

# 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 <sup>[1]</sup> (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 sub-specialties.

## How much can I earn?

You'll first earn a salary when you start your [foundation training](#) <sup>[2]</sup> after medical school. Find out details of current salary ranges for foundation and specialty training, [SAS doctors](#) <sup>[3]</sup> and consultants on the ['Pay for doctors'](#) <sup>[4]</sup> 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](#) <sup>[5]</sup> surgery. The surgeons made me feel**

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

[Read Bynvant's story](#) <sup>[6]</sup>.

## 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](#) <sup>[7]</sup> where you'll work in six placements in different settings.

After your foundation programme, you can apply for paid [specialty training](#) <sup>[8]</sup> 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

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- **Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon (Hip/Knee surgeon)**

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 \(Hip/Knee surgeon\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[9]</sup>

- **Consultant Colorectal Surgeon**

Bournemouth & Poole, BH7 7DW

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Colorectal Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[10]</sup>

- **Consultant Breast Surgeon**

Swansea, SA2 8QA

Salary:

£106000.00 to £154760.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Swansea Bay University Health Board

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Breast Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[11]</sup>

- **Consultant Urological Surgeon**

Torquay, TQ2 7AA

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Urological Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[12]</sup>

- **Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon**

Cramlington, NE23 6NZ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[13]</sup>

- **Consultant - Urological Surgeon**

Slough, SL2 4HL

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant - Urological Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[14]</sup>

- **Consultant Oculoplastic Surgeon**

Maidstone, ME16 9QQ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Oculoplastic Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[15]</sup>

- **Consultant Dermatology Surgeon**

Canterbury, CT1 3NG

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Dermatology Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[16]</sup>

- **Consultant Vascular Surgeon**

Sheffield, S5 7AU

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Vascular Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[17]</sup>

- **Consultant Hand Surgeon**

Bristol, BS7 8SA

Bristol, BS11 0QE

Bristol, BS9 3AA

Bristol, BS10 6AF

Bristol, BS34 6BQ

Bristol, BS15 4EJ

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Locum

Employer:

HealthHarmonie

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Hand Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[18]</sup>

- **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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[19]</sup>

- **Locum Consultant Thoracic Surgeon**

Cambridge Bio Medical Campus, CB2 0AY

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Royal Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Thoracic Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[20]</sup>

- **Consultant Colorectal/Peritoneal Surgeon**

Manchester, M20 4BX

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

The Christie NHS FT

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Colorectal/Peritoneal Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[21]</sup>

- **ENT Consultant Surgeon (General)**

Middlesbrough, TS4 3BW

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for ENT Consultant Surgeon \(General\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[22]</sup>

- **Locum Consultant Plastic Surgeon**

Sheffield, S10 2TH

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Locum

Employer:

Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Plastic Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[23]</sup>

- **Consultant Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgeon**

London, E1 1FR

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Barts Health NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[24]</sup>

- **Locum Consultant Thoracic Surgeon**

Liverpool, L14 3PE

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Thoracic Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[25]</sup>

- **Orthopaedic Surgeon Hip & Knee**

Sutton Coldfield, B75 5BL

Salary:

£7200.00

Type:

Bank

Employer:

Medinet Clinical Services Limited

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Orthopaedic Surgeon Hip & Knee job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[26]</sup>

- **Fixed Term Consultant Spinal Surgeon**

Brighton and Hove, BN2 5BE



Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust (279)

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Fixed Term Consultant Spinal Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[27]</sup>

- **Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon (Hip & Paediatric)**

Swansea, SA6 6NL

Salary:

£106000.00 to £154760.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Swansea Bay University Health Board

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon \(Hip & Paediatric\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[28]</sup>

- **Locum Consultant Colorectal & General Surgeon**

Blackpool, FY3 8NR

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Locum

Employer:

Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Colorectal & General Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[29]</sup>

- **Locum Consultant Spinal Deformity Surgeon**

Northfield, Birmingham, B31 2AP

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

The Royal Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Spinal Deformity Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[30]</sup>

- **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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[31]</sup>

- **Locum General Surgeon - Upper GI**

Stockport, SK2 7JE

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Stockport NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum General Surgeon - Upper GI job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[32]</sup>

- **Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon (Foot & ankle)**

Torquay, TQ2 7AA

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 \(Foot & ankle\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[33]</sup>

- **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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[34]</sup>

- **Consultant Head and Neck Surgeon**

London, SW3 6JJ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Head and Neck Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[35]</sup>

- **Treatment Doctor / Surgeon - 15 hours**

Birmingham, B30 1DB

Salary:

£101000.00 to £151000.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS)

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Treatment Doctor / Surgeon - 15 hours job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[36]</sup>

- **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 \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[37]</sup>

- **Locum Consultant Burns and Plastics Surgeon**

Birmingham, B46NH

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Locum

Employer:

Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Burns and Plastics Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[38]</sup>

- **Locum Consultant Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon**

East Grinstead, RH19 3DZ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[39]</sup>

- **Consultant Plastic & Reconstructive Surgeon (Head & Neck)**

Swansea, SA6 6NL

Salary:

£106000.00 to £154760.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Swansea Bay University Health Board

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Plastic & Reconstructive Surgeon \(Head & Neck\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[40]</sup>

- **Consultant ENT Head & Neck Cancer Surgeon**

Rhyl, LL18 5UJ

Salary:

£106000.00 to £154760.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant ENT Head & Neck Cancer Surgeon job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[41]</sup>

- **Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon - Specialising in Soft Tissue Knee**

Stoke on Trent, ST4 6QG

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

University Hospital of North Midlands NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon - Specialising in Soft Tissue Knee job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[42]</sup>

- **Consultant Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon with interest in TMD**

East Grinstead, RH19 3DZ

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon with interest in TMD job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[43]</sup>

- **Locum Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon With An Interest In Spinal**

Swansea, SA6 6NL

Salary:

£116600.00

Type:

Locum

Employer:

Swansea Bay University Health Board

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon With An Interest In Spinal job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[44]</sup>

- **Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon with special interest in Knee Surgery**

Stockport, SK2 7JE

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Stockport NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon with special interest in Knee Surgery job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[45]</sup>

- **Consultant Urological Surgeon SI in Non-muscle-invasive bladder cancer**

Dartford, DA2 8DA

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Urological Surgeon SI in Non-muscle-invasive bladder cancer job \(opens in a new window\)](#) <sup>[46]</sup>

## • 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](#) <sup>[47]</sup>

[Association of Breast Surgery](#) <sup>[48]</sup>

[Association for Cancer Surgery](#) <sup>[49]</sup>

[Association of Coloproctology of Great Britain and Ireland](#) <sup>[50]</sup>

[Association of Laparoscopic Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland](#) <sup>[51]</sup>

[Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland](#) <sup>[52]</sup>

[Association of Upper Gastrointestinal Surgeons for Great Britain and Ireland](#) <sup>[53]</sup>

[British Association of Endocrine and Thyroid Surgeons](#) <sup>[54]</sup>

[British Transplantation Society](#) <sup>[55]</sup>

[Joint Committee on Intercollegiate Examinations](#) <sup>[56]</sup>

[Royal College of Surgeons](#) <sup>[57]</sup>

[Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh](#) <sup>[58]</sup>

[Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow](#) <sup>[59]</sup>

[Vascular Society](#) <sup>[60]</sup>

## Other roles that may interest you

- [Anaesthesia](#) <sup>[61]</sup>
- [Emergency medicine](#) <sup>[62]</sup>
- [Medical oncology](#) <sup>[63]</sup>

- Plastic surgery [64]

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## Links

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