# NHS England plans robotic surgery surge to tackle waiting lists and boost patient care



The NHS in England is set to significantly expand its use of robotic surgery, aiming to enhance patient care and reduce waiting times. Currently, the NHS performs approximately 70,000 robot-assisted surgeries annually, but this figure is expected to leap to around 500,000 by the end of the next decade. By 2035, NHS officials anticipate that a remarkable 90% of all keyhole surgeries will be executed with the aid of robotic systems, marking a substantial increase from today's rate of one in five procedures.

Health Secretary Wes Streeting, who himself underwent robot-assisted surgery for kidney cancer, has been a vocal proponent of these innovative technologies, stating that such advancements will "transform the NHS." The positive outcomes associated with robotic-assisted surgeries are well-documented, with patients typically enjoying quicker recovery times and reduced hospital stays. The technology allows for greater precision and dexterity, enabling surgeons to manage instruments via a console equipped with a camera.

Robotic surgery has seen a marked expansion in its applications across various medical fields. For example, the Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has recently adopted the Versius robot across multiple departments, including General Surgery, Urology, and Gynaecology. This investment underscores a regional commitment to integrating cutting-edge technology in order to enhance patient outcomes, as Chief Medical Officer Jon Westbrook highlighted the transformative potential of these advancements.

Additionally, initiatives at Bedfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust and Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust illustrate the growing trend. Bedfordshire has introduced two da Vinci Xi robots, facilitating interventions in areas such as bowel and renal cancer, while Royal Devon has invested in new robots to tackle procedures like hernia repairs. Both trusts emphasise the benefits of fewer post-operative complications, leading to improved quality of life for patients.

In a similar vein, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust made headlines as the first in the UK to implement the Hugo robotic-assisted surgery system from Medtronic. This system complements their existing robotic arsenal, enhancing their capability to perform minimally invasive procedures that promise shorter recovery times for patients. One patient, Rob George, expressed satisfaction with his experience post-prostatectomy, reinforcing the technology's positive impact on patient care.

The dedicated push for robotic surgery in the NHS is not merely about adopting new technology; it aligns with broader goals to alleviate pressure on healthcare services. NHS leaders are optimistic that increased efficiency and improved patient outcomes from robotic surgery could significantly contribute to reducing waiting lists, as stated by Sir Jim Mackey, the head of NHS England. He outlined plans to return to shorter elective waiting times by 2029, emphasising that expanding robotic surgery is a critical component of this strategy.

As more hospitals invest in robotic systems, the landscape of surgical care in the UK is poised for transformation. The Samworth Foundation's recent £1.5 million donation to Leicester Hospitals, aimed specifically at enhancing access to robotic-assisted cancer surgeries, exemplifies a growing recognition of the importance of this technology in modern healthcare. As hospitals across the country adopt these innovations, the NHS moves closer to realising its vision of a more efficient, patient-centred approach, leveraging the benefits of technology to enhance surgical care.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/nhs-robotic-surgery-treatment-england-b2767490.html), [[2]](https://www.gwh.nhs.uk/news/posts/2023/march/major-investment-into-new-surgical-robot/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/nhs-robotic-surgery-treatment-england-b2767490.html), [[2]](https://www.gwh.nhs.uk/news/posts/2023/march/major-investment-into-new-surgical-robot/), [[3]](https://www.bedfordshirehospitals.nhs.uk/news/robotic-assisted-surgery-to-transform-care-at-bedfordshire-hospitals/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/news/new-surgical-robot-makes-uk-debut-guys-and-st-thomas), [[5]](https://www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/news/major-expansion-of-robotic-surgery-at-the-royal-devon/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.gwh.nhs.uk/news/posts/2023/june/investment-in-robotic-surgery-across-bath-and-north-east-somerset-swindon-and-wiltshire), [[7]](https://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/aboutus/our-news/press-release-centre/2023/samworth-foundation-provides-15m-boost-for-robotic-assisted-surgery-at-leicesters-hospitals/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/nhs-robotic-surgery-treatment-england-b2767490.html), [[4]](https://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/news/new-surgical-robot-makes-uk-debut-guys-and-st-thomas)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/nhs-robotic-surgery-treatment-england-b2767490.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gwh.nhs.uk/news/posts/2023/march/major-investment-into-new-surgical-robot/> - Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has invested in a new surgical robot to enhance patient care. The Versius robot will be utilised across General Surgery, Urology, and Gynaecology departments, enabling less invasive operations. This investment aligns with the regional commitment to adopt the latest technology, aiming to reduce hospital stays and improve patient outcomes. The Trust's Chief Medical Officer, Jon Westbrook, highlighted the importance of this advancement in providing high-quality care locally. ([gwh.nhs.uk](https://www.gwh.nhs.uk/news/posts/2023/march/major-investment-into-new-surgical-robot/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.bedfordshirehospitals.nhs.uk/news/robotic-assisted-surgery-to-transform-care-at-bedfordshire-hospitals/> - Bedfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust has introduced two da Vinci Xi robots at Bedford Hospital and Luton & Dunstable University Hospital. These robots will be used across various specialties, including bowel and renal cancer, gynaecology, and complex head and neck conditions. The technology offers benefits such as reduced post-operative pain, faster recovery, and improved quality of life. Consultant Surgeon Mrs Katharine Bevan expressed excitement over this new era of surgery at the Trust. ([bedfordshirehospitals.nhs.uk](https://www.bedfordshirehospitals.nhs.uk/news/robotic-assisted-surgery-to-transform-care-at-bedfordshire-hospitals/?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/news/new-surgical-robot-makes-uk-debut-guys-and-st-thomas> - Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust has become the first in the UK to adopt the Hugo robotic-assisted surgery system from Medtronic. This addition brings the Trust's total to seven robots across six specialties. Robotic-assisted surgery is minimally invasive, leading to shorter hospital stays and faster recovery for patients. Patient Rob George, who underwent prostatectomy, shared his positive experience with the new technology. ([guysandstthomas.nhs.uk](https://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/news/new-surgical-robot-makes-uk-debut-guys-and-st-thomas?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/news/major-expansion-of-robotic-surgery-at-the-royal-devon/> - Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust has expanded its robotic surgery services with two new robots funded by NHS England and the Cancer Alliance. The new robot at North Devon District Hospital is used for procedures like hernia repairs and gallbladder removal, while the one at Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital is employed by ENT surgeons for tumour removals. This expansion aims to provide advanced surgical options and attract top surgical talent to the region. ([royaldevon.nhs.uk](https://www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/news/major-expansion-of-robotic-surgery-at-the-royal-devon/?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.gwh.nhs.uk/news/posts/2023/june/investment-in-robotic-surgery-across-bath-and-north-east-somerset-swindon-and-wiltshire> - Great Western Hospital in Swindon and Royal United Hospital in Bath have invested in surgical robots, with Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust set to begin using theirs later this year. This regional investment aims to reduce the need for patients to travel long distances for robotic surgery. Robotic technology allows surgeons to perform complex procedures with minimal access, ensuring high levels of patient safety. ([gwh.nhs.uk](https://www.gwh.nhs.uk/news/posts/2023/june/investment-in-robotic-surgery-across-bath-and-north-east-somerset-swindon-and-wiltshire?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/aboutus/our-news/press-release-centre/2023/samworth-foundation-provides-15m-boost-for-robotic-assisted-surgery-at-leicesters-hospitals/> - The Samworth Foundation has donated £1.5 million to Leicester Hospitals Charity to fund a new surgical robot at Leicester Royal Infirmary. This grant aims to quadruple the number of cancer patients benefiting from robotic-assisted surgery, expanding access to gynaecological, rectal, pelvic, and head and neck cancer treatments. Robotic surgery offers advantages like improved precision, reduced pain, and faster recovery times. ([leicestershospitals.nhs.uk](https://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/aboutus/our-news/press-release-centre/2023/samworth-foundation-provides-15m-boost-for-robotic-assisted-surgery-at-leicesters-hospitals/?utm_source=openai))