

# "Working in theatre, you're right at the heart of patient care and get to work as part of a team with experienced surgeons."

Jenny wanted to be a nurse from an early age as all the women in her family are nurses and she knew what it was like first hand.

## Jenny Abraham

### Consultant nurse

#### Employer or university

University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust



### How I got into the role

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I grew up on a farm. I am sure that looking after animals lends itself to working in a caring profession.

I started my nursing career immediately after A levels. I trained as general nurse and secured my first job as an orthopaedic theatre nurse and have enjoyed a varied career in surgery for over 40 years.

I am a [perioperative](#) <sup>[1]</sup> and day surgery nurse by background. The NHS has been a great employer. It has allowed me to move sideways and up the career ladder in a range of nursing roles. My role as a surgical care practitioner started as a secondment, meaning I

could undertake minor and medium operations under direct and indirect supervision.

It has taken a while for surgical care practitioner positions to be established. When they were I was fortunate to gain a post. During this time, I have also been a senior lecturer and emergency coordinator which provided broader experience and opportunities.

The surgical care practitioner is now embedded in the nursing career pathway. It allowed me to become a Consultant Nurse in 2021.

## **What I do**

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I am in a strategic leadership role that allows me to develop services. I have also been involved in developing digital technologies, which improve services at my trust and in primary and secondary care [2]. It's encouraging more innovative ways of working which I love.

I spend about fifty percent of my time providing expert clinical practice in general and bariatric (weight loss) surgery. I assess, diagnose and manage complex patients using evidence-based practice.

I also speak at conferences across the world and mentor other colleagues.

## **The best bits and challenges**

### **Expand / collapse**

Working in surgery means you're right at the heart of patient care. You get to work as part of a team with experienced surgeons as well as a range of other healthcare staff.

One of the things I love about my role is the people I work with. I work with a dynamic and innovative bariatric surgeon and management team who drive forward improvements that help and empower patients.

Patients are at the heart of what I do. It's important that health professionals understand the complexity of obesity, which is a chronic disease. This role means I can develop and teach modules for future health professionals.

Not everything is perfect, there are challenges, and pressures to delivering services with limited time and financial constraints. Everybody's lives are also busy. It can mean it is difficult to meet people and work collaboratively.

I am a big supporter of face-to-face interaction. It allows us to create a more positive culture where kindness is at its core. We can also explore what is working and resolve problems and communicating via technology such as MS Teams and Zoom can be barrier this.

## **Life outside work**

### **Expand / collapse**

My family is my world. Spending time them helps bring balance to my busy job. I am also a keen gardener. I also love to walk and enjoy sport. They all help me relax after a busy week.

## **Career plans and top tips for others**

### **Expand / collapse**

I recently finished writing a chapter for a Surgical First Assistant book. I enjoyed it and I am thinking about writing another chapter.

I will continue to support weight-loss patients undergoing surgery. I'd like to work closer with primary care <sup>[3]</sup> colleagues. It would mean we can be more collaborative in supporting patients' long term. Additionally, I have a couple of publications and research ideas I'd like to explore further.

Anyone thinking about advanced clinical practice should explore its four pillars. Insight into clinical, education, leadership and research can help your career. You should also have an area of clinical expertise and knowledge.

It's important to remain persistent and believe in yourself. Take every development opportunity you can even if it is a sideways move. You will gain new skills, meet new people, which will expand your ideas. I suggest getting a mentor or coach who can help you navigate this pathway. Mine has been a fantastic support in my career.

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## Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Perioperative> [2]

[https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Secondary\\_care](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Secondary_care) [3]

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