Health centre's robotic arm



Consultant Samantha Hook and her team with the new Mako robotic arm. Photo: Nuffield Health Centre

A private health centre in Chichester has introduced robotic-arm technology for joint surgeries after a million pound investment.

Officials at the Nuffield Health Centre in Chichester said the introduction of the Mako robotic arm should help teams meet the growing demand for orthopaedic surgery across Sussex.

The cutting-edge technology is an ideal assistant for total knee, partial knee and total hip replacements, and, in a bid to cut down on waiting times across the city, the centre is in talks with the NHS about plans to fund robot assisted joint surgery for qualifying NHS referrals.

The robotic assistant allows consultants to make more precise joint cuts during surgery, preventing damage to sensitive soft tissue in the joint, and to insert joint replacements themselves with greater accuracy and precision.

It is hoped that making the procedure more precise in this way will reduce recovery time, reduce pain and improve functional results for patients. It uses 3D images generated by the patient's own CT scan to plan the exact size and orientation of the implant, and then to guide the surgeon as they remove the original bone and fit the implant itself. Six of the hospital's surgical team have been trained to deliver reconstructive surgery using the Mako.

Among them is Samantha Hook, who said she is excited to offer the service to patients: "Robotic assisted joint replacement surgery is becoming common place in orthopaedic surgery, and it is fantastic to be able to now deliver these procedures at Nuffield Health Chichester. Robotic assisted surgery with the Mako for me is about optimising my ability to achieve the best possible result for the patient.

"With careful planning and execution, robotic assistance allows me to restore the patient's anatomy and biomechanics to as near normal as possible. The surgeon is still very much in control of all the instruments, the robot just helps us use them more accurately, and so the Mako robot is a great addition to our surgical facility. I am pleased to see that our amazing and enthusiastic theatre team have made the robot very welcome as part of their team."