

# PRESS RELEASE

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## Tees hospital trust now at forefront of UK robotic surgery

SOUTH Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has become one of only three NHS trusts in the country to have three of its own surgical robots - and now has the potential to become a national centre of excellence.

Surgical teams at The James Cook University Hospital now have three da Vinci robots which means more patients than ever before can benefit from minimally invasive surgery.

The three robots will be used across five different specialties at the Middlesbrough hospital - amongst the highest number anywhere in the UK - including urology, thoracic services, gynaecology, general surgery and ear, nose and throat and maxillofacial services.

James Cook currently provides robotic surgery to around 350 to 380 patients a year, but the expansion programme is expected to double the number of patients who can benefit from this leading edge treatment.

By 2021 it is hoped heart specialists at the hospital will be the first in the north east region - and only the second in the UK - to offer robotics for cardiac surgery.

The additional robot will also enable the introduction of robotic treatments for oesophageal (food pipe) procedures and complex endometriosis operations.

Robotic surgery first came to Teesside in 2014. It revolutionised treatment by making it possible for surgeons to perform minimally invasive surgery with greater precision and control than ever before.

The robots use tiny instruments which are controlled remotely by the surgeon sitting at a console. The surgeon has the benefits of 3D vision and hand and foot controls to control the micromanipulators, which have a greater range of movement than the human hand.

This enhanced precision helps reduce side effects and the length of time patients have to stay in hospital, for example a patient undergoing a robotic prostate procedure now spends an average of one day in hospital instead of seven.

“We are now one of only three hospitals in the UK that has three robots,” said cardiothoracic surgeon Joel Dunning.

“This is going to hugely spring forward our ability to do minimally invasive surgery at this site and it will allow us to start cardiac robotics so it is a very exciting time.”

The new fourth generation da Vinci robot will be used in James Cook’s operating theatres from early December and provides the potential for the hospital to become a centre of excellence for robotic surgery and teaching.

It will also enable the hospital to be amongst the first in the UK to take part in a national Royal College of Surgeons' study looking at how much robotic surgery benefits patients.

***ENDS***

**Picture captions:**

- ***Pic 1:*** *Surgical care practitioner Vicky Harding, urologist Brian Chaplin, urologist and vice president of the British Association of Urological Surgeons Jo Creswell, surgical care practitioner Nicola Nicholson and theatre scrub nurse Sue Wadkins (left to right)*
- ***Pic 2:*** *Urologist Brian Chaplin, urologist and vice president of the British Association of Urological Surgeons Jo Creswell, surgical care practitioner Vicky Harding, theatre scrub nurse Sue Wadkins and surgical care practitioner Nicola Nicholson (left to right)*
- ***Pic 3:*** *Cardiothoracic surgeon Joel Dunning*