

Surgical care practitioner

Surgical care practitioners are established members of the surgery team within healthcare organisations. Their main responsibilities are to support surgeons and other professionals before, during and after surgical procedures.

Surgical care practitioners provide care in an operating theatre, on wards and in clinics. They are trained to undertake some surgical procedures under appropriate supervision and within their allowed scope of practice. They are directly responsible to the consultant surgeon [1].



Working life

You'll be a trained clinical professional, such as a theatre nurse [2] or operating department practitioner, [3] who has received further training. You're trained to undertake a range of tasks in a surgical environment under the direct supervision of surgeon including:

- managing clinics where you would see patients before surgery including ensuring they are placed on surgery lists

- assessing patients to ensure they are clinically fit and healthy for the surgery
- preparing patients for surgery including venepuncture and catheterisation
- surgical procedures under direct supervision of a surgeon such as wound closure, harvesting veins [4] and carpal tunnel surgery,
- supporting a supervising surgeon as a first or second assistant
- daily ward rounds, making assessments and formulating plans for patients' post-operative care
- writing of operation notes and ward round note taking
- care after the surgery eg wound assessment, treatment and identification of surgical problems and complications
- provision of support to on-call and emergency services
- evaluating a patient's condition, including the discharge process and follow-up care arrangements
- training of trainee surgeons
- prescribing appropriate medications

Entry requirements

Education institutions will decide on their own specific academic requirements for entry onto their programme. However, the minimum entry requirements for entry to a recognised training programme are:

- evidence of an ability to study at Level 7 or above eg at Master's level)
- qualified and registered healthcare professional eg with the Nursing and Midwifery Council if you are a nurse or the Health and Care Professions Council if you are an allied health professional.
- evidence of at least 18 months post registration experience

You'll also need

- commitment to patient care and patient safety
- understanding of a multidisciplinary team especially with respect to the changing role of surgery
- recognition of the role and responsibilities of being a trainee surgical care practitioner
- understanding of the training programme
- an aptitude for both clinical and operative practice
- recognition that educational as well as clinical development will be required.

Accreditation of prior experiential learning will be dependent upon the local Higher Education Institution requirements.

- Pay and conditions Expand / collapse

Surgical care practitioners in the NHS work standard hours, which are likely to be around 37.5 a week. While training, you will be paid at band 6 of the Agenda for Change pay rates [5] and at band 7 after qualifying. Due to the nature of the work, you are likely to work shifts., including evenings, nights and weekends.

- Where the role can lead Expand / collapse

After completing your training, you'll be expecting to maintain and extend your knowledge, skills and competence as defined by the Royal College of Surgeons. [6]

As a valued member of the surgical team, you will be offered opportunities to develop your career further by learning more about service delivery which will be agreed with your surgical lead or line manager. This will support your progression through the Agenda for Change [7] banding structure.

- Expand / collapse
Job market and vacancies

Most NHS trusts advertise their vacancies on NHS Jobs [8]. Some advertise on their own websites. You can find a list of NHS organisations on the NHS Choices [9] website.

If you're applying for a role either directly in the NHS or in an organisation that provides NHS services, you'll be asked to show how you think the NHS values apply in your everyday work. The same will be true if you are applying for a university course funded by, or with placements in, the NHS.

Find out more about NHS values. [10]

- Expand / collapse
Further information
 - Royal College of Surgeons [6]

Other roles that may interest you

- Operating department practitioner [3]
- Theatre nurse [2]
- Theatre support worker [11]
- General surgery [12]

Partner logos



Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/medical-associate-professions/roles-medical-associate-professions/surgical-care-practitioner>

Links

- [1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/surgery>
- [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/theatre-nurse>
- [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/roles-allied-health-professions/operating-department-practitioner>
- [4] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Harvesting_veins
- [5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates>
- [6] <https://www.rcseng.ac.uk/>
- [7] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Agenda_for_Change
- [8] <http://www.jobs.nhs.uk/>
- [9] <http://www.nhs.uk/aboutnhs/howthenhsworks/authoritiesandtrusts/Pages/Authoritiesandtrusts.aspx>

[10] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/working-health/nhs-constitution>

[11] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/clinical-support-staff/theatre-support-worker>

[12] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/surgery/general-surgery>