

"I love that the job is so varied, I never know what the day will bring."

Maggie had never heard of an operating department practitioner before a colleague suggested it as a career option. After doing some research and attending some university open days, she decided it was the career for her and applied to start the diploma course.

Maggie Williams

Senior operating department practitioner

Employer or university

University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust



- **How I got into the role**

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In 2004, I joined UK Transplant (now part of NHS Blood and Transplant) as a duty officer and was fortunate enough to work with a wide range of healthcare professionals. I knew I wanted to take my

career further in a healthcare role but wasn't sure where to start looking. One day, a colleague suggested I look into becoming an ODP. I'd never heard of the role before but, once I looked into it, it seemed like the perfect career for me so I decided to apply for the diploma course.

After qualifying, I was lucky enough to obtain a job in my clinical placement hospital, Gloucester Royal Hospital, which was great as it allowed me to build my confidence in a safe and supportive environment. I started as a band 5 ODP in anaesthetics and assisted the anaesthetist in the planning and implementation of the patient's care during surgery, for both adult and paediatric patients. I helped check the equipment was safe for use, anaesthetised patients and monitored them throughout their surgery, safely transferring them to recovery afterwards. As an ODP, I act as the patient's advocate throughout their whole theatre journey. The role has allowed me to explore different specialties too, including emergency, general, orthopaedics, trauma, and obstetrics theatres.

- **What I do**

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One thing that drew me to becoming an ODP was the career prospects. Just two years after qualifying, I got a senior post at University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust. In my new band 6 role as a senior ODP, I was able to move into A&E resuscitation, which enabled me to utilise my anaesthetic and major trauma skills in a new setting. I still work within theatres and have added neurosurgery to the specialties I'm familiar with. I am also a team leader and responsible for supporting junior staff, carrying out appraisals, problem solving and implementing new policies and procedures.

My current role is a bit different to the normal ODP role, but it reflects the ever widening remit of the profession. Becoming an ODP has opened a lot of doors for me and I think the role will continue to develop and expand, both within theatres and the wider hospital community.

- **The best bits
and challenges**

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collapse**

I love that the job is so varied. I never know what the day will bring – one minute I can be caring for a patient who's been in a car crash and the next for a young child who is having difficulty breathing.

I enjoy being an active part of the team, where my input is valued, and I get to make a real difference to patient care.

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