the heart's chambers)
- aortic and pulmonary valve stenosis (where the valve is narrower than normal)
- transposition of the arteries

You could specialise or conduct research, teach medical students or postgraduate students in training and get involved in research at universities, the NHS or private sector.

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#### o Consultant Cardiothoracic Radiologist

Stoke on Trent, ST4 6QG

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospital of North Midlands NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Cardiothoracic Radiologist job (opens in a new window) [10]

#### Consultant in Cardiothoracic Histopathology

Cambridge Bio Medical Campus, CB2 0AY

Salary:

£109725.00 to £145478.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Royal Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

<u>Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Cardiothoracic Histopathology job (opens in a new window)</u> [11]

#### Specialist Pharmacist- Adult Cardiothoracic

317 01 Freeman Hospital, NE7 7DN

Salary:

£47810.00 to £54710.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialist Pharmacist- Adult Cardiothoracic job (opens in a new window) [12]

#### Consultant in Cardiothoracic Anaesthesia

Oxford, OX3 9DU

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Cardiothoracic Anaesthesia job (opens in a new window) [13]

#### Clinical Lead for Cardiothoracic Theatres

Cardiff, CF14 4XW

Salary:

£48527.00 to £55532.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Clinical Lead for Cardiothoracic Theatres job (opens in a new window) [14]

#### Senior Cardiothoracic Surgical Care Practitioner

Basildon, SS16 5NL

Salary:

£55690.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Senior Cardiothoracic Surgical Care Practitioner job (opens in a new window) [15]

#### Senior Clinical Fellow in Cardiothoracic Anaesthesia

Uxbridge, UB9 6JH

Salary:

£70425.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Senior Clinical Fellow in Cardiothoracic Anaesthesia job (opens in a new window) [16]

#### OMFS Consultant Surgeon

Plymouth, PL6 8DH

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for OMFS Consultant Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [17]

#### Consultant ENT Surgeon

Luton, LU4 0DZ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Bedfordshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant ENT Surgeon job (opens in a new window)

[18]

#### Consultant Hand Surgeon

Doncaster, DN40TG

Barnsley, S71 1TH

Sheffield, S105UB

Sheffield, S80YH

Sheffield, S61GA

Rotherham, S639EH

Barnsley, S728SU

Sheffield, S56AZ

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Locum

Employer:

HealthHarmonie

#### Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon

Shepton Mallet, BA4 4LP

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

**Practice Plus Group** 

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [20]

#### Consultant Prostate Surgeon

Southampton, SO16 6YD

Salary:

£109725.00 to £145478.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospital Southampton NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Prostate Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [21]

#### Consultant Cardiac Surgeon

Oxford, OX3 9DU

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Cardiac Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [22]

#### Consultant Breast Surgeon

Barnsley, S75 2EP

Salary:

£109725.00 to £145478.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Breast Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [23]

#### Consultant Vascular Surgeon

London, SE5 9RS

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Vascular Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [24]

#### Consultant Spinal Surgeon

Sheffield, S11 8UX

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

One Health Group

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Spinal Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [25]

#### Consultant Cleft Surgeon

London, SE1 7EH

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Cleft Surgeon job (opens in a new window)

#### ToP Surgeon (Rotherham)

Rotherham, S60 1FL

Salary:

£78488.17 to £109691.14

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

**MSI** Reproductive Choices

Apply now on NHS Jobs for ToP Surgeon (Rotherham) job (opens in a new window) [27]

#### Consultant Cardiac Surgeon

Brighton, BN2 5BE

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust (279)

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Cardiac Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [28]

#### • Consultant in Cardiac Surgery and Cardiothoracic Transplantation

Manchester, M23 9LT

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Cardiac Surgery and Cardiothoracic

Transplantation job (opens in a new window) [29]

#### Locum Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgeon

Tooting, SW17 0QT

Salary:

£109725.00 to £145478.00

Type:

Locum

Employer:

St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [30]

#### Consultant Oncoplastic Breast Surgeon

Worthing, BN11 2DH

Salary:

£109725.00 to £145478.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust (279)

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Oncoplastic Breast Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [31]

#### Consultant Colorectal & General Surgeon

Watford, WD18 0HB

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Colorectal & General Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [32]

#### Locum Consultant Urological Surgeon

Northampton, NN1 5BD

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Northampton General Hospital

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Urological Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [33]

#### Consultant Colorectal & General Surgeon

Basildon/Broomfield/Southend, CM1 7ET

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Colorectal & General Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [34]

#### Locum Consultant Breast Surgeon

Bristol, BS10 5NB

Salary:

£109725.00 to £145478.00

Type:

Locum

Employer:

North Bristol NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Breast Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [35]

#### Locum Consultant Vascular Surgeon

Sheffield, S5 7AU

Salary:

£109725.00 to £145478.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Vascular Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [36]

#### Consultant Oncoplastic Breast Surgeon

Wolverhampton, WV10 0QP

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Oncoplastic Breast Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [37]

#### Consultant Oncoplastic Breast Surgeon

Brighton, BN1 6AG

Salary:

£109725.00 to £145478.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust (279)

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Oncoplastic Breast Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [38]

#### Consultant Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon

Lancaster, LA14RP

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [39]

#### Consultant Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon

Lancaster, LA14RP

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [39]

# CONSULTANT in Adult Cardiothoracic & ICM - interest in (SARF) & ECMO

Leicester, LE3 9QP

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for CONSULTANT in Adult Cardiothoracic & ICM - interest in (SARF) & ECMO job (opens in a new window) [40]

### Consultant General Surgeon (Lower GI)

Sheffield, S11 8UX

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

One Health Group

<u>Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant General Surgeon ( Lower GI ) job (opens in a new window) [41]</u>

#### Consultant Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon

Salisbury, SP2 8BJ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [42]

#### Consultant General Surgeon (Upper GI)

Sheffield, S11 8UX

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

One Health Group

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant General Surgeon ( Upper GI ) job (opens in a new window) [43]

# Treatment Doctor / Surgeon - 7.5 hours

Reading, RG1 4QA

Salary:

£101000.00 to £151000.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS)

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Treatment Doctor / Surgeon - 7.5 hours job (opens in a new window) [44]

#### Consultant Burns and Plastic Surgeon

Birmingham, B46NH

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Burns and Plastic Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [45]

#### Consultant Colorectal and General Surgeon

Dorchester, DT1 2JY

Salary:

£109725.00 to £145478.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

**Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust** 

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Colorectal and General Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [46]

#### Fellowship-trained Foot & Ankle Surgeon

Sheffield, S11 8UX

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

One Health Group

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Fellowship-trained Foot & Ankle Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [47]

# Locum Consultant Plastic and Breast Surgeon

Nottingham, NG5 1PB

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Locum

Employer:

Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trusts

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Plastic and Breast Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [48]

# Locum Consultant Plastic Surgeon - Hand Specialist

Salisbury, SP2 8BJ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Plastic Surgeon - Hand Specialist job (opens in a new window) [49]

#### Fixed Term Consultant Oncoplastic Breast Surgeon

Brighton, BN1 6AG

Salary:

£109725.00 to £145478.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust (279)

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Fixed Term Consultant Oncoplastic Breast Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [50]

#### Locum Urological Surgeon Specialized General & Reconstructive Surgery

London, E9 6SR

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Homerton Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Urological Surgeon Specialized General & Reconstructive Surgery job (opens in a new window) [51]

## Consultant Plastic Surgeon (Burns / General Plastic Surgery)

Wakefield, WF14DG

Salary:

£109725.00 to £145478.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

The Mid Yorkshire Teaching NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Plastic Surgeon (Burns / General Plastic Surgery) job (opens in a new window) [52]

#### Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon – Upper Limb or Shoulder & Elbow

Shepton Mallet, BA4 4LP

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Practice Plus Group

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon – Upper Limb or Shoulder & Elbow job (opens in a new window) [53]

#### Consultant Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgeon, Hand and Wrist

Wythenshawe, M23 9LT

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgeon, Hand and Wrist job (opens in a new window) [54]

#### Locum Consultant Paediatric Surgeon with Interest in Oncology

Leeds, LS1 3EX

Salary:

£109725.00 to £145478.00

Type:

Locum

Employer:

Leeds Teaching Hospitals

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Paediatric Surgeon with Interest in Oncology job (opens in a new window) [55]

#### Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon with specialist interest in Paediatrics

Watford, WD18 0HB

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon with specialist interest in Paediatrics job (opens in a new window) [56]

#### Consultant General Surgeon WSI Benign Upper GI Surgery

Warwick, CV34 5BW

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

South Warwickshire University NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant General Surgeon WSI Benign Upper GI

Surgery job (opens in a new window) [57]

#### Consultant in Trauma and Orthopaedics - Hand and Wrist Surgeon

Rotherham, S60 2UD

Salary:

£109725.00 to £145478.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Trauma and Orthopaedics - Hand and Wrist Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [58]

#### Locum ENT Consultant Surgeon with specialist interest in Paeds Otology

London, E9 6SR

Salary:

£109725.00 to £145478.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Homerton Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum ENT Consultant Surgeon with specialist interest in Paeds Otology job (opens in a new window) [59]

#### Locum ENT Consultant Surgeon with a specialist interest in Otology

London, E9 6SR

Salary:

£109725.00 to £145478.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Homerton Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

<u>Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum ENT Consultant Surgeon with a specialist interest in Otology job (opens in a new window) [60]</u>

#### Locum Consultant Plastic Surgeon in Hand Surgery or Skin and General

Bradford, BD9 6RJ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Locum

Employer:

Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Plastic Surgeon in Hand Surgery or

Skin and General job (opens in a new window) [61]

# Further information

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

Royal College of Surgeons [62]

Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh [63]

Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow [64]

Society for Cardiothoracic Surgery in Great Britain and Ireland [65]

And hear from people working as cardiothoracic surgeons.

A career in cardiothoracic surgery (BMJ) [66]

A day in the life of a thoracic surgeon (CTSNET) [67]

A day in a heart surgeon's life (CTSNET) [68]

# Other roles that may interest you

- Cardiologist [69]
- Emergency medicine [70]
- Respiratory medicine [71]
- Knowledge and library services [72]

**Source URL:**<a href="https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/surgery/cardiothoracic-surgery?field\_field\_role=274&page=7">https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/surgery/cardiothoracic-surgery?field\_field\_role=274&page=7</a>

#### Links

[1] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Intensive care [2]

https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Stroke [3]

https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Thrombosis [4]

https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Foundation\_training [5]

https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/career-opportunities-doctors/sas-doctors [6]

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https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/surgery/cardiothoracic-surgery/real-

life-story-omal-jarral [8] https://foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/ [9] https://specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk/ [10]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9205-25-1074 [11]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9175-25-0274 [12]

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