

"The commitment is massive; however, it is hugely rewarding – you can instantly see the difference you make each day."

Jordan's stellar career started off when her mum suggested she consider the role of an operating department practitioner (ODP), something she hadn't heard of before.

Jordan Faithwaite

ODP professional development practitioner

Employer or university

The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

Salary range

£30k-£40k

Jordan Faithwaite

How I got into the role

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My mum worked on a surgical ward and suggested the role of an operating department practitioner (ODP) to me. I had not heard about it before and when I started looking into it, I knew straightaway it was something I would be interested in. I've always wanted to work in a role that would help people and this role seemed so interesting.

Once I became an ODP, I started to look for career opportunities within the NHS. I have always enjoyed education and knew that this was something I wanted to pursue. I was very lucky when a clinical educator's role became available within my trust. I applied for it and was successful.

Following this, an opportunity arose where I moved into a management position within the education team for theatres. Now I manage a team of very experienced clinical educators within theatres.??

What I do

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There are two very different sides to my role: the clinical role and the educational role.??

In my clinical role, every day is different and rewarding in many ways. ODPs work in three different clinical roles within the theatre department: anaesthetics, surgery and post-anaesthetic care. There is a lot of variety.

Depending on where you work, you have the opportunity to specialise in different clinical specialities or work across a wide variety of specialities. You are directly involved in hands-on patient care, caring for patients when they are most vulnerable.??

In my educational role, I am part of a team who is responsible for delivering training to staff, students and learners across theatres. This ranges from clinical skills to resilience and well-being. This role is very varied as it includes policy writing, training, learning from incidents and also supporting staff and students.

The best bits and challenges

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Every day is different. The needs and requirements of each patient change each day which keeps work interesting and challenging.

In both my clinical and educational roles, I know I am making a difference to patients whilst improving the safety of the work place and providing high-quality care.

Life outside work

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Running is a great way for me to keep fit and healthy. It also helps me 'escape' for a little bit. It helps having something to focus on outside of work.??

Career plans and top tips for others

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When I trained to be an ODP, only a diploma in Operating Department Practice was required. However, this has changed and would-be ODPs now do a three-year BSc honours degree in Operating Department Practice. To keep in line with those who are qualified now, I completed a top-up degree.

I have also started working towards completing an MSc in health professionals education as I am looking to improve the training that staff receive within theatres.

The three qualities needed for this role are:

Caring – patients come to the theatre at their most vulnerable so you need to put them at ease, give support to their family and carers, and look after them whilst they are unconscious.??

Forward-thinking – a theatre is a very fast paced, critical area to work in. You need to be able to plan ahead, anticipate difficulties and respond to incidents when they occur.?

Committed – a theatre, like many clinical areas, requires staff to work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The commitment is massive; however, it is hugely rewarding – you can instantly see the difference you make each day.??

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