

Operating Department Practitioner

Operating department practitioners (ODPs) support theatre staff while they carry out complex procedures, and care for theatre patients before, during and immediately after surgery. They work alongside surgeons, anaesthetists and theatre nurses.

The Work

You could be:

- preparing drugs, drips and dressings
- preparing all the necessary instruments and equipment for the procedure
- standing by during the operation, handing over each instrument, swab or dressing as the surgeon needs it and counting them all at the end
- reassuring the patients before and during the administration of the anaesthetics, helping lift the patients on to the operating table and monitoring them while they are unconscious
- helping with resuscitation if a patient stops breathing
- taking patients to the recovery room, checking up on them as they come round and arranging for their transfer back to the ward
- checking stock levels of theatre supplies and keeping records.

You would normally work within either an anaesthetic, surgical or recovery team.

Pay

ODPs working in the NHS are generally on Band 5, £34,494 to £42,977 a year. The current pay scales are from April 2025.

Pay will be different for ODPs working outside the NHS.

Conditions

- You work shifts would cover evenings, weekends and public holidays.
- Part time work is available and on call duty is common.
- An operation might unexpectedly last hours past the end of your shift.
- You work mostly in the operating theatre which is bright, clean, sterile, warm and air-conditioned.
- You wear a face mask and head covering as well as surgical gloves, gown and shoes.
- You must stay alert while standing in the one position for hours at a time.
- You must get used to blood and other unpleasant sights and smells. There can be a slight risk of infection.
- The work can be stressful and emergency situations can occur at any time.
- There is some heavy lifting.

Getting In

- To work as an ODP with the NHS you need to study for a qualification approved by the Health and Care

Professions Council (HCPC).

- To work with the NHS, you would apply for a Graduate Apprenticeship (GA) in Operating Department Practice.
- The University of the West of Scotland are the only Scottish institution to offer a course in this career, and you need to be currently employed in an NHS hospital.
- Entry requirements for the GA is typically are 2 Highers and 3 subjects at National 5, or relevant national qualifications at SCQF Level 6.
- The [College of Operating Department Practitioners \(CODP\)](#) have a list of approved courses on their website. Currently they are all full time courses offered in England.
- Experience in hospital work such as nursing auxiliary work is useful.
- You must be fit and have stamina. You will need to sit a pre-entry medical test.
- You must be over 18 when you start work.
- You will require a satisfactory criminal record check from Disclosure Scotland to show that you are suitable for this type of work. Contact [Disclosure Scotland](#) for details on the type you would need.

Vacancies appear within hospitals and on the [NHS Scotland Recruitment website](#).

What Does It Take

You should be:

- responsible about hygiene
- able to concentrate for long periods
- not squeamish
- a good communicator
- able to learn quickly and follow instructions
- able to stay calm and focused in an emergency
- flexible in your approach to hours and duties
- empathetic with patients
- able to work as a team member.

Training

- The GA is 3 years in duration, with a combination of practical work experience and university study.
- Once your training is complete, you will be able to register with the Health and Care Professions Council as a registered Operating Department Practitioner.
- Once you are qualified, you will be expected to undertake continuing professional development (CPD) to maintain your registration with the HCPC. In your first year after qualifying, you will get extra support and guidance through the [Flying Start programme](#).

Getting On

- After training and experience, you can move into more senior grades, such as a surgical care practitioner, or a physician's assistant.
- You could also move into other areas, such as education and training.
- There are also possibilities of work abroad.

Contacts

Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)

Tel: 0300 500 6184

Email: education@hcpc-uk.org

Website: www.hcpc-uk.org

X: @The_HCPC

Facebook: www.facebook.com/hcpcuk

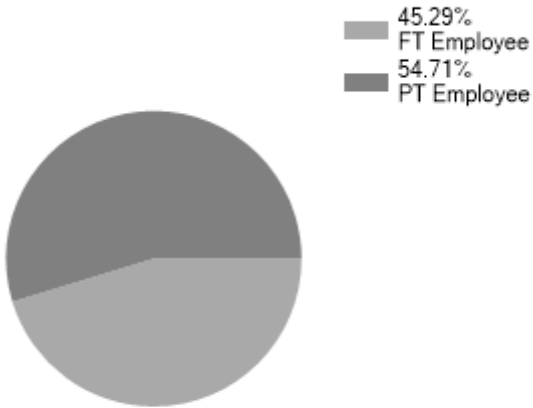
NHS Scotland Careers

Website: www.careers.nhs.scot

Website (2): jobs.scot.nhs.uk

Statistics

Employment Status UK %

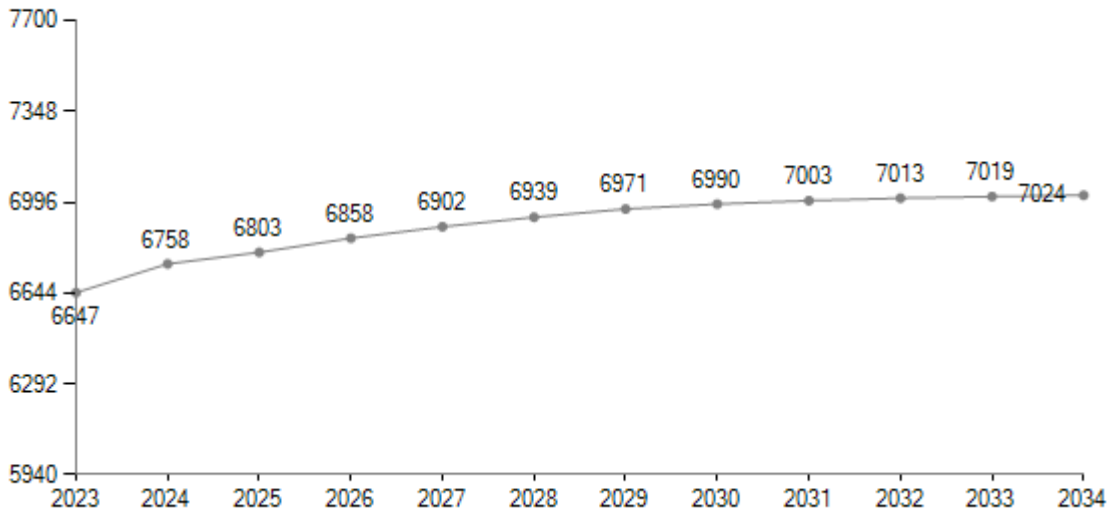


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)