

The Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital Foot and Ankle Fellowship

Background

The Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital is the UK's largest specialist orthopaedic hospital and is currently ranked the 9th best orthopaedic institution in the world. The hospital accepts referrals from nationwide and also serves the local area for orthopaedic needs. It provides a comprehensive range of neuromusculoskeletal health care ranging from complex foot & ankle surgery, acute spinal injury, complex bone tumours, orthopaedic medicine, various sub-specialty orthopaedic services and specialist rehabilitation for chronic pain. This broad range of services is unique within the NHS.

Supervisor

Mr Nick Cullen is the principle supervisor for the fellowship. He was appointed as a consultant in 2005 at the RNOH, and has taken over supervision of the fellowship since 2020. He is the lead convenor for the annual Stanmore Foot Course and is regularly invited to speak at regional and national meetings and conferences.

Other unit consultants & team members

The other unit consultants are:

- Mr Matthew Welck
- Mr Shelain Patel
- Mr Karan Malhotra

In addition, there is a dedicated foot and ankle team including specialist nurses, data collection officers and administrative staff. The unit works together closely, and the fellow is welcomed and encouraged to join other consultants' lists for further experience.

Length of fellowship

The fellowship lasts six months with a new fellow usually appointed to start each April and October.

Application details

Application for the fellowship is conducted formally through the NHS Jobs website (www.jobs.nhs.uk). Advertisements are usually placed 6-18 months in advance. Further details of vacancies can be found by emailing rnoh.footandankle@nhs.net.

Experience required

This is a post-CCT fellowship and the fellow is expected to have experience at registrar or fellow level prior to the commencement.

Expected outcomes

The fellow should at the end of six months have a firm understanding of elective foot and ankle pathology. They will be exposed to forefoot, hindfoot and ankle conditions. The unit is the largest centre nationally for treating neuromuscular conditions and is one of the highest volume units for ankle replacement and revision surgery.

Completion of a research and/or quality improvement project is expected with publication in a peer reviewed journal. The unit has a strong track record of publications and the fellow is expected to contribute to this.

A weekly foot and ankle MDT is attended by surgical, radiology, nursing and physiotherapy staff. Teaching on a specialist topic is conducted prior to discussion of complex cases by either a registrar or fellow. The fellow is expected to present on new developments or controversial topics to stimulate debate and aid knowledge.

There is also a strong emphasis on preparing the fellow to manage a consultant practice and develop the skills needed to make decisions on simple and complex cases.

What pathology will you be likely to see?

As a complex tertiary referral centre there is a higher proportion of complex cases that will be seen. The pathology and procedures that the fellow will be expected to gain experience in during their placement includes:

- Ankle and hindfoot arthritis and severe deformity and multilevel deformity
- Primary and revision total ankle replacements
- Ankle fusions (open, arthroscopic and revision)
- Hindfoot fusions including tibiotalar calcaneal fusions, talectomies, revision fusions, triple fusions and custom implants / patient specific guides
- Neuromuscular and cavovarus feet including Charcot-Marie Tooth, Hereditary Sensorimotor Neuropathy, Polio, and Clubfoot
- Flatfoot
- Talar osteochondral defects
- Ankle arthroscopy
- Soft tissue injuries around the foot and ankle
- Midfoot deformity (including severe, multilevel deformity)
- Forefoot deformity

What pathology will not be encountered?

The unit is based within a tertiary elective hospital without an Emergency department meaning there will be no exposure to acute trauma or acute diabetic foot disease.

Timetable

Below is a typical weekly timetable of activity.

| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|----|----------|-----------------------------|-----------|-------------|---------|
| AM | Clinic | Clinic/Theatre [†] | Theatre* | MDT, Clinic | Theatre |
| PM | Research | Clinic/Theatre [†] | Theatre* | Admin | Theatre |

[†] denotes alternating weeks

*denotes Theatre with Matthew Welck (Consultant Foot and Ankle surgeon)