



# Surgical Care Practitioners



## What are surgical care practitioners?

Surgical care practitioners (SCPs) are established professionals within surgery teams. Their main responsibility is to support surgeons and other healthcare professionals before, during and after minor surgical procedures.

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



## Training and qualifications

- Registration as a healthcare professional (eg registered nurse or operating department practitioner).
- One to two-year postgraduate experience.
- Two-year master's degree course, including specialisation in a chosen surgical speciality.



## What do they do?

- ✓ Manage clinics and see preoperative patients.
- ✓ Patient assessment and preparation for surgery.
- ✓ Minor surgical procedures (under direct supervision of a surgeon) such as wound closure, harvesting veins and carpal tunnel surgery.
- ✓ Support surgeons as a first or second assistant.
- ✓ Ward rounds.
- ✓ Postoperative care plans.
- ✓ Delivering postoperative care (eg wound assessment or identification of complications).
- ✓ Supporting the on-call and emergency services.
- ✓ Prescribing appropriate medications.

## The facts

- It is estimated that there are around 200 SCPs working across the UK.
- Training SCPs are paid at band 6, and band 7 or 8a after qualification.



## What are the benefits of having an SCP in the team?

The role of the surgical care practitioner is now well established and has been shown to enhance patient care, maintain surgical services and support surgical training.

By establishing an on-going relationship with the consultant surgeon, SCPs can provide expert practical assistance while the surgeon trains the junior doctor. This approach also frees up time for surgical trainees, enabling them to attend teaching or theatres. SCPs can also help surgeons to settle into rotations more quickly.

The experience and expertise of SCPs improves continuity of care, and offers greater efficiency of discharge and smoother-running clinics.



## Further Information

The Royal College of Surgeons  
[www.rcseng.ac.uk/careers-in-surgery/surgical-care-team/surgical-care-practitioner/](http://www.rcseng.ac.uk/careers-in-surgery/surgical-care-team/surgical-care-practitioner/)

The Association of Perioperative Practice (AfPP)  
[www.afpp.org.uk](http://www.afpp.org.uk)

NHS Employers  
[www.nhsemployers.org/maps](http://www.nhsemployers.org/maps)