Trauma and orthopaedic surgery

Trauma and orthopaedic (T&O) surgeons diagnose and treat conditions of the musculoskeletal system including bones and joints and structures that enable movement such as ligaments, tendons, muscles and nerves.

You'll work with patients of all ages, often in a district general hospital or possibly in specialist centres or orthopaedic hospitals.

Life as a trauma and orthopaedic surgeon

You'll spend around 40% of your time in surgery and the rest in outpatient clinics, the emergency department and assessing/monitoring patients before and after surgery. This is a rewarding specialty where your work can bring rapid relief from pain and discomfort for patients.
You'll work on trauma to the musculoskeletal system, such as broken, fractured or dislocated bones and soft tissue injuries. These could be caused by anything from a low energy fracture in an older patient to multiple injuries caused by a road traffic accident.

Your orthopaedic work will include the replacement of whole joints such as knees and hips following damage due to osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis. You’ll also treat congenital and degenerative conditions of the musculoskeletal system, often in babies and children, as well as infections and tumours.

Your surgical work is specialised and varied. Some operations are very quick, for example a spinal injection, whereas other operations, to stabilise someone’s neck or straighten a spine, may take several hours. You could work as part of a trauma team alongside emergency department doctors, anaesthetists, general surgeons and specialist nurses. You'll also work independently.

You will use the latest technologies such as minimally invasive techniques for diagnosis and surgery and computer-aided navigation during surgery which enables 3D mapping of a joint. This is exciting for you and highly beneficial for your patients with reduced scarring and recovery time.

You can expect to be on-call for trauma emergencies and to sometimes work out-of-hours on long surgical procedures, more so than in some other surgical specialties.

**How much can I earn?**

You’ll first earn a salary when you start your foundation training after medical school. The basic salary ranges from £29,384 to £34,012. Once you start your specialty training as a trauma and orthopaedic surgeon employed by the NHS, you can expect to earn a salary of at least £40,257, which can increase to between £84,559 and £114,003 as a consultant.

**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.

"It was a placement in a children’s hospital towards the end of my specialist training that made me decide on paediatric T&O as my sub-specialty. I immediately loved the warm and welcoming atmosphere in the hospital, and working with children."

Read Emily's story [2].

What are my chances of starting a career in trauma and orthopaedics?

In 2020 there were 715 applications for 125 specialty training places, (a competition ratio [3] of 5.72). There are currently 2,654 trauma and orthopaedic surgeons working in the NHS in England.

How to become a trauma and orthopaedic surgeon

After medical school, you’ll join the paid two-year foundation programme [4] where you’ll work in six placements in different settings.

After your foundation programme, you can apply for paid specialty training [5] to become a trauma and orthopaedic surgeon, which will take a minimum of six 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 in trauma and orthopaedics can take you

You could:

- specialise or conduct research in areas such a particular part of the body for example shoulder/elbow, joint reconstruction such as hip or knee, paediatric surgery, sports injury or complex trauma surgery
- teach medical students or postgraduate students in training
- get involved in research at universities, the NHS or private sector

Live vacancies

Find a vacancy

Enter your location or postcode

Show results within

Clinical Lead Trauma and Orthopaedics
Merthyr Tydfil, CF47 9DT
Salary: £42284.00 to £48388.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Clinical Lead Trauma and Orthopaedics job (opens in a new window)

Theatre Practitioner - Trauma and Orthopaedic
Ipswich, IP4 5PD
Salary: £28407.00 to £34581.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Theatre Practitioner - Trauma and Orthopaedic job (opens in a new window)
- **Trauma and Orthopaedic Booking Clerk**
  
  Newport, NP20 4SZ
  
  Salary: £23159.00 to £24701.00
  
  Type: Fixed-Term
  
  Employer: Aneurin Bevan University Health Board
  
  Apply now on NHS Jobs for Trauma and Orthopaedic Booking Clerk job (opens in a new window) [8]

- **Physicians Associate Trauma and Orthopaedics**
  
  Reading, RG1 5AN
  
  Salary: £43742.00 to £50056.00
  
  Type: Fixed-Term
  
  Employer: Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust
  
  Apply now on NHS Jobs for Physicians Associate Trauma and Orthopaedics job (opens in a new window) [9]

- **Lead pharmacist for Trauma and Orthopaedics**
  
  Dudley, DY1 2HQ
  
  Salary: £50952.00 to £57349.00
  
  Type: Permanent
  
  Employer: The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust
  
  Apply now on NHS Jobs for Lead pharmacist for Trauma and Orthopaedics job (opens in a new window) [10]

- **Specialty doctor in Trauma and Orthopaedics**
  
  Romford, RM7 0AG
  
  Salary: £51000.00 to £80000.00
  
  Type: Fixed-Term
Employer:
  Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty doctor in Trauma and Orthopaedics job (opens in a new window) [11]

**Physician Associate in Trauma and Orthopaedics**

Tooting, SW17 0QT

Salary:
  £51488.00 to £57802.00
Type:
  Permanent
Employer:
  St George's Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Physician Associate in Trauma and Orthopaedics job (opens in a new window) [12]

**TPD Trauma and Orthopaedics - Osw-Stoke**

Birmingham, B2 4BH

Salary:
  Negotiable
Type:
  Secondment
Employer:
  Health Education England
Apply now on NHS Jobs for TPD Trauma and Orthopaedics - Osw-Stoke job (opens in a new window) [13]

**Foot & Ankle Fellow Trauma and Orthopaedics**

Leicester, LE5 4PW

Salary:
  Negotiable
Type:
  Fixed-Term
Employer:
  University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Foot & Ankle Fellow Trauma and Orthopaedics job (opens in a new window) [14]

**Healthcare Support Worker - Trauma and Orthopaedic**

Tunbridge Wells, TN2 4QJ

Salary:
£22383.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Healthcare Support Worker - Trauma and Orthopaedic job (opens in a new window) [15]

Patient Pathway Administrator - Trauma and Orthopaedics

Nottingham, NG7 2UH

Salary: £22816.00 to £24336.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trusts
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Patient Pathway Administrator - Trauma and Orthopaedics job (opens in a new window) [16]

Healthcare Support Worker - Trauma and Orthopaedic

Tunbridge Wells, TN2 4QJ

Salary: £22383.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Healthcare Support Worker - Trauma and Orthopaedic job (opens in a new window) [17]

Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist-Trauma and Orthopaedics

Coventry, CV2 2DX

Salary: £43742.00 to £50056.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist-Trauma and Orthopaedics job (opens in a new window) [18]

Highly Specialised Physiotherapist in Orthopaedic Trauma
Doncaster, DN2 5LT

Salary: £43742.00 to £50056.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: Doncaster & Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS FT
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Highly Specialised Physiotherapist in Orthopaedic Trauma job (opens in a new window) [19]

Waiting List Coordinator - Trauma and Orthopaedics - Hands

Nottingham, NG7 2UH

Salary: £25147.00 to £27596.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trusts
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Waiting List Coordinator - Trauma and Orthopaedics - Hands job (opens in a new window) [20]

Deputy Ward Manager - Ward 10 Trauma and Orthopaedics

Upton, Wirral, CH49 5PE

Salary: £35392.00 to £42618.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: Wirral University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Deputy Ward Manager - Ward 10 Trauma and Orthopaedics job (opens in a new window) [21]

Healthcare Support Worker - Trauma and Orthopaedics (Band 2)

Steeton, BD20 6TD

Salary: £22383.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: Airedale NHS Foundation Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Healthcare Support Worker - Trauma and Orthopaedics (Band 2) job (opens in a new window) [22]
Senior Physiotherapist and Deputy Team Lead Trauma and Orthopaedics
Cambridge, CB2 0QQ
Salary: £35392.00 to £42618.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: Cambridge University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Senior Physiotherapist and Deputy Team Lead Trauma and Orthopaedics job (opens in a new window) [23]

Housekeeper - Trauma & Orthopaedics
Telford, TF1 6TF
Salary: £22383.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Housekeeper - Trauma & Orthopaedics job (opens in a new window) [24]

Medical Secretary - Trauma & Orthopaedics
Swansea, SA6 6NL
Salary: £25524.00 to £28010.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: Swansea Bay University Health Board
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Medical Secretary - Trauma & Orthopaedics job (opens in a new window) [25]

Consultant in Trauma & Orthopaedics
Bath, BA13NG
Salary: £88364.00 to £119133.00
Type: Permanent
Employer:
   Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Trauma & Orthopaedics job (opens in a new window) [26]

○ **Rehabilitation Assistant - Trauma Orthopaedics and Major Trauma**

Manchester, M13 9WL

Salary:
   £22816.00 to £24336.00
Type:
   Fixed-Term
Employer:
   Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Rehabilitation Assistant - Trauma Orthopaedics and Major Trauma job (opens in a new window) [27]

○ **Specialist Occupational Therapist - Trauma & Orthopaedics**

Sandwell/Birmingham, B71 4HJ

Salary:
   £35392.00 to £42618.00
Type:
   Permanent
Employer:
   Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialist Occupational Therapist - Trauma & Orthopaedics job (opens in a new window) [28]

○ **LAS ST3+ in Trauma & Orthopaedics**

Southport and Ormskirk, PR8 6PN

Salary:
   £50017.00
Type:
   Fixed-Term
Employer:
   Southport And Ormskirk NHS Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for LAS ST3+ in Trauma & Orthopaedics job (opens in a new window) [29]

○ **Band 7 Trauma Orthopaedic Practitioner**

Gateshead, NE9 6SX

Salary:
£43742.00 to £50056.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Band 7 Trauma Orthopaedic Practitioner job (opens in a new window) [30]

Orthopaedic Physiotherapist – Elective and Trauma

King's Lynn, PE30 4ET

Salary: £35392.00 to £42618.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: The Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn NHSFT
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Orthopaedic Physiotherapist – Elective and Trauma job (opens in a new window) [31]

Orthopaedic Physiotherapist – Elective and Trauma

King's Lynn, PE30 4ET

Salary: £35392.00 to £42618.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: The Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn NHSFT
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Orthopaedic Physiotherapist – Elective and Trauma job (opens in a new window) [31]

Medical Support Secretary - Trauma & Orthopaedics

Stoke on Trent, ST4 6QG

Salary: £22816.00 to £24336.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: University Hospital of North Midlands NHS Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Medical Support Secretary - Trauma & Orthopaedics job (opens in a new window) [32]

Locum Consultant in Trauma & Orthopaedics
Bath, BA1 3NG

Salary: £88364.00 to £119133.00
Type: Fixed-Term
Employer: Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant in Trauma & Orthopaedics job (opens in a new window) [33]

Surgical Audit Clerk, Trauma & Orthopaedics

Ashford, TN24 0LZ

Salary: £22816.00 to £24336.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Surgical Audit Clerk, Trauma & Orthopaedics job (opens in a new window) [34]

Theatre Practitioner - RN/ODP in Orthopaedic Scrub

Bangor, LL57 2PW

Salary: £28834.00 to £35099.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Theatre Practitioner - RN/ODP in Orthopaedic Scrub job (opens in a new window) [35]

Theatre Practitioner - RN/ODP in Orthopaedic Scrub

Bangor, LL57 2PW

Salary: Negotiable
Type: Permanent
Employer: Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Theatre Practitioner - RN/ODP in Orthopaedic Scrub job (opens in a new window) [36]
Fixed Term Consultant in Trauma & Orthopaedic Surgery – Major Trauma

Brighton and Haywards Heath, BN2 5BE

Salary:
£88364.00 to £119133.00
Type:
Fixed-Term
Employer:
University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust (279)
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Fixed Term Consultant in Trauma & Orthopaedic Surgery – Major Trauma job (opens in a new window) [37]

Junior Clinical Fellow (STRL) in Trauma and Elective Orthopaedics

Cardiff, CF14 4XW

Salary:
Negotiable
Type:
Fixed-Term
Employer:
Cardiff and Vale University Health Board
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Junior Clinical Fellow (STRL) in Trauma and Elective Orthopaedics job (opens in a new window) [38]

Consultant in Trauma & Orthopaedics (Lower limb)

Basingstoke, RG24 9NA

Salary:
Negotiable
Type:
Permanent
Employer:
Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Trauma & Orthopaedics (Lower limb) job (opens in a new window) [39]

Deputy Team Leader, Trauma Orthopaedic Theatres

Leicester, LE1 5WW

Salary:
£35392.00 to £42618.00
Type:
Permanent
Employer:
University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Deputy Team Leader, Trauma Orthopaedic Theatres job (opens in a new window) [40]

**Occupational Therapist - Band 6 - Trauma & Orthopaedics**

Bury St. Edmunds, IP33 2QZ

Salary:
£35392.00 to £42618.00
Type:
Permanent
Employer:
West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Occupational Therapist - Band 6 - Trauma & Orthopaedics job (opens in a new window) [41]

**Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon**

Ilford, IG3 8YY

Salary:
£120000.00 to £120000.00
Type:
Permanent
Employer:
Practice Plus Group
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [42]

**Rotational B6 Occupational Therapist Trauma & Elective Orthopaedics**

Leicester, LE5 4PW

Salary:
£35392.00 to £42618.00
Type:
Permanent
Employer:
University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Rotational B6 Occupational Therapist Trauma & Elective Orthopaedics job (opens in a new window) [43]

**Consultant T&O Surgeon – Major Trauma with Hand & Wrist**
Consultant Orthopaedic Pelvic and Acetabular Surgeon

Stoke on Trent, ST4 6QG

Salary: £88364.00 to £119133.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: University Hospital of North Midlands NHS Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Orthopaedic Pelvic and Acetabular Surgeon job (opens in a new window) [45]

Locum Consultant - Trauma and Consultant

Basildon, SS16 5NL

Salary: £88364.00 to £119133.00
Type: Locum
Employer: Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant - Trauma and Consultant job (opens in a new window) [46]

Clinical Psychologist - Trauma and Affective Disorders

Southampton, SO14 3DT

Salary: £48526.00 to £54619.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Clinical Psychologist - Trauma and Affective Disorders job (opens in a new window) [47]
Specialty Physiotherapist – Trauma and Acute General Medicine

Banbury, OX16 9AL

Salary: £35392.00 to £42618.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: Oxford University NHS Foundation Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Physiotherapist – Trauma and Acute General Medicine job (opens in a new window) [48]

Specialty Occupational Therapist – Trauma and Acute General Medicine

Banbury, OX16 9AL

Salary: £35392.00 to £42618.00
Type: Permanent
Employer: Oxford University NHS Foundation Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialty Occupational Therapist – Trauma and Acute General Medicine job (opens in a new window) [49]

Orthopaedic practitioner

High Wycombe, HP11 2TT

Salary: Negotiable
Type: Permanent
Employer: Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Orthopaedic practitioner job (opens in a new window) [50]

Senior Trauma Fellow

Leeds, LS1 3EX

Salary: £58398.00
Type: Fixed-Term
**Employer:**
Leeds Teaching Hospitals
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Senior Trauma Fellow job (opens in a new window) [51]

**Trauma Triage Practitioner**

Basingstoke, RG24 9NA

Salary: £35392.00 to £42618.00
Type: Permanent

**Employer:**
Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Trauma Triage Practitioner job (opens in a new window) [52]

**Major Trauma Coordinator**

Cambridge, CB2 0QQ

Salary: £35392.00 to £42618.00
Type: Fixed-Term

**Employer:**
Cambridge University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Major Trauma Coordinator job (opens in a new window) [53]

**Band 4 Trauma Facilitator**

Romford, RM7 0AG

Salary: £29460.00 to £31909.00
Type: Permanent

**Employer:**
Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Band 4 Trauma Facilitator job (opens in a new window) [54]

**Advanced Practitioner Major Trauma**

Salford, M6 8HD

Salary: £50952.00 to £57349.00
Type:
Permanent
Employer:
Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Advanced Practitioner Major Trauma job (opens in a new window) [55]

• Neuro Trauma Specialist Practitioner

Nottingham, NG7 2UH

Salary: £35392.00 to £42618.00
Type: Secondment
Employer: Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trusts
Apply now on NHS Jobs for Neuro Trauma Specialist Practitioner job (opens in a new window) [56]

Further information

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

British Orthopaedic Association [57]
British Orthopaedic Trainees Association [58]
Future Orthopaedic Surgeons [59]
Joint Committee on Intercollegiate Examinations [60]
The Royal College of Surgeons of England [61]
The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh [62]
Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow [63]

And hear from people working as a trauma and orthopaedic surgeon:

Consultant Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgeon [64]– Council member Royal College of Surgeons

A career in trauma and orthopaedics [65]– Alexander F Young, Benjamin C Caesar, Lee A David
Other roles that may interest you

- Anaesthesia [66]
- Emergency medicine [67]
- Rheumatology [68]
- Sport and exercise medicine [69]

Source URL: https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/surgery/trauma-and-orthopaedic-surgery

Links
[1] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Foundation_training
[3] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Competition_ratio
[22] https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9423-23-0249
[26] https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9427-23-0342
[27] https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9349-23-1276
[29] https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9347-23-0183
[31] https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9426-23-0201
[33] https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/C9427-23-0345
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[42] https://beta.jobs.nhs.uk/candidate/jobadvert/E0314-23-2587