

PRESS RELEASE - 26 February 2019

**Robotic surgery at Sunderland Royal Hospital passes 1000
milestone**



Surgeons at Sunderland Royal Hospital have reached a major milestone – successfully completing 1,000 operations using a surgical robot.

A dedicated team, including surgeons, nurses, and anaesthetists, began using the robot in 2013 for treating kidney and prostate cancers. Since then, they have expanded its use for cancers of the bladder, bowel, and head and neck.

Sitting at the console of the state-of-the-art da Vinci system, the surgeon sees 3D images of the inside of the patient's body and controls the robot's 'arms' with pinpoint accuracy to carry out advanced laparoscopic (keyhole) surgery. The robotic instruments are very small, around 8mm in size, and can bend and rotate in a similar fashion to the human wrist, allowing for more precise operation. Consequently, there is less scarring, less pain and a much faster recovery time, with fewer complications, allowing patients to continue after cancer with an improved quality of life.

The use of robotic surgery at Sunderland Royal has made a major contribution to improving the quality of services and care provided to patients, including revolutionising urological cancer surgery at the hospital, thereby improving surgical outcomes and the quality of life for patients in Sunderland, South Tyneside, North Durham and Bishop Auckland.

In the last published National Prostate Cancer Audit, the Trust performed better than the national average and was the best performer in the region for readmissions and urinary complications after radical prostatectomy (surgery to remove the prostate gland and tissues surrounding it). The Trust is also a national leader in keeping the length of stay short for patients who undergo bladder removal for bladder cancer. In addition, the Trust has one of the most structured robotic colorectal surgical programmes in the North of England, and the head and neck cancer team are able to offer complex robotic procedures which are only available in a select few centres in the country.

Urology Consultant Mr Kanagasabai Sahadevan, who set up the service at Sunderland Royal along with his colleagues, said: “Establishing robot surgery has been a very rewarding experience and the team are incredibly proud to be providing this service and to have reached the landmark of 1,000 cases. Our local population can be assured that, in Sunderland Royal, they have a world-class robotic surgery centre of excellence.

“We are very grateful to City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust’s Board for their support for this exciting development which is giving patients such great benefits. “

Having personally performed more than 500 robotic surgeries, Mr Sahadevan is now expanding the use of the robot to perform even more complex procedures.

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Photo caption: Left to right, Urology Consultant Mr Kanagasabai Sahadevan, Consultant Colorectal Surgeon Mr Golam Farook, Urology Consultant Mr Bharat Gowardhan, Consultant Colorectal Surgeon Mr Steve Holtham and Urology Theatre

Team Lead Nina Priestley with the surgical robot system at Sunderland Royal Hospital

Issued by **Kay Jordan**

For press enquiries on this release, contact **0191 404 1128** or email

kay.jordan@stft.nhs.uk