



CODP



College of Operating Department Practitioners

Operating department practitioners – making a real difference to patients

Anyone who has ever been in hospital for surgery has been under the care of an operating department practitioner (ODP). But most people have never heard of them.

UNISON is proud to represent this critical group of NHS staff because the work they do plays a vital role in keeping patients safe during surgery and recovery.

An ODP is a highly trained registered healthcare professional working in a range of critical care environments. They are usually in the operating theatre in the three phases of care during surgery – anaesthetics, surgery and recovery.

They work alongside the anaesthetist where they use their advanced skills in caring for a patient undergoing anaesthetic. This includes taking responsibility for airway management, cannulation, medication and the use of specialist equipment. While the patient is on the operating table the ODP will ensure that they are kept warm

and their skin is protected. They also monitor the patient closely to ensure that the anaesthetist can respond to the patient's needs while they are asleep.

Before an operation the ODP will prepare the operating theatre, making sure that the correct specialist equipment is available for each procedure. They work closely with the surgeon, and a key part of their role is anticipating the surgeon's next move and keeping track of all the surgical instruments used during surgery.

When a patient is recovering in the post anaesthetic care unit the ODP will monitor them closely ensuring they can breathe on their own and helping them with any pain and discomfort. They will then discharge the patient back to the care of the ward or day care unit once they are satisfied with their progress.

But you won't only find ODPs in the operating theatre. They use their expert skills in other areas too, places like accident and emergency, intensive care, endoscopy, ambulances, cardiac arrest teams, maternity, research and education. They can also be found taking on specialist roles like surgical first assistant and physician's assistant too.

Now that you know a little more about this vital role, we are sure that you will recognise how important these members of staff are and why UNISON is so proud to represent them. To find out more about the ODP role go to codp.org.uk. You will also find useful information if you are interested in finding out how to become an ODP.

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