

## 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:

- cleaning and sterilising surgical instruments before the operation
- 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 a surgical, anaesthetic or recovery team. However, you may sometimes work in other departments, such as accident and emergency, intensive care, or with resuscitation teams and helicopter emergency medical services.

### Pay

ODPs working in the NHS are generally on Band 5, £24,670 to £30,742 a year. The current pay scales are from April 2019.

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).
- You could get in through a 2 year programme with one of the NHS Scotland health boards. You would complete the DipHE Operating Department Practice.
- Entry requirements are 2 Highers and 3 subjects at National 5, or relevant national qualifications at SCQF Level 6.
- Several universities in England offer the DipHE and BSc Hons in Operating Department Practice. See [HCPC website](#) for a full list of approved courses.
- Alternatively you could train as a nurse (see [Nurse - Adult](#)). You would also require a relevant anaesthetic certificate.
- 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 in trade journals 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 who may be frightened
- able to work as a team member.

## Training

- BSc (Hons) degrees at English and Welsh universities take 3 years. Courses in operating department practice include anatomy, anaesthetics, surgery, pharmacology, microbiology, infection and science. (Unlike nurses, ODPs are trained in anaesthesia as part of their basic course).
- On completion of the degree, you are eligible to apply for registration with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), which is necessary for working in the NHS.

## Getting On

- There is growing demand for ODPs. Most jobs are in the NHS, but there are also jobs in private or military hospitals. Temporary work is available through agencies.

- After training and experience you can move into more senior grades, perhaps in training or management. Some employers encourage experienced ODPs to do further training in technical and managerial skills.
- There are also possibilities of work abroad.

## Contacts

### **Disclosure Scotland**

Tel: 03000 2000 40

Email: [info@disclosurescotland.gov.scot](mailto:info@disclosurescotland.gov.scot)

Website: [www.mygov.scot/organisations/disclosure-scotland](http://www.mygov.scot/organisations/disclosure-scotland)

Twitter: @DisclosureScot

### **Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)**

Tel: 0300 500 4472

Email: [registration@hcpc-uk.org](mailto:registration@hcpc-uk.org)

Website: [www.hcpc-uk.org](http://www.hcpc-uk.org)

Twitter: @The\_HCPC

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/hcpcuk](http://www.facebook.com/hcpcuk)

### **NHS Scotland Careers**

Website: [www.careers.nhs.scot](http://www.careers.nhs.scot)

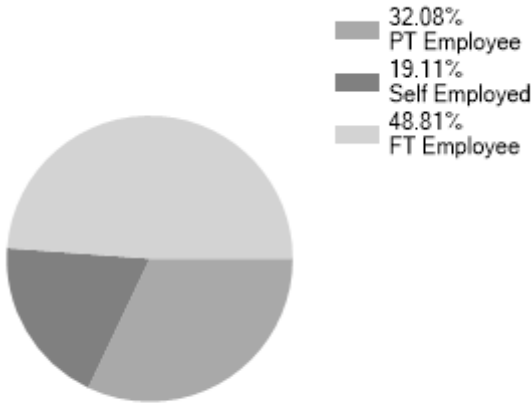
Website (2): [jobs.scot.nhs.uk](http://jobs.scot.nhs.uk)

Twitter: @NHSScotCareers

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/NHSScotlandCareers](http://www.facebook.com/NHSScotlandCareers)

Statistics

Employment Status UK %



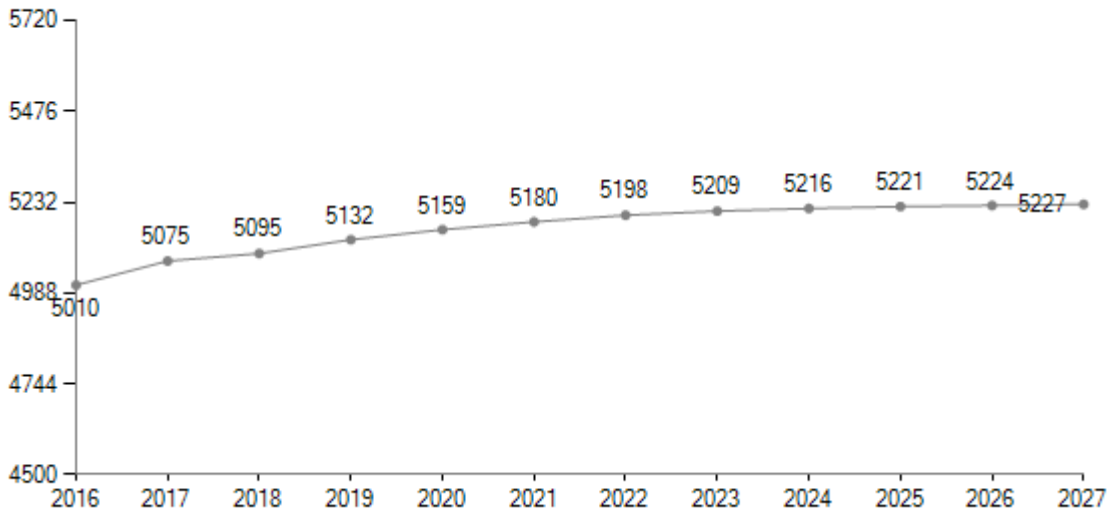
Past Unemployment - Scotland

Date	Unemployed
Dec 2016	0.1%
Dec 2018	0.02%
Mar 2019	0.02%

LMI data powered by [EMSI UK](#)

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

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [EMSI UK](#)