

To whom it may concern: Leicester Knee Fellowship

It has been my pleasure to undertake the Leicester Knee Fellowship between September 2023 till August 2024 for a one-year period. This was my first ever fellowship and I was keen to explore the wide array of knee surgery that was offered including complex arthroplasty and revision but also soft tissue and sports surgery. Despite being nervous – fresh from completing my training – the team was quick to make me feel comfortable and from my first week I was in an independent weekend operating list with support from my mentor!

The rota remains flexible with multiple operating and clinic lists and a level of independence that is perfect for a first time fellow but can easily be adapted to a more senior level. There is a strong backbone of arthroplasty, and the fellowship is divided into revision arthroplasty and soft tissue/sports knee for 6 months each. In such a big department, there are many surgeons and mentors to engage with and the variety meant that every day was a learning day. Each division allows for independent lists and the case mix is discussed and you can be supported throughout.

There are regional MDTs for both complex soft tissue cases but also for complex revision arthroplasty to help cater to all forms of knee surgery. Participation and running these has been a useful and insightful experience to help me develop as a future consultant.

My logbook showed 355 procedures by the end with 88% as a first named surgeon, 38% of all cases completely independent. I am most proud of the 64 soft tissue ligament reconstructions, of which 40 were ACL reconstructions, including quadriceps and hamstring MPFL reconstructions and multi-ligament surgery including PCL. I was involved in 62 meniscal surgeries (50% repair of all types) and even exposure to more complex chondral work like OATS and Autocart. In addition to this, my experience involved 111 lower limb joint replacements of which comprised 15 were uni-compartmental replacements (medial and lateral), 66 total knee replacements and even 16 revision surgeries. I was also privileged to be part of this unit's first meniscal transplant, first lateral patellofemoral ligament reconstruction and synthetic MPFL reconstruction.

Whilst at the unit, I was involved in business case creation looking at injection coding and platelet rich plasma pathways and quality improvement projects aiming to create a more cost-effective standardised preparation technique. I was invited to cadaveric lab courses to further my experience and even try out new techniques and to present at various regional meetings and teaching events. The department now hosts a monthly research meeting where my involvement in creating and running multiple projects will lead to publication and furthering our knowledge but also to leave a legacy for incoming fellows to continue.

I am proud to have been part of this long running and prestigious fellowship. The team and setup allow flexibility to allow you to prioritise your learning but also to ensure that you are not overburdened and can still maintain a social presence both at home and away. Despite the multiple challenges that this trust -like all other trusts in the NHS - faces coming out of COVID-19, the industrial action and winter pressures – the team and department have strived to make this a memorable and truly amazing fellowship. I cannot thank them enough -not only for my own personal development and allowing me to go onto obtain a substantive consultant position – but for their dedication, support and commitment to their craft, department and fellows.

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