



The British Association
of Hand Therapists



LION
The Lilongwe Institute of
Orthopaedics & Neurosurgery

BSSH LION Hand Service
BSSH Malawi Training Fellowship
Terms of Reference

What is LION?

The Lilongwe Institute of Orthopaedics and Neurosurgery (LION) is a new purpose-built healthcare facility attached to the Kamuzu Central Hospital (KCH), which is the main public Hospital in Lilongwe, the capital city of Malawi. When fully operational, LION will offer a comprehensive range of diagnostic, orthopaedic, neurosurgical and rehabilitation services, free at the point of delivery for Malawi Citizens. The institute has an emergency department, four operating theatres, clinic space, a modern radiology department, laboratories, and a rehabilitation centre.

The LION has a number of established partnerships with other charitable organizations, and its main sponsor is Haukeland University Hospital in Bergen, Norway. LION's mission is "to alleviate orthopaedic and neurosurgical disability and its economic impact on the people of Malawi through provision of high quality, equitable, safe and compassionate surgical care and rehabilitation, effective and efficient management, valuing our staff and clients, and conducting quality research and training."

What is the BSSH LION Hand Service?

The BSSH LION Hand Service is a formal partnership between the British Society for Surgery of the Hand (BSSH), the British Association of Hand Therapists (BAHT) and the Lilongwe Institute of Orthopaedics and Neurosurgery (LION) in Malawi. The main purpose of the project is to support the orthopaedic service at LION in the development of subspecialist skills in hand surgery that will aid delivery of treatment to patients with elective and traumatic conditions of the hand.

Over a period of 5 years, commencing in January 2023, the aspiration is to provide the continuous presence of a volunteer Hand Surgeon, Hand Therapist and Hand Trainee at LION. Volunteers will work with local surgeons, therapists, fellows and trainees to develop and deliver a subspecialist hand service, engaging in training at all levels and helping to treat the large numbers of Malawian patients with hand problems. It is the aspiration of BSSH, BAHT and LION that at the end of 5 years, the local surgeons will be sufficiently experienced to run the Hand Unit autonomously, with BSSH and BAHT withdrawing to a background level of support.

Who can apply?

The fellowship is open to specialist trainees from either plastic or orthopaedic backgrounds, who are committed to a career in Hand Surgery and the principle of delivery of healthcare worldwide.

Candidates are expected to hold a National Training Number (NTN) in either Trauma and Orthopaedics or Plastic Surgery.



They will be expected to have reached an adequate standard in their parent speciality before taking up the post, and be broadly competent in the treatment of traumatic, degenerative, infective, inflammatory, neoplastic and congenital pathologies affecting the hand and upper limb. It is desirable, but not essential, that candidates have experience of global healthcare/surgery and familiarity with working in low resource settings.

The time spent working at LION can be taken as special leave or count as “Out-of-Programme Experience” (OOPE). Trainees will be expected to gain all necessary approvals from their current Training Programme Director (TPD) and current Department. The posts are not recognised by the Postgraduate Dean for training but will offer broad exposure and training opportunities in global hand surgery for the successful candidates.

What does the role entail?

The Training Fellow will be part of the BSSH LION Hand Service. The aspiration is that the team will consist of at least one visiting, volunteer, consultant level Hand Surgeon and at least one visiting, volunteer Hand Therapist as well as the Trainee. This team will work collaboratively with the Lilongwe Kamuzu Central Hospital and LION surgeons, therapists and trainees to develop and deliver subspecialist hand services, including hand clinics and regular hand trauma and elective lists at LION and possibly outreach clinics. The team will be available for an agreed routine work schedule which currently includes twice weekly clinics, Minor Ops theatre twice a week and a full day list in Main Theatres.

Volunteers will need to be good team workers. They will be expected to respect the local processes and staff, work within the governance framework and reporting chain of the LION and recognise that clinical priorities may not always allow for ringfenced subspecialist services.

Teaching and training are some of the most important components of the programme and the Training Fellow is expected to play an important role in this, actively participating in and helping to manage the local teaching programme in Hand Surgery. This includes delivering weekly teaching sessions for Orthopaedic Clinical Officers and supporting the team in delivering weekly teaching for LION resident doctors. They will also contribute to and help run the BSSH LION Hand MDT on the ground.

The aspiration of the BSSH Malawi Training Fellowship is to provide the trainee with exposure to a wide breadth of hand surgery, as well as to the unique pathologies and challenges faced practising in low resource settings. Teamworking skills will be developed, international friendships born, surgical and personal resilience nurtured. It will provide the individual with a unique experience in global hand surgery, develop many skills transferrable back to the UK, and provide an excellent foundation to support future overseas work.

Logistics



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Fellowships will run for a minimum of 4 weeks. Longer visits are encouraged, and these applications may be preferentially selected. The maximum length of Fellowship is 6 months.

Volunteers can expect airfares to and from Malawi at either end of the fellowship to be funded. Support will be given in applying for visas and medical registration, and any associated fees paid. Medical indemnity and insurance will be provided. Accommodation and basic subsistence (including food, services, and transport to and from the hospital). Accommodation in a house with other members of the team will be provided. There will be no salary or other expenses.

Application and selection process

Recruitment will be managed by the BSSH via a competitive application and interview process. The successful candidates will be asked to provide written confirmation of their OOPE approval, and a signed letter from their TPD supporting the trip/post.