

Home > Explore roles > Doctors > Roles for doctors > Surgery > General surgery

# **General surgery**

General surgeons perform a wide range of surgery, often in emergency situations, and make up 25% of all consultant surgeons.

They experience a highly competitive but hugely rewarding career performing life-changing and life-saving surgery.

surgeon with tools

## Life as a general surgeon

You'll be part of one of the largest surgical specialties and expected to perform a wide range of surgeries involving:

- surgical conditions of the gastrointestinal tract from the oesophagus to the anus
- breast conditions
- kidney, pancreas and liver transplantation
- trauma to the abdomen and thorax
- · certain skin conditions
- · initial assessment of patients with peripheral vascular disease
- childhood conditions

Elective [1] (planned) surgery is an important part of the work but also, you'll play an important role within emergency departments. Acute abdominal pain is the most common emergency requiring surgery, and you'll regularly operate for conditions such as appendicitis, hernias and gallstones.

Advances in technology have made keyhole surgery (laparoscopic surgery) increasingly commonplace and you'll use it within general surgery. Most abdominal operations including bowel tumour removal and hernia repair can be carried out using keyhole surgery.

You'll have the opportunity to specialise in keyhole surgery as well as a broad range of subspecialties.

## How much can I earn?

You'll first earn a salary when you start your <u>foundation training</u> [2] after medical school. Find out details of current salary ranges for foundation and specialty training, <u>SAS doctors</u> [3] and consultants on the 'Pay for doctors' [4] 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**

- 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
- 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

## **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 decided that I wanted to become a surgeon during my third year at medical school, when the course included a two-month hospital placement in colorectal [5] surgery. The surgeons made me feel

really welcome and I loved the work and the theatre environment from day one."

Read Bynvant's story [6].

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

There are approximately 2,571 general surgeons working in the NHS in England.

## How to become a general surgeon

After medical school, you'll join the paid two-year foundation programme [7] where you'll work in six placements in different settings.

After your foundation programme, you can apply for paid <u>specialty training</u> [8] to become a general surgeon, which will take a minimum of eight 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 general surgeon can take you

Sub-specialties within general surgery include:

- breast surgery assessment of breast symptoms, breast cancer surgery and breast reconstructive surgery where a plastic surgeon is not needed
- lower gastrointestinal surgery for the diseases of the colon, rectum and anal canal, and particularly cancer of the bowel
- endocrine surgery for thyroid and other endocrine glands
- upper gastrointestinal this includes the oesophagus, stomach, liver and pancreas and also incorporates weight-loss surgery
- transplant surgery renal (kidney), hepatic (liver) and pancreatic transplantations

Specialist training is also provided for advanced trauma surgery (for military surgery and trauma centres) and for remote and rural surgery.

Live vacancies

## Find a vacancy

Enter your location or postcode

#### Show results within

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#### Consultant Dermatology Surgeon

Grimsby, DN31 2BH

Salary:

£105000.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

HCRG Care Group

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Dermatology Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [9]

#### Consultant Cardiac Surgeon

Plymouth, PL6 8DH

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust

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

## 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 Dermatology Surgeon

Scunthorpe, DN15 6HX

Salary:

£105000.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

**HCRG Care Group** 

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Dermatology Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [12]

#### Consultant Hand Surgeon

Birmingham, B15 2TH

Salary:

£109725.00 to £145478.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust

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

## 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) [14]

## Consultant Urological Surgeon

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 Urological Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [15]

#### Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon

Torquay, TQ2 7AA

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [16]

#### Consultant Oncoplastic Breast Surgeon

Birmingham, B15 2TH

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust

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

## Consultant Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon

Northampton, NN1 5DB

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Northampton General Hospital

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [18]

## Consultant Breast Surgeon(Locum)

London, W6 8RF

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Breast Surgeon(Locum) job (opens in a new window) [19]

#### Locum Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon

Tooting, SW17 0QT

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Locum

Employer:

St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

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

#### 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) [21]

## Consultant Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeon

Merthyr Tydfil, CF72 9DT

Salary:

£110240.00 to £160951.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

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

## Consultant Emergency General Surgeon

Orpington, BR6 8ND

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

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

#### Locum Consultant Urological Surgeon

Stockport, SK2 7JE

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Stockport NHS Foundation Trust

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

#### Consultant Gastroenterologist/ Colorectal Surgeon

Manchester, M22 4DB

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Beacon Medical Services Group Ltd

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

## Locum Consultant Plastic Surgeon

Middlesbrough, TS4 3BW

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Plastic Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [26]

## Locum Consultant Plastic Surgeon

Birmingham, B15 2TH

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust

<u>Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Plastic Surgeon job (opens in a new window)</u> [27]

#### Consultant Orthopaedic Revision Hip Surgeon

Carlisle, CA2 7HY

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Orthopaedic Revision Hip Surgeon job

(opens in a new window) [28]

### 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) [29]

## Consultant Hip and Knee Surgeon

Sheffield, S11 8UX

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

One Health Group

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Hip and Knee Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [30]

#### 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) [31]

## Consultant Orthopaedic and Oncology Surgeon

Oswestry, SY10 7AG

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Orthopaedic and Oncology Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [32]

## Consultant Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon

North Shields, NE29 8NH

Salary:

£109725.00 to £145478.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

<u>Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon job</u>

(opens in a new window) [33]

## Consultant General Surgeon (Lower GI)

Sheffield, S11 8UX

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

One Health Group

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

## Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon (Shoulder & Elbow)

Torquay, TQ2 7SS

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon (Shoulder & Elbow) job (opens in a new window) [35]

#### Locum Consultant Plastic Reconstruction surgeon

Plymouth, PL6 8DH

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Locum

Employer:

University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Plastic Reconstruction surgeon job (opens in a new window) [36]

## 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) [37]

## o Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon - Foot and Ankle

Shepton Mallet, BA4 4LP

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

**Practice Plus Group** 

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon - Foot and Ankle job (opens in a new window) [38]

#### Locum Consultant Oral & Maxillo Facial Surgeon

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 Consultant Oral & Maxillo Facial Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [39]

#### Locum Consultant Surgery - Vascular & Endovascular Surgeon

Truro, TR1 3LJ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Locum

Employer:

Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Surgery - Vascular & Endovascular Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [40]

## Consultant Upper GI and General Surgeon

Salisbury, SP2 8BJ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Upper GI and General Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [41]

## Locum Consultant in General Surgery (Emergency Surgeon)

Stevenage, SG1 4AB

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

East and North Hertfordshire Teaching NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant in General Surgery (Emergency Surgeon) job (opens in a new window) [42]

## Consultant Colorectal/General Surgeon (Advanced Colorectal Cancers)

Liverpool, L7 8XP

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Colorectal/General Surgeon (Advanced Colorectal Cancers) job (opens in a new window) [43]

#### Consultant Plastic Surgeon (Interest in Breast & Skin)

Stoke on Trent, ST4 6QG

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospital of North Midlands NHS Trust

<u>Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Plastic Surgeon (Interest in Breast & Skin)</u>

job (opens in a new window) [44]

## Consultant General Surgeon with SI in Benign Biliary

Lincoln, LN2 5QY

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant General Surgeon with SI in Benign Biliary job (opens in a new window) [45]

## o Consultant ENT Surgeon Special interest in Paediatric ENT

Birmingham, B15 2TH

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant ENT Surgeon Special interest in Paediatric

ENT job (opens in a new window) [46]

#### Consultant Plastic Surgeon WSI Burns, Skin & Perineal Reconstruction

Chelmsford, 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 Plastic Surgeon WSI Burns, Skin & Perineal Reconstruction job (opens in a new window) [47]

#### Locum Consultant Surgeon in Oral & Maxillo Facial 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 Consultant Surgeon in Oral & Maxillo Facial Surgery job (opens in a new window) [48]

## Consultant General Surgeon with SI in Ab Wall Reconstruction

Lincoln, LN2 5QY

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant General Surgeon with SI in Ab Wall Reconstruction job (opens in a new window) [49]

## Consultant Plastic Surgeon with a special interest in Gender Surgery

London, SW10 9NH

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Plastic Surgeon with a special interest in Gender Surgery job (opens in a new window) [50]

## Further information

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

Association of Trauma and Military Surgery [51]

Association of Breast Surgery [52]

Association for Cancer Surgery [53]

Association of Coloproctology of Great Britain and Ireland [54]

Association of Laparoscopic Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland [55]

Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland [56]

Association of Upper Gastrointestinal Surgeons for Great Britain and Ireland [57]

British Association of Endocrine and Thyroid Surgeons [58]

British Transplantation Society [59]

Joint Committee on Intercollegiate Examinations [60]

Royal College of Surgeons [61]

Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh [62]

Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow [63]

Vascular Society [64]

## Other roles that may interest you

- Anaesthesia [65]
- Emergency medicine [66]
- Medical oncology [67]
- Plastic surgery [68]

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#### Links

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

https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Foundation\_training[3]

https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/career-opportunities-doctors/sas-doctors [4]

https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/pay-doctors [5]

https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Colorectal [6] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-

roles/doctors/roles-doctors/surgery/general-surgery/real-life-story-bynvant-sandhu[7]

https://foundationprogramme.nhs.uk/ [8] https://specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk/ [9]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/E0279-25-1075 [10]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9216-25-0847 [11]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/U0024-25-0036SYO [12]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/E0279-25-1077 [13]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C0020-25-1087 [14]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/B0103-25-0027 [15]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9360-25-0358 [16]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9388-25-0777 [17]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C0020-25-1043 [18]

https://beta.iobs.nhs.uk/candidate/iobadvert/C9265-25-0264 [19]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9290-25-0768 [20]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9200-25-0756 [21]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9331-25-0608 [22]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/H9110-25-0914 [23]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9213-25-0682 [24]

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https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9362-25-0516 [25]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/E0312-25-0000 [26]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9328-25-0666 [27]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C0020-25-1065 [28]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9262-25-0811 [29]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/B0103-25-0024 [30]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/B0103-25-0025 [31]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/B0103-25-0026 [32] https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9224-25-0153 [33]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9319-25-0623 [34]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/B0103-25-0021 [35]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9388-25-0776 [36]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9216-25-0787 [37]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/B0201-MED-TOPS-REA-3 [38]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/E0314-25-2223 [39]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9293-25-0263 [40]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9156-25-0329 [41]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9269-25-0275 [42]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9361-25-0414 [43]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9287-25-1040 [44]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9205-25-0867 [45] https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9357-25-0547 [46]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C0020-25-1048 [47]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9390-25-1281 [48]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9293-25-0266 [49]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9357-25-0548 [50]

https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9289-25-0117 [51] http://www.atms.org.uk/default.aspx [52] http://www.associationofbreastsurgery.org.uk/ [53] http://www.baso.org.uk/ [54] http://www.acpgbi.org.uk/

[55] http://www.alsgbi.org/ [56] http://www.asgbi.org.uk/ [57] http://www.augis.org/ [58]

http://www.baets.org.uk/ [59] http://www.bts.org.uk/ [60] http://www.jcie.org.uk [61]

http://www.rcseng.ac.uk/ [62] http://www.rcsed.ac.uk [63] http://www.rcpsg.ac.uk [64]

http://www.vascularsociety.org.uk/ [65] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/anaesthesia [66] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/emergency-medicine [67] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/medicine/medical-oncology [68] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/surgery/plastic-surgery