



*a union for the whole
surgical team*

**20
25**

**End of
Year
Report**



486

CBS members



1950+

surgical professionals
engaged with CBS

surgical advisory service - why you needed support

**SURGICAL ADVISORY SERVICE
TOPICS 2025**



social media community

2,476

Instagram

1,356

LinkedIn

2,337

X

94

Facebook

150

Bluesky

communication



1950+

people reached via the CBS bi-monthly
newsletter

9

conferences
attended

5

webinars given

in the news

11

articles in the
industry press

7

CBS blogs



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Introduction

Introduction

2025 has been a year of significant progress and consolidation for the Confederation of British Surgery (CBS). As the UK's sole certified trade union representing surgeons and the wider surgical community, CBS has continued to strengthen its role as the professional voice for surgery. Our work this year has focused on advocacy, workplace representation, and the delivery of practical support to surgeons at every stage of their careers.

Against a backdrop of increasing pressures within the NHS and the wider healthcare system, CBS has expanded its services, deepened engagement with trainee and specialty associations, and amplified the voices of surgical professionals through publications, events, and advisory services. These initiatives reflect our commitment to safeguarding the wellbeing, resilience, and sustainability of the surgical workforce, while ensuring that surgery remains a rewarding and viable career pathway for future generations.

This report highlights the key achievements and areas of focus for CBS throughout 2025, and sets the foundation for our continued work in 2026 and beyond.



CBS Executive Board Meeting
November 2025

In this image:
Mr Alistair Jenkins
Mrs Clare Belton
Ms Tingy Simoes
Mrs Ruth Waters
Mr Mark Henley
Mr Andrew Garnham
Miss Shireen McKenzie



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Engagement

Engagement with Surgical Trainee Associations

In Q2 and Q3 of 2025, CBS successfully established engagement with the surgical trainee associations ASiT and BOTa. This marks the beginning of our pledge to actively support the next generation of surgeons. Through these collaborations, CBS is committed to ensuring that trainees have access to the highest quality training, resources, and professional support.

By strengthening ties with trainee organisations, CBS aims to safeguard the future of surgery as a rewarding and sustainable career, while fostering a culture of excellence and inclusivity for those entering the profession.

Engagement with Medical Students

In 2025, CBS launched several important initiatives to strengthen support for medical students and those pursuing a surgical career pathway.

- **New CBS Medical Students Committee.** A dedicated committee has been established to ensure that medical students on surgical pathways receive appropriate guidance and representation, while also raising awareness of CBS across the student community.
- **Mentoring Scheme.** CBS introduced a new mentoring programme, which is now actively running. This initiative pairs students and trainees with experienced surgical professionals, providing structured support, career advice, and professional development opportunities. This has been established and implemented by the newly formed Medical Student Committee.
- **Electives Webinar Series.** A series of webinars has been delivered to support students undertaking surgical electives, offering practical guidance and insights into the realities of surgical training and practice.

These initiatives reflect CBS's commitment to nurturing the next generation of surgeons, ensuring that students have access to the resources, mentorship, and professional networks they need to thrive. We would like to express our thanks to the medical students on the committee.

Engagement with the CPOC

CBS has joined the Centre for Perioperative Care (CPOC). The Advisory Group is a multiprofessional, multi-specialty team guiding CPOC's strategic priorities. Its role is to:

- Establish, maintain, and improve perioperative guidelines, standards, and policies.
- Act as CPOC's first point of contact for consultation on guidelines and publications.



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Webinars and blogs

Webinars and Educational Support

CBS delivered a series of webinars during 2025, designed to provide practical guidance and professional support for surgeons. Topics included:

- *Setting up Private Practice*
- *When a Complaint Lands*

In partnership with Chase de Vere, CBS hosted three dedicated webinars focusing on pensions and financial planning following the Autumn Budget. These sessions offered members timely and expert advice on navigating complex financial matters.

We extend our sincere thanks to our sponsors, Ballards LLP and Chase de Vere, whose support made these educational initiatives possible.

CBS Blogs

In 2025, CBS published a series of blogs that explored some of the most pressing challenges and debates within the surgical profession and the wider healthcare system. These pieces provided insight, provoked discussion, and highlighted the lived experiences of surgeons and trainees.

Featured blogs included:

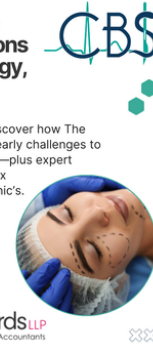
- Everything but the Pay: Why Surgeons' Discontent Runs Deeper than Their Payslip
- Where Have All the Doctors Gone?
- Beyond the Frontline: How War Shapes Surgery
- Fit for the Future or Not Fit for Purpose: The NHS 10-Year Health Plan
- All Cut Up: Eight Out of Ten Aspiring Surgeons Say Training Ruined Their Relationships

Together, these blogs underscored CBS's commitment to amplifying the voices of surgical professionals by raising awareness of systemic issues, and fostering dialogue on the future of surgery.

Setting Up a Private Clinic: Shared Lessons in Resilience, Strategy, and Survival

In this FREE webinar you will discover how The Westbourne Centre overcame early challenges to build a successful private clinic—plus expert insights from Ballards LLP on tax and accountancy for private clinic's.

Wednesday, 11 June 2025
7:00PM - End
Speaker
Mr Hiroshi Nishikawa MA MD FRCS
Plast



5

webinars



7

CBS blogs





In the press

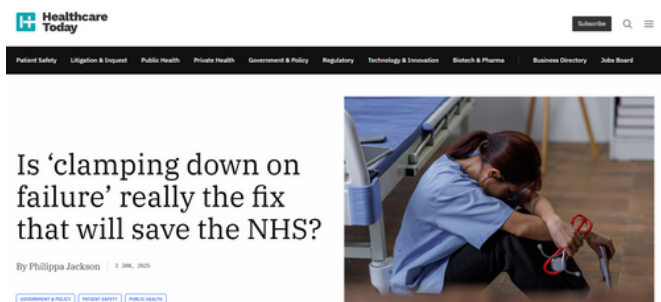
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CBS in the News

Throughout 2025, CBS has contributed to national discussions on key issues affecting the surgical profession. Articles authored by CBS representatives have appeared in leading journals and platforms, raising awareness and driving debate on matters of importance to surgeons and the wider healthcare community.

Is 'clamping down on failure' really the fix that will save the NHS?

Authored by Philippa Jackson. Consultant plastic surgeon Miss Philippa Jackson rails against health secretary Wes Streeting's plans for NHS reforms. Featured in Healthcare Today.

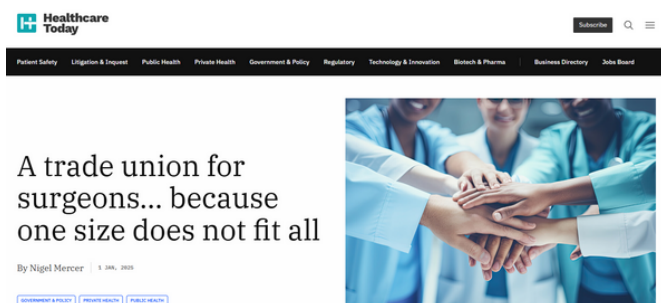


You're under investigation – what next?

Authored by Peter Sedman and featured both in the CSJ and Healthcare Today. The article highlights the steps to take and the support available to surgeons under investigation.

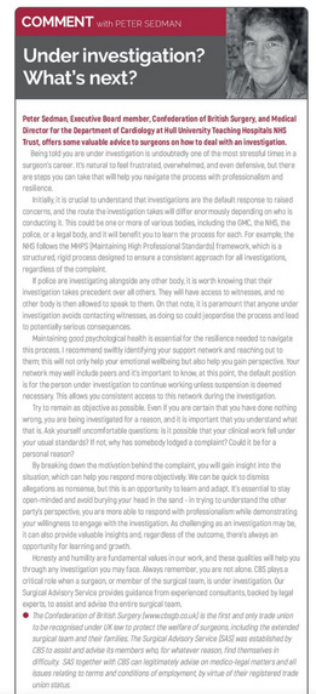
A Trade Union for surgeons...because one size does not fit all

Authored by Nigel Mercer and published in Healthcare Today. Mr Mercer makes a case for investing time, resources and thought into ensuring surgeons are kept happy and motivated – and describes why he thinks a surgical trade union is the way forward.



11

featured articles





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In the press

CBS in the News

The Case for Surgical Hubs

Authored by Peter Sedman, examining the role of surgical hubs in improving patient care and efficiency. Featured in Healthcare Today and as the long read in the CSJ.

No Surgeon Too Small

Authored by Philippa Jackson after CBS research that identified gender bias. This article details CBS's findings and calls for the surgical community to take action. Published in the CSJ.



Patient Safety | Litigation & Inquest | Public Health | Private Health | Government & Policy | Regulatory | Technology & Innovation | Research & Pharma | Business Directory | Jobs Board

The case for surgical hubs

By Peter Sedman | 14 Feb, 2025

[Continue Reading](#) [Public Health](#)



Workforce issues

'Too small to be a surgeon': cutting out gender bias

A new survey by the Confederation of British Surgery (CBS) has identified continuing gender bias in surgical disciplines. The feedback suggests that women face barriers that men do not. In this article, the surgical trade union comments on the latest findings and calls on the surgical community to take action.

The stats should startle, but sadly they are not unexpected. The Confederation of British Surgery's survey about gender bias specific to surgery was distributed to everyone from trainee students to established consultants. The findings highlight how women are still being told that their gender will hinder their ability to pursue a surgical career.

75.8% of female respondents reported that, yes, they have experienced this particular misogyny. 71.4% explicitly told they were the wrong gender for the profession - at some point in their career. To put this in context, zero percent of men reported experiencing any gender bias whatsoever during their navigation of the same landscape. What does this show us? It demonstrates that, while progress has been made in promoting equity and equality in the workplace in general, we still have a way to go when it comes to surgical careers specifically.

Consultant plastic surgeon and Board member at the Confederation of British Surgery, Miss Philippa Jackson, says, "There's this constant scrutiny over women's lives that men simply don't face. I've had people ask me about my menstrual cycle, about when I planned to have children, how many, and how I'd manage that alongside my career, as if it's anyone's business."

However, it's not just men who do this - women are guilty of it too, perpetuating the idea that we have to fit into a system built for male norms.

Philippa continues, "I've stood in theatres and watched my male counterparts get opportunities I was overlooked for." Speaking about her experiences upon returning from maternity leave, she continues, "After maternity leave, I genuinely considered leaving surgery altogether because of how hard it was. We call women's skill with babies, the holistic, empathetic approaches, but these aren't soft, they're essential. And yet these are so often dismissed



as unimportant, when in reality they're exactly what we need more of in surgery."

With 58.6% of female medical students and 69.8% of female consultants reporting having experienced gender bias, we wonder how many students have quit their dreams of a surgical career because of this entrenched misogyny. A stat that backs up this fear is that 85% of female surgical trainees were discouraged from pursuing surgical careers, being told to "think about their future husband and children" before pursuing surgery.

Others have been told that they are 'too small' for orthopaedics and mocked for making the choice to pursue this specialty, while some reported being told that they should choose specialties more conducive to family life (e.g. as a GP). One respondent even reported being told that she was 'too old' and that each time

surgeons (arguably) more conducive to family life) isn't as good."

It's a depressing situation - for those women who manage to fight through the initial barriers, a lifetime of hurdles awaits. Female surgeons must be prepared to answer uncomfortable questions, to fend off queries about their fertility, and their family plans. Furthermore, they must be prepared to be told they're better off finding a male surgeon to marry so they don't have to work, that their children will suffer for their career decisions, that they should freeze their eggs, make choices about the events that they aren't ready to even consider, or just simply... not be a surgeon.

If they are supported in their choice of career, or manage to navigate through the first set of hurdles, they must then justify which specialty they are asked to do. Not orthopaedics ▶

A call for change to break down barriers

APRIL 15, 2025



James Henderson is a Plastic and Hand Surgeon and Confederation of British Surgery* Co-opted Member (Neurodiversity Lead). He believes we need to break down barriers for neurodivergent surgeons.

As a neurodivergent consultant surgeon, I often feel thankful that I was not diagnosed with autism until I was 48. By that time, I had established myself in both my professional and personal life, and my diagnosis could not possibly thwart me on either front. This is a different story for many neurodivergent trainees, and surgeons diagnosed early in their careers. Often, they are told that it is not possible to have a successful surgical career, are shamed into giving up their dreams altogether. Those who persist are rarely offered any specific support.

Breaking Barriers: A Call for Change for Neurodivergent Surgeons

Authored by James Henderson, advocating for greater inclusivity and support for neurodivergent professionals in surgery. Published by the CSJ and Healthcare Today.



In the press

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CBS in the News

The Axe has Fallen on NHS England, and it Might Not be a Bad Thing

Authored by Alistair Jenkins, reflecting on structural changes within NHS England and their potential impact. Featured in Healthcare Today.



Are Women Surgeons Still Facing Discrimination in the Workplace?

Authored by CBS Vice President Mrs Ruth Waters alongside Kajal Gohil, Eve McMahon, and Alicja Moore, following a CBS Surgery that highlighted ongoing challenges for women in surgery. Read the article [here](#). Published in the RCS Bulletin.



These contributions demonstrate CBS's active role in shaping the national conversation on surgical practice, equality, and the future of healthcare delivery.



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Surgical advisory service

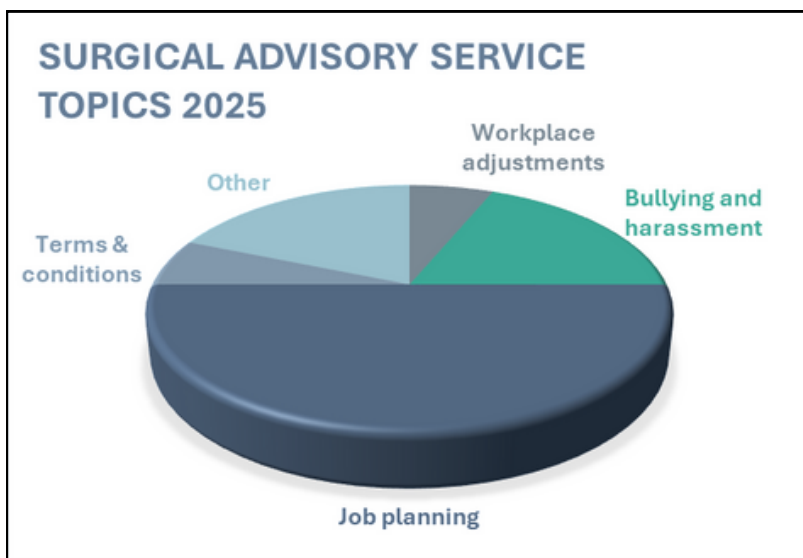
Surgical Advisory Service – Activity Report

Throughout 2025, the Surgical Advisory Service provided support to a wide range of surgical professionals across the specialty groups. Demand for the service continued to grow, with a notable increase in calls relating to bullying and harassment, as well as job planning.

Case distribution for 2025 was as follows:

- Workplace adjustments – 6%
- Bullying & harassment – 19%
- Job planning – 50%
- Terms & conditions – 6%
- Other – 19%

The Advisory Service remains a vital resource in ensuring that surgeons have timely access to confidential advice. Importantly, the service is now utilised by a number of surgical associations to ensure their members have access to an initial consultation for support. Reflecting the Surgical Advisory Services value across the profession.



In 2025, participating associations included:

- SBNS
- BAPRAS
- ENTUK
- ABS
- BAUS.

By offering specialist guidance on issues ranging from workplace challenges to contractual and professional matters, the Surgical Advisory Service continues to strengthen support for the surgical workforce and uphold standards of welfare and governance across the surgical community.



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Advisory panel

Establishment of the New Advisory Panel

2025 saw the creation of a new Advisory Panel to strengthen and support the Surgical Advisory Service Helpline. The Panel has been established to provide expert knowledge and a comprehensive understanding of the surgical environment, ensuring that the guidance offered through the Helpline is both authoritative and relevant.

The Panel's objective is to include representation from all surgical specialty groups. By drawing on expertise across the full breadth of surgical practice, the Panel ensures that the nuances and complexities of each discipline are fully appreciated. This breadth of representation guarantees that issues raised by members are clearly understood and that the advice and support provided are tailored specifically to the realities of surgical practice.

The establishment of this Advisory Panel marks a significant step forward in enhancing the quality, accuracy, and relevance of the support available to surgical professionals, reinforcing our commitment to safeguarding standards and wellbeing across the surgical workforce.

The screenshot shows the top section of the CBS website. At the top left is the CBS logo with the text 'THE CONFEDERATION OF BRITISH SURGERY' to its right. On the top right are two purple buttons: 'Become a Member' and 'Members'. Below this is a teal navigation bar with links: 'Home', 'About CBS', 'Join CBS', 'Membership Benefits', 'Advice and Support' (which is highlighted with a purple underline), 'Events', 'News & Resources', and 'Contact'. The main banner features a dark blue background with the text 'SURGICAL ADVISORY SERVICE' in large white letters. On either side of this text are images of surgeons in blue scrubs and masks. Below the banner, there is a breadcrumb trail 'Home | Surgical Advisory Service'. The main content area has a white background and contains the text: 'Don't suffer alone - call 07498 322935 or email advice@cbsgb.co.uk for support!' in purple, followed by 'Surgical Advisory Service' in bold purple, and 'Support When You Need It Most' in a smaller purple font.



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Conferences and social media

Conferences and Professional Engagements

In 2025, CBS actively participated in a wide range of national conferences and professional meetings, ensuring strong representation across the surgical community.

These were:

BAAPS | Fifth Operating Theatre Show | Moynihan Academy | PLASTA | SBNS
Vascular Society | BAM | BAUS | ENTUK

Our presence at these events provided valuable opportunities to engage with members, share expertise, and strengthen collaborative ties across surgical specialties.

Social Media

CBS's social media presence continues to grow, strengthening engagement across multiple platforms. By year-end, our community spans:

- LinkedIn: 1,356 followers
- X (Twitter): 2,337 followers
- Instagram: 2,476 followers
- Facebook: 94 followers
- Bluesky: 150 followers

This expanding reach reflects CBS's commitment to sharing news, insights, and updates with a diverse and connected audience.

Newsletters

CBS has continued to produce a bi-monthly newsletter, providing members with news, views, and articles that highlight key developments and perspectives across the profession and CBS. The newsletter is as a valued communication channel, reaching more than 1,950 readers and strengthening engagement with the CBS community.



9

conferences



7

newsletters

1,950+

readers



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Presidents closing statement

Presidents closing statement

"As the year draws to a close, the Confederation of British Surgery reflects with considerable pride on the progress achieved in championing the interests of surgeons and surgical teams across the United Kingdom. Through sustained advocacy for fair working conditions and united professional engagement, we have continued to strengthen and elevate the voice of surgery at a national level.

We acknowledge the challenges that remain, but we also celebrate the resilience, innovation, and dedication of our members who continue to uphold the highest standards of patient care. Importantly, we continue to stand beside surgeons in difficulties, providing support, guidance, and advocacy when it is most needed.

Looking ahead, CBS remains committed to supporting surgeons in every specialty, fostering collaboration, and ensuring that the profession is equipped to meet the demands of the future.

Together, we will continue to build a stronger, fairer, and more sustainable surgical community. Thank you to all our members and partners for your contributions this year, we look forward to achieving even greater impact in the year ahead."

Mr Mark Henley
CBS President

