



Royal Devon  
University Healthcare  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Your career in therapies

— Northern Services —

Make a difference



# Contents

A warm welcome from our Head of Therapies . . . . .	3
A bit about us . . . . .	4
Therapies in North Devon . . . . .	5
Explore where your future can take you . . . . .	8
Funded qualifications. . . . .	11
Pay banding explained . . . . .	13
Healthcare Support Workers . . . . .	14
Assistant Practitioner . . . . .	16
Settings and rotational work. . . . .	20
Registered Therapist . . . . .	24
Returning to practice . . . . .	26
Overseas qualifications . . . . .	28
Preceptorship programme . . . . .	31
Specialists . . . . .	32
Advanced Practitioner and Consultant . . . . .	34
Benefits . . . . .	36
Working and living in North Devon . . . . .	38
What to do next . . . . .	39

## A warm welcome from our Head of Therapies

I'm lucky enough to be leading a team of dedicated and compassionate professionals that strive to help our community every day.

What can you expect from joining us? You can expect to be part of a team that is at the forefront of innovation and development, in both our services and our people. You can expect to be invested in, supported, and given the tools you need to succeed in your role and progress in your career.

Innovation is central to therapies at the Royal Devon, demonstrated by the implementation of several new initiatives and the development of non-traditional roles in recent years.

We are not afraid of adopting new techniques, as shown by the introduction of our ultrasound-guided injection therapy in Orthopaedic and Neurology pathways.

Training and development opportunities are in high supply here, whether you are interested in clinical or leadership development, courses, secondments or placements. We'll support you in finding the best way to grow.

We continue our 'out of the box' thinking with the development of new roles, which extend our career pathways and challenge practitioners to work to the top of their licence. A good example of this is the Research and Innovation Lead role we created. Roles in research are traditionally reserved for academic institutions but adding this role to our team has not only provided the basis for further improvement within our team but the findings have been subsequently accredited through publication in academic journals and presentation at national events.

The culture we have built has earned us a reputation within the Trust and our clear vision and plans instilled the belief and support required to access further financial investment. This allows us to improve patient pathways including early supported discharge in rehabilitation.

Don't hesitate when applying for a role here, you'll join a wonderful team with massive ambition in beautiful county Devon.

Helen Cooke  
Head of Therapies



## A bit about us

It's a very exciting time to join us. Newly formed in April 2022, the Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust is renowned for ground-breaking research, dynamic innovation and strong links to leading universities.

Stretching across Northern, Eastern and Mid Devon, we have a workforce of over 15,000 staff, making us the largest employer in Devon. Our core services, which we provide for over 615,000 people, cover more than 2,000 square miles across Devon, while some of our specialist services cover the whole of the peninsula, extending our reach as far as Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

We deliver a wide range of emergency, specialist and general medical services through North Devon District Hospital and the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital (Wonford). Alongside our two acute hospitals, we provide integrated health and social care services across a variety of settings including community inpatient hospitals, outpatient clinics, and within people's own homes. We also offer primary care services, a range of specialist community services, and Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC).

You'll be joining a team of like-minded professionals to provide personalised care, making a huge difference to the patients we see.

**83%**  
of allied health professional staff would recommend us as a great place to work \*

“  
*I have enjoyed learning and have been very well supported by my team and management to gain the training and development I need to do my job to the best standard possible.*

”

**Helen Chambers**  
Exercise Specialist Practitioner

## Therapies in North Devon

Therapy professionals make a difference to patients' lives every single day. You could be opening up a world of possibilities for a child's diet, empowering a patient to rediscover their sense of self after a stroke, or even keeping a family together by avoiding a hospital admission for their loved one.

Our service covers a huge variety of roles that come under four main categories:

**Physiotherapists** transform people's quality of life by improving mobility, reducing pain and helping them regain independence. This may be after an injury, operation, or as the result of ageing or a physical disability. You'll be using therapeutic exercise, education and manual therapy to enhance their wellbeing.

**Occupational Therapists** enable people of all ages to overcome challenges at home, work and with other activities. They complete a wide range of functional assessments to measure physical and cognitive abilities in order to make individualised plans. Occupational Therapists help people maintain independence and boost wellbeing by teaching new skills, adapting environments and providing equipment.

“  
*The sky is truly the limit in the role that we play in providing health care services... therefore why not be a part of it?*

”

**Gian Jacobs**  
Community Therapy Team Lead



**Speech and Language Therapists** provide life-changing treatment, support and care for adults who have difficulties with communication, eating, drinking and swallowing. You'll meet patients with complex needs and those affected by conditions such as dementia, stroke, neurological diseases, head and neck cancer and voice disorders.

**Dietitians** translate the science of nutrition into everyday information about food. You'll be advising about nutrition choices to promote good health, prevent illness and support patients with dietary related health issues such as allergies and other conditions.

Never underestimate how much you can enhance a person's quality of life simply by doing what you love. Find your ideal path and take the first steps towards your career in therapies.



**Laura Gilham**  
*Speech and Language Therapy, Acute Lead*

My role as a SLT is to support adults with their swallowing and communication. I predominantly work with adults who are in hospital, and love the fast paced, problem solving and social nature of my work.

Most people say they love eating and drinking, so being able to support patients to improve this can have a real positive impact on their quality of life and wellbeing.

In addition to supporting patients, I also lead a team of therapists. The NHS wouldn't function without our amazing staff, so I also enjoy interacting with my team every day, making sure they're enjoying their roles and striving to learn. Together we all have the common goal of providing the best quality service for our patients that we can.

Whilst training to be a SLT, I had placements with both children and adults but felt particularly drawn to working with older adults. I enjoy talking to them and being able to help them reach a goal to ensure they are enjoying eating and drinking, as it is often something simple that we all take for granted.

Maintaining my development over my career has continued my interest and enthusiasm for my job. To be able to learn new skills opens up opportunities, gives more variety to my day, and ultimately provides a better service for the patients.

SLT is a small profession and not one that's really known about... but we cover so much! Although I've found my role within dysphagia management with older adults, there are many more opportunities whether that's working with children, helping people with their speech, language, communication or voice. Take a look at what our small but mighty profession can do!

There's nothing like seeing someone tuck into a meal for the first after being unable to swallow for so long!

“

*The NHS wouldn't function without our amazing staff, so I also enjoy interacting with my team every day, making sure they're enjoying their roles and striving to learn.*

”

**Laura Gilham**  
Speech and Language Therapy,  
Acute Lead

# Explore where your future can take you

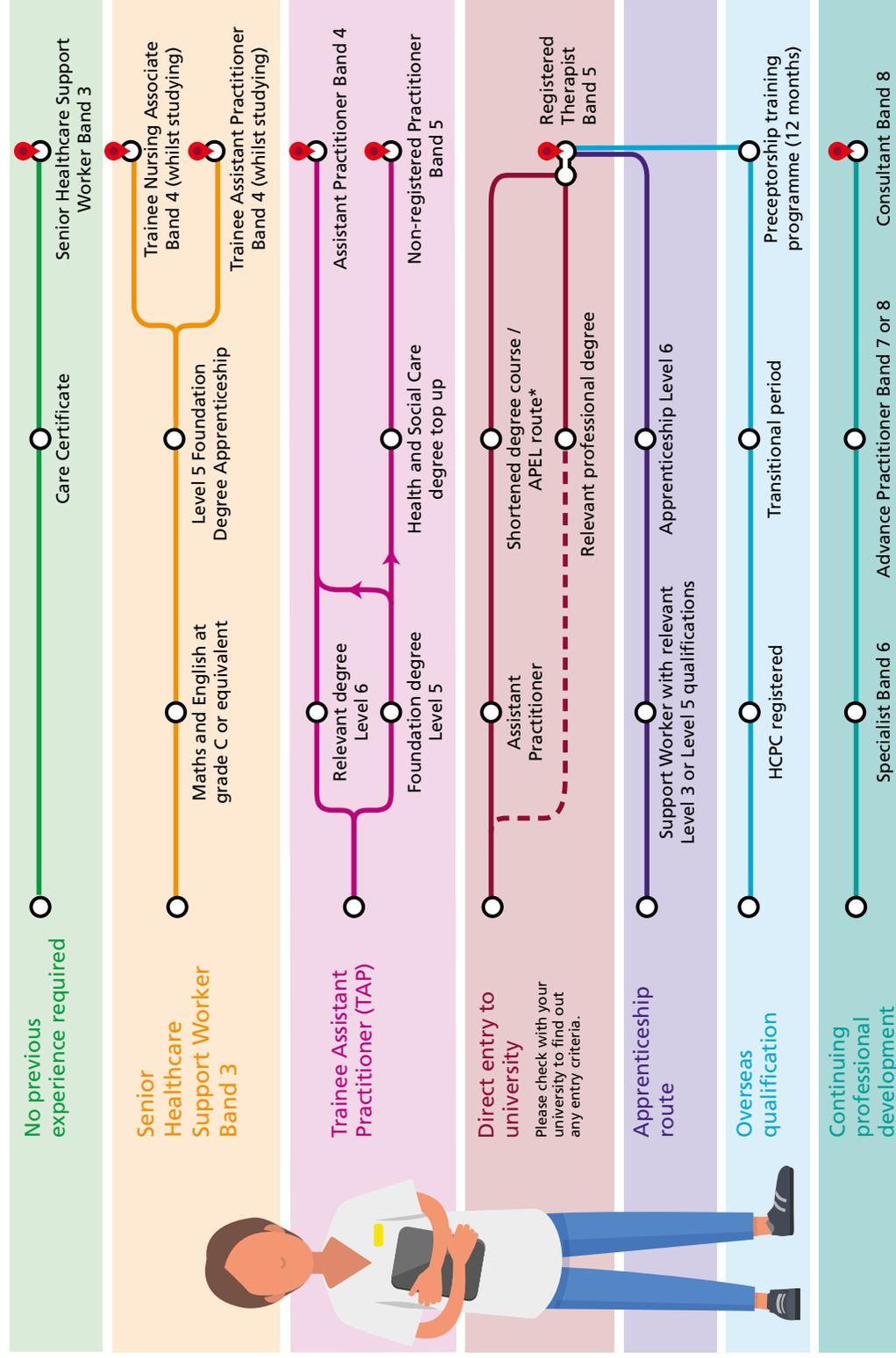
What does success look like for you? There are so many ways to achieve a fulfilling and rewarding career in therapies.

You may be starting afresh and looking for a brand new role, or perhaps you have dedicated a few years to other goals and are looking to return to practice.

If you are interested in developing your role, we have a wealth of opportunities you can harness too.

To help you on your way, we have mapped out the routes into therapies here. You'll discover more as you read through this brochure.

## Routes into Therapies (OT/PT)





**Becky Fox**  
*Therapy Research and Innovation Lead*

Historically clinicians interested in research or clinical academic career paths have ended up leaving to pursue those interests. In a smaller district general, which doesn't have a university next door, the challenges of accessing academic skill sets can be even greater.

The opportunity to support research from within the NHS, rather than having to leave and look towards universities was the draw to this role. I feel real value in being closer to the patients, as improving their experience, their care and their outcomes, is my reason for doing the research and the training I've been through over the years. It's really important that the questions we ask and the solutions we find are timely and practical for use; so maintaining clinical contact and working alongside the clinicians is the part of the role that really drives me.

I'm really honoured that the department have the vision to utilise my skills, despite their untraditional nature, and introduced this new role. I'm even more excited that others have expressed a desire to join me, demonstrating that research can be exciting and invigorating and hugely beneficial to the care we provide.

In the future this role will provide a structure to support and grow the opportunities for building research as an integral part of how we work within the Therapy department. It's important that busy clinicians can feel enabled to evaluate, learn and progress the care they provide.

We were awarded some funding from the Southwest Clinical Research Network which enabled us to trial the role and test out some strategies to support research in Therapies - that formed the basis of this role being developed and was a significant learning phase for me. Having management support to test things out and see how they worked with some honest feedback was essential.

As well as my clinical background as a physio, I have worked in research delivery in the past and been a postgraduate research student so the combination of those two sides of research experience has been fortuitous when it comes to this role where the ambition is to grow both the clinical research activity and clinical academic skill sets.

In an innovative role there isn't always someone internally who has the all the experience you need pull on. I've been fortunate to be able to pull on different leaders for mentoring related to different aspects of the role.

## Funded qualifications

If you're looking for a career and not just a job, the Royal Devon is the perfect place for you. We have an established track record for bright and impassioned individuals, so all you'll need to do is bring your best and we'll take care of the rest.

In return, we'll welcome you into the fold with learning and development opportunities and a package of support, benefits and guidance to enhance your wellbeing and transform your skillset. You'll be part of a friendly team of professionals dedicated to providing excellent standards of care to our patients.

Guided by senior members of the team and collaborating with all kinds of different specialties, you'll progress along your chosen career pathway with the help of your Personal Development Plan. This will drive your learning and identify a plethora of opportunities to build skills including IT, clinical, leadership, coaching and mentoring. It's also a great way to achieve diplomas, T-Levels, and apprenticeships across a variety of levels.

Apprenticeships are a great way to receive training in healthcare. You'll not only grasp new knowledge and expertise, but you'll also get the hands-on experience necessary to put your newfound knowledge into practice. Apprenticeships are fully funded via the apprenticeship levy, so they won't cost you a penny.

### How do I access an apprenticeship?

Once you have your Care Certificate and providing you have Maths and English GCSE's or equivalent\*, we'll help you take the next step in your career. Both career routes involve studying for a Level 5 Foundation Degree Apprenticeship, after which you'll be able to build your training to become a qualified Nurse or Practitioner. Either way, you'll be able to gain plenty of experience as you grow and learn.

You can also take on higher level apprenticeships for anything up to Level 7.

Level	Equivalent qualification example
Level 7	Masters' degree
Level 6	Bachelors' degree
Level 5	Foundation degree
Level 4	Certificate of higher education
Level 3	A-Levels
Level 2	GCSE (Grades 9 – 4 or A* – C)

\* Grades 4-9 (A-C) or relevant Level 2 equivalents such as diplomas, RQF's (formally known as NVQ's and CQF's).



**Bev Snowden**  
*Speech and Language Therapist Advanced Practitioner and Clinical Educator*

Currently I have two jobs. The first is supporting people with communication and swallowing disorders after they have had a stroke or a neurological event such as a traumatic brain injury. I work with people as soon as they go home, supporting with communication and helping them eat and drink as normally and safely as possible.

The second part of my job is working as a Clinical Educator for the speech and language therapy. I am helping staff in the hospital to feel confident about supporting people who have communication difficulties. This role also involves looking at the training needs of the speech and language therapy service and how we support students.

I have been doing this job for nearly 30 years after being inspired by a speech and language therapist when I was 17. This lady was kind, intelligent, really easy to talk with and a bit cool! I remember thinking I'd like to be like her and do what she does. Also, My grandfather had a stroke and it had such a big impact on my family. A bit of support and education after a stroke would go a long way in improving people's lives.

Training is a lifelong experience. It is important both in terms of patient safety but also to ensure the therapy and support we deliver is evidence based and is the best care available. It is hugely motivating, makes you feel more confident in your role and invigorated within your job.

It's a great job. Speech and language therapists might work with babies right through to people who might be nearing the end of their life. If you like working with people and like a challenge it can be hugely rewarding. Being able to tackle the complexities of people going through difficult situations and make things a bit easier for my patients is my favourite part of the role.



*Being able to tackle the complexities of people going through difficult situations and make things a bit easier for my patients is my favourite part of the role.*



**Bev Snowden**  
Speech and Language Therapist  
Advanced Practitioner and  
Clinical Educator

## Pay banding explained

Known as 'Agenda for Change', NHS pay is structured around different bandings for a fair and transparent pay structure.

Levels of pay vary within each band according to experience. As your career develops, you can expect to earn more and move to the top of your pay banding before working your way up to the next one.

- Healthcare Support Workers and Assistant Practitioners are usually within Bands 2 to 4
- Newly qualified, Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) registered practitioners start at Band 5
- Highly qualified and experienced specialists and consultants can climb all the way up to Band 8

Full information on pay banding can be found here: [www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/working-health/working-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates/agenda-change-pay-rates](http://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/working-health/working-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates/agenda-change-pay-rates)



Band	Earning cap
Band 2	Up to £21,318
Band 3	Up to £23,177
Band 4	Up to £26,282
Band 5	Up to £32,934
Band 6	Up to £40,588
Band 7	Up to £47,672
Band 8	Up to £91,787

# Healthcare Support Workers

Healthcare Support Workers play a vital role within the team, often working across disciplines and providing a holistic view of patient's needs.

A typical day may see you get a patient back onto their feet after major surgery or creating strategies to help a patient with dementia keep their independence for longer. This is life-changing – you'll play a key role in helping people continue with activities that are important to them.

It's amazing how much just a few adjustments can improve an individual's environment, or perhaps you can guide your patient to learn new ways to do things.

## Sounds great, what do I need to do?

You don't need experience to get started! We'll provide all training on the job and help you achieve your Care Certificate within the first year of your role.

## Advancing your career

Once you have achieved your Care Certificate and providing you have Maths and English GCSE's or equivalent, we'll help you take the next steps in your career.

Achieving Band 3 status opens a route to becoming a Trainee Assistant Practitioner. You may also be interested in training to become a Nursing Associate.

These career routes involve studying for a Level 5 Foundation Degree Apprenticeship, after which you'll be able to build your training to become a qualified Nurse or Practitioner.

“

*If you're considering becoming a Support Worker, you should know, whilst the role can be challenging, it really is the most rewarding job, especially when you see someone progress and achieve their goals.*

”

**Paula Doidge**  
Clinical Support Worker

## At a Glance

**Working Bands:** 2 or 3

**Previous experience required**

No experience required

**Qualifications**

Working towards Care Certificate

**Next steps**

Trainee Assistant Practitioner



**Paula Doidge**

I was attracted to the role of a support worker as I am keen to help patients achieve their goals. I am involved with the amputees and enjoy seeing them progress.

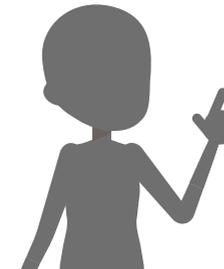
I work in the community team and our aim is to speak with our patients to find out what their concerns are, so we then can assist them with their goals.

During my time in the community, I have completed amputee training and also spent time at the Exeter mobility centre to get a better understanding of how they are measured for a new limb, which has been invaluable for my knowledge.

My involvement with the amputees during the covid pandemic was a standout proud moment for me. Thanks to the challenge of completing rehab at home rather than in the gym as we normally would, we had to figure out the best way to support and rehab the amputees in a safe way.

If you're considering becoming a Support Worker, you should know that whilst the role can be challenging, it really is the most rewarding job, especially when you see someone progress and achieve their goals.

“Paula has been visiting me for several weeks to help me overcome the physical problems following a stroke. I look forward to her visit and the exercises that are applied with helpful assistance. I am sure that, given time, they will help me get back to my former self.” **Norman**



# Assistant Practitioner

Assistant Practitioners have a wealth of experience in specific areas of clinical practice, so it's the perfect career for those who can't wait to immerse themselves in a particular area of healthcare. The choice is endless, roles can see you working across a variety of teams including inpatient services, rehabilitation services, outpatient clinics and out in the community.

A typical day could involve scrubbing up to help with a Barium Swallow in Fluoroscopy, analysing a patient's nutritional intake, or providing expert advice on rehabilitation needs so a patient can achieve what matters to them.

Working under the direction of therapists, your level of experience means that you can carry your own delegated caseload and make amendments to people's treatment plans in line with your job role and competencies. You'll be empowered to carry out agreed procedures, referring to your team for guidance and support.

Many people working as Assistant Practitioners come into the role following a spell as a Therapy Support Worker or on occasions, a Healthcare Assistant. You can start a Trainee Assistant Practitioner (Band 3) role with a Level 3 qualification. A relevant degree or foundation degree is needed to take on the role of Assistant Practitioner (Band 4).

“

*To put it simply, I became an Assistant Practitioner because I like helping people and since joining I can honestly say making a difference to peoples lives has been as fulfilling as I hoped it would be.*

”

Theresa Curtis  
Assistant Practitioner

**Theresa Curtis**  
*Assistant Practitioner*

To put it simply, I became an Assistant Practitioner because I like helping people and since joining I can honestly say making a difference to peoples lives has been as fulfilling as I hoped it would be.

My role consists of doing frontline assessments, falls assessments, providing home exercise prescriptions and supplying equipment. I assist the Physiotherapist and Occupational Therapists with complex patients who have on-going rehab needs, helping patients live a more independent and fulfilling life.

The Royal Devon provided funding and organise the formal training required to do the role, but for me, the best training has been spending time with team and learning from my peers.

If you like a challenge and you like helping people then this is the job for you! Remember, everyone is individual and should be treated that way. People should always be treated with dignity and respect, whatever there circumstances.

A standout patient of mine is a palliative lady that I have been working with for several years. During the pandemic I used to call her every two weeks just to touch base and talk about rubbish really. She has no family and at that point I was one of the only contacts she had. She used to tell me that I brightened up her day and she looked forward to the calls – this meant so much to me, and I learned in this case time was as good a medicine as any.

“

*If you like a challenge and you like helping people then this is the job for you!*

”

Theresa Curtis  
Assistant Practitioner

## At a Glance

**Working Bands:** 3 or 4

**Route to role**

Health care experience or enter as a Trainee Assistant Practitioner

**Qualifications**

Maths and English grade C or above, with experience as a Therapy Support Worker or  
A relevant degree or foundation degree

**Next steps**

Non-registered Practitioner or registered therapist



**Helen Chambers**  
**Exercise Specialist Practitioner**

My role is to support the work of the Neuro-Rehab Outpatients team with the prescription of exercise for people living with long-term neurological conditions.

I aim to help people gain confidence, have more autonomy, and improve their overall wellbeing by embracing exercise as an essential part of their lifestyle and maintaining/improving upon their fitness and mobility.

I also teach weekly exercise classes (both online and face to face) for the Parkinson's Disease and Multiple Sclerosis Society. These classes encourage interaction and a sense of community for those people who attend, in addition to the benefits of appropriate and challenging exercise.

Training and development has helped to orientate me into working in this very unique environment, and learn the correct protocol and procedures. I have developed my skills and knowledge within the specific area I work, and it has enabled me to grow in confidence and competency. I have enjoyed learning and have been very well supported by my team and management to gain the training and development I need to do my job to the best standard possible.

I have always wanted to work in a field that involved caring for and supporting people, and to have a positive impact on people's lives when they need it the most. Life took me in several other directions before this over the years that all played a part in making this, ultimately, the perfect vocation for me. I was lucky enough to be approached by a trusted friend and encouraged to move into this specific field based on my experiences, skills and personal skills...and I haven't looked back!

I am most proud of the positivity, pride and joy that this role enables me to inspire within people daily.



"Helen, I felt that I needed to say a big THANK YOU to you yet again! So many things have changed or gone out of reach for us oldies, but you are still helping us with well-planned lessons, continuity, patience and fun. I creak a bit, but I still find I want to take up the challenge of your class. I am grateful that you are lavish with praise and encouragement, where other individuals and groups have given up on me and people like me."



# Settings and rotational work

Working in Therapies at the Royal Devon is more than just a day job. You'll discover a wealth of opportunities as you work your way across a wide range of settings such as acute medicine, cardiology and community rehabilitation.

Most of our support workers merge roles and combine professions to get the best of both worlds. It's a brilliant way to develop a plethora of skills using the expertise and guidance of our therapy teams.

Some job roles are rotational across acute, community and outpatient services. These are most frequently in junior qualified roles where you are able to gain a range of experiences to guide you towards a specialist interest. Rotational posts give Therapists excellent variety and exposure as well as scope for continued professional development. There are also exciting opportunities to become involved in research and education.

## Pathfinder Team

The Pathfinder Team is a multi-disciplinary team comprising physios, OT's, paramedics and nurses who work generically to support holistic, patient centred assessments within:

- The Emergency Department – to support admission avoidance
- MAU and the short stay ward – to ensure timely discharges of patients admitted for less than 72 hours
- On all wards – to support the discharges of patients to nursing homes and the discharges of some palliative patients

## Occupational Therapy

- Orthopaedics including supported discharge
- Medical respiratory
- Cardiac
- Surgery
- Critical Care
- Neuro-rehab including early supported discharge
- Healthcare for Older People
- Acute Medicine
- Community Rehabilitation
- Emergency Department
- Same day emergency care
- Hand therapy and rheumatology outpatient services, rehabilitation – community bedded unit, hospice
- Rehabilitation – community bedded unit, hospice
- Respiratory outpatients
- Neuro-rehab including acute stroke, early supported discharge and outpatients

## Physiotherapy

- Orthopaedics including supported discharge
- Medical respiratory
- Cardiac
- Surgery
- Critical Care
- Neuro-rehab including early supported discharge
- Healthcare for Older People
- Acute Medicine
- Community Rehabilitation
- Musculoskeletal outpatients
- Emergency Department
- Same day emergency care
- Rehabilitation – community bedded unit, hospice
- Respiratory outpatients
- Neuro-rehab including acute stroke, early supported discharge and outpatients
- Orthopaedic interface

## Speech and Language Therapy

- General Medical inpatients
- Stroke / Neuro acute including early supported discharge
- Community/medical/surgical respiratory services
- Community
- Specialisms include voice, head and neck cancer, adult learning disability

## Dietetics

- Medical Inpatients
- Surgery
- Outpatients
- Intensive care
- Community/medical/ surgical respiratory services' and Outpatients including head and neck cancer



**Debbie Groves**

*Rehabilitation Practitioner in Neuro Rehab Service*

I started my career in dentistry, but soon realised that I would prefer a more 'hands on' role and moved into domiciliary care with the elderly and disabled.

A life event prevented me from pursuing a nursing career, but an opportunity arose to cover maternity leave in physiotherapy and I loved it! I was not in the position to do my physiotherapy degree but I landed a permanent band 2 assistant post in 2005. Kicking off from here, I worked my way up to a band 4 role in the Stroke Early Supported Discharge team in 2010, where I got the chance to complete the FdSc Assistant Practitioners course.

In 2018 I was supported to further my education and completed my BA (Hons) Professional Development in Health and Social Care, where my dissertation focused on clinical awareness of Functional Neurological Disorders. Gaining my degree enabled me to achieve my non registrant post.

Having been part of the award-winning Neuro rehab team at North Devon District Hospital over several years, I am proud to have seen the amazing journeys that many of our patients have travelled, with varying, but often life changing results. Supporting the determined, motivated, and dedicated staff and those living with a variety of neurological conditions in North Devon is a pleasure.

I have always been very proud of my work and I have been encouraged no end by senior staff and management who openly value my skills and commitment, which has led me to be an advocate for support staff of whatever grade or profession.

"Debbie is amazing and without her I know I would not be where I am now. She really does believe in me and encourages me to try new things. She will come in with new ideas, and together we get them to work for me. The care she gives is second to none. Two winters ago, I brought my first pair of boots in 30 years. It was something I never thought I would be able to do again. I had been in orthopaedic boots since I was about 19 years old.

Thanks to Debbie's amazing skill, patience, professionalism and dedication to her job and her patients, I am now wearing bright yellow doc martin style boots! It's something I could only dream of until now. She is one of our NHS's heroes, and I'm delighted she turned up on my doorstep, what seems like a lifetime ago. Thank you, Debbie, you're amazing."



# Registered Therapist

Joining the team at North Devon presents a whole host of opportunities, including the chance to work in different settings with a rotational work pattern. It's a brilliant way to glean exposure and experience.

You'll be making a difference every day, transforming the way our patients carry out day-to-day activities, improving their mobility and regaining their independence after illness, injury or trauma. You'll also be helping people manage difficulties associated with ageing, disabilities and a range of long-term conditions.

Funding is available for continued professional development, so take your pick of the acute and community pathways that open up as you strive to progress. The next steps from here are specialist and Advanced Practitioner roles.

Therapists play a vital role for our patients – but with such a wealth of career options out there to choose from, which one is the perfect fit for you?

“

*SLT is a small profession and not one that's really known about... but we cover so much! Take a look at what our small but mighty profession can do.*

”

Laura Gilham  
Speech & Language Therapy,  
Acute Lead

“

*Anyone interested in food, nutrition or wellbeing would find a dietitian role interesting. There are so many strands involved in our patient assessments and it's so rewarding to know we have helped them through their recovery.*

”

Donna Murray-Holland  
Band 5 Dietitian

## At a Glance

### Working Bands: 5

#### Route to role

Directly from university or  
Progression from a Trainee Assistant Practitioner role via an apprenticeship

### Qualifications

A relevant professional degree is required. This can be achieved via an apprenticeship when working as a Assistant Practitioner

### Next steps

Specialist, Advance Practice, Consultant



Donna Murray-Holland  
Dietitian

I love talking about food and I find it really helps people to open up when I ask them what they like to eat at home and what their favourite foods are. This creates a collaborative relationship where I make suggestions to support nutrition according to what is available in hospital and their medical condition. I always work with what appeals to patients as everyone benefits from that element of comfort in their food whilst in hospital.

I'm a newly qualified Band 5 Dietitian currently on a general medical rotation. I assess, review and monitor the patients on my caseload before passing them to the outpatient team where required upon discharge from hospital. I was attracted to this role after I came to the North Devon District Hospital for my student placements. There is a small dietetics team here but I always felt supported and encouraged to broaden my experience and knowledge.

Working in hospital is quite a unique environment and not like other jobs I have had in the past. It can be a big, noisy place with lots of different people at first but I feel like I'm getting used to understanding who everyone is and how our roles interact for the benefit of our patients.

I'm most proud of the days when a patient thanks me for making a difference to their treatment progression. Everyone needs food and nutrition, without it, treating patients' medical needs can become so much more complex.

Anyone interested in food, nutrition or wellbeing would find a dietitian role interesting. There are so many strands involved in our patient assessments and its so rewarding to know we have helped them through their recovery.

One of my patients had suffered a stroke and was being supported with their nutrition through different phases of recovering their swallow. This involved multiple supplements and texture modified meals. They were so pleased that we had been able to offer our input as otherwise their recovery could have taken much longer.

“

*I'm most proud of the days when a patient thanks me for making a difference to their treatment progression. Everyone needs food and nutrition, without it, treating patients' medical needs can become so much more complex.*

”

Donna Murray Holland  
Dietitian

# Returning to practice

If you are looking to return to practice, we can't wait to welcome you back on board. Your experience is invaluable to the workforce, and you'll be bringing a welcome sense of familiarity, professionalism and in-depth knowledge to our team.

As keen as we are to get you back into the swing of things as soon as possible, we understand that transitioning back can be a challenging, confusing and sometimes lonely process.

We have a return-to-work programme in place to help you settle back into your practice. We do this by making sure you have up-to-date knowledge and skills, and we'll carefully transition you into your substantive roles over time.

The length of the programme varies depending on the amount of time you have been away from practice. We follow the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) guidance regarding this, which recommends the minimum requirements needed to update you with everything you need to flourish.

“

*Returning and updating my training has given me additional confidence in my role, I look forward to being able to add to my current skillset in the months ahead.*

”

Susanna Berry  
Occupational Therapist



**Susanna Berry**  
*Occupational Therapist – Return to Practice*

Occupational Therapists have very varied roles and can work in diverse locations. I qualified as an OT in 2000 and worked at the North Devon District Hospital until leaving to have my family. After almost 15 years, I decided to return to practice in order to re register as an OT.

I worked my hours as a Therapy Support Worker, which was a great opportunity to get to grips with the many things that have changed since 2007. I was accepted back onto the HCPC register in March 2022. Returning and updating my training has given me additional confidence in my role, I look forward to being able to add to my current skillset in the months ahead.

My biggest achievement to date is returning to work after having my children. Getting back into my green trousers and being able to identify as part of the OT team means a lot. My role allows me to really get alongside patients and relatives to make a difference.

Occupational Therapy is a profession well worth pursuing. Having a good band 5 rotation can set you up with multiple skills to take your profession forward in lots of directions such as mental health, paediatrics, social care, general medicine/surgery, rehabilitation or further afield in the private sector.

If you want a caring profession with incredible scope for different working environments and client groups and the ability to really make a difference, then OT is for you.

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*To work with humility and acceptance of the feelings of others, and to accept them even when at their most honest takes much more than being professional. To have achieved a balance of teamwork in this way is a skill that many under your management can benefit from in the future and hopefully a lesson for OTs still to come.*

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## At a Glance

<b>Working Bands:</b> dependent on role and experience	<b>Length of programme</b>	• 5 years or over out of your profession – 60 days of updating your skills and knowledge
<b>Previous experience required</b> Via our return-to-work programme	• 0-2 years out of profession – no requirements	<b>Next steps</b> Specialist, Advance Practice, Consultant
	• 2-5 years out of your profession – 30 days of updating your skills and knowledge	

# Overseas qualifications

Are you looking to enhance your career and be part of something amazing? We're one of the most varied and diverse workforces in the UK, employing professionals from all around the world.

If you're interested in bringing your skills to England, you've come to the right place.

When you work with us, you'll join our passionate team and enjoy job security, a competitive salary and flexible hours.

You won't have to pay any recruitment fees upfront and we'll provide an in-depth induction process to help you feel settled. We'll also support you until you feel at home, providing you with a welcome pack and all the information you might need.

Our overseas staff complete a Preceptorship Programme during the first year to help you adjust to your new role, equipping you with everything you need for a successful career.

## At a Glance

**Working Bands:** 5-6

### Route to role

HCPC registration  
Transitional Period  
Preceptorship Programme

### Qualifications

Overseas therapists must be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) to work in the UK.

As part of the registration, the ability to communicate effectively in English is included as a requirement in the standards set by the HCPC, therefore no additional tests need to be completed once in the UK.

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*I trained in South Africa (undergraduate and postgraduate), where I owned my own practice. The demands of running my own practice taught me valuable lessons that I have brought to the table working for the NHS. I am continuing to update my skills and knowledge with the vast array of learning opportunities offered by the Trust.*

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Gian Jacobs  
Community Therapy Team Lead



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Community Therapy Team Lead

I lead a community team that consists of; Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Assistant Practitioners and Community Service Workers. We work closely with District Nurses, Community Matrons and Social Care, in providing expert healthcare services to the greater community of Torridge.

I was attracted to this role because it is multi-faceted and demands I be a leader, therapist, negotiator, advocate and critical thinker. It pushes me to be at my best every day.

On top of that, the fully committed team of healthcare professionals that I lead each day make me immensely proud to be part of them. They will truly go above and beyond!

I trained in South Africa (undergraduate and postgraduate), where I owned my own practice. The demands of running my own practice taught me valuable lessons that I have brought to the table working for the NHS. I am continuing to update my skills and knowledge with the vast array of learning opportunities offered by the trust.

I believe that Community Health Care will be the focus point in patient management in the not-so-distant future. So if you're considering a career in it, there is no better time to be involved in shaping the NHS for generations to come.

Community rehabilitation is an evolving service that is becoming ever more complex. With time it will become more apparent that there is a need for more investment and focus on community teams as they hold the key to helping ease the demand of acute services. The caseload is becoming ever more complex and acute as we are faced with an aging community and drive to receive health care at home.

Community Rehabilitation is a fast paced, highly rewarding and the sky is truly the limit in the role that we will play in providing health care services, therefore why not be a part of it?

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Gian Jacobs  
Community Therapy Team Lead



## Preceptorship programme

Whether you are newly qualified, joining us from outside the UK, or returning to practice, your first few days can feel quite challenging. Our preceptorship programme will help you find your feet and develop your knowledge and skills so you feel more confident and competent in the care you are delivering.

The structured programme consists of a series of study days, after which preceptees apply theory to practice and practice the skills they have learnt in their clinical area. The study days, delivered by our clinical Training team and clinical experts are spread over the course of a year.

The structure allows for a combination of facilitated experiential learning in the workplace with a theoretical component based upon facilitated group learning. The programme is so important because an effective transition will give you confidence to deliver effective care, and as a result, remain in the profession.

Furthermore, as part of the programme, you'll enter our buddy scheme. Your buddy will be someone outside of your team, who you can lean on for personal and professional advice, whether it be finding a place to live, or how to book annual leave.

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*I have always been very proud of my work and I have been encouraged no end by senior staff and management who openly value my skills and commitment, which has led me to be an advocate for support staff of whatever grade or profession.*

”

**Debbie Groves**  
Rehabilitation Practitioner in  
Neuro Rehab Services

[www.northdevonhealth.nhs.uk/work/preceptorship](http://www.northdevonhealth.nhs.uk/work/preceptorship)

**National  
award  
nomination  
for our Buddy  
System!**

# Specialists

Whether you're already an existing specialist or looking to become one, this is your chance to be part of something ground-breaking.

Combined with the guidance of a dedicated team and a whole host of support packages, you'll soon be reaching your career goals and establishing new ones as you discover your potential.

Physiotherapy, occupational therapy, dietetics and speech and language therapy have a range of specialisms you can focus on, and here are just some of the roles this includes:

- Specialist Physiotherapist
- Specialist Occupational Therapist
- Community Practitioner
- Senior Practitioner
- Specialist Speech and Language Therapist
- Specialist Dietitian

Specialists operate in Band 6, but you can continue to climb up to Band 8 as an advanced practitioner.

## At a Glance

**Working Bands:** 6

**Route to role**  
2-5 years qualified experience

**Qualifications**  
Degree, post-graduate diploma

**Next steps**  
Advanced Practitioner, Consultant

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*SLT is a small profession and not one that's really known about... but we cover so much! Although I've found my role within dysphagia management with older adults, there are many more opportunities.*

”

Laura Gilham  
Speech and Language Therapy,  
Acute Lead

## Which specialism?

[Find out about different specialisms on page 18](#)

## Natassja Hodgson Specialist Gastroenterology Dietitian and Acute inpatient Dietitian

I work within both an outpatient and inpatient capacity, supporting patients with their nutritional needs when acutely ill and helping people in the community with managing gastroenterology symptoms. I also advise on how to maximise nutrition when living with lifelong conditions such as pancreatic insufficiency or liver disease.

I have a passion for gastroenterology and I enjoy helping people to live their best lives regardless of medical condition. Since starting this role, I have had lots of support to increase my knowledge and experience in my speciality.

I often have to communicate complex conditions to patients and I always take pride in ensuring that regardless of the complexities, my patients understand everything I explain to them.

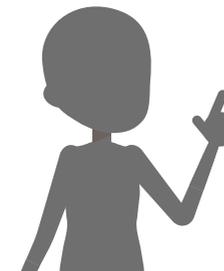
Being a Dietitian is an incredibly rewarding job and I've been lucky enough to do what I love whilst maintaining a good work-life balance.

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Natassja Hodgson  
Specialist Gastroenterology  
Dietitian and Acute  
inpatient Dietitian



“Thank you for your time, Just having someone listen to my needs has made me feel really supported.”

# Advanced Practitioner and Consultant

Taking your career to the next level, you'll be shaping the future of healthcare as you do what you do best, using your wealth of experience whilst embracing new methods and state-of-the-art techniques. You'll often get to be involved in dynamic research programmes, plus you'll have plenty of opportunities to boost your knowledge and further your development too.

Advanced practitioners and Team Leads (band 7s) work within traditional specialist roles, supporting patient care and development of staff and services.

Advanced Clinical Practitioners or Consultants (band 8s) are educated to Master's level and have developed the skills and knowledge to allow them to take on expanded roles and scope of practice caring for patients.

We're not afraid to break the barriers of tradition. We have been proactive in using therapy skills in non-traditional roles, for example in our quality improvement team, improving patient flow. Therapy specific research and innovation has also led to drive research active clinicians at all levels.

The emergence of these new and pioneering positions has expanded what we can offer, so you'll soon see even more opportunities becoming available for Band 8 roles.

It is such an exciting time to join us.

## At a Glance

**Working Bands:** 7 or 8

**Qualifications**  
Master's degree

**Next steps**  
Progression through bands, Consultant

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*I'm really honoured that the department have the vision to utilise my skills, despite their untraditional nature, and introduced this new role. I'm even more excited that others have expressed a desire to join me, demonstrating that research can be exciting and invigorating and hugely beneficial to the care we provide.*

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**Becky Fox**  
Rehabilitation Practitioner  
in Therapy Research and  
Innovation Lead



**Gethin Lynch**  
*MSK Consultant Physiotherapist*

Having previously worked in the likes of South Wales and Bristol, when an opportunity arose for me to join the team in North Devon I jumped at the chance. My wife is native to North Devon and is very nostalgic about her idyllic childhood, so we decided it was right move for us to start a family, and I haven't looked back.

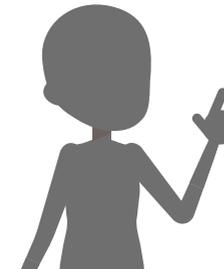
I joined the team as an Extended Scope Physiotherapist, where I was operating above my normal responsibilities, so my very nurturing manager recommended we conduct a skills match, and this opened up the opportunity for me as an MSK Consultant Physiotherapist. This role provides opportunity for not only my own development but the development of the Musculoskeletal service by driving high standards of care.

North Devon is a great place to flourish, if you're considering joining the team I'd say don't hesitate to apply. Not all places have the developmental infrastructure that the Royal Devon has created, they really give you the wings to fly.

Not only has the trust funded my postgraduate certificate in Musculoskeletal diagnostic ultrasound, but I also had a mentor who supported me through the process.

I love my role as it provides me with a lot of variety and plenty of scope to develop but above all else, I'm proud of the team. The people of North Devon are blessed with a high level of musculoskeletal care.

“Gethin was great, he listened to my worries and answered my questions, explaining things clearly to me and filling me with confidence with sensible plans.”



# Benefits

Therapists make a huge difference to the lives of patients every day and a role in therapy will deliver a sense of purpose, fulfillment, as well as some fantastic benefits, including:

- A respectable salary
- Generous annual leave entitlement
- Incremental pay progression
- Experience across multiple therapy disciplines
- Bespoke training and development opportunities
- Opportunities for advancement
- Flexible working
- Salary sacrifice scheme
- Range of Family Leave entitlements
- Childcare support
- Wellbeing and occupational health support, including a staff physiotherapist
- Exclusive health service discounts for NHS staff
- A dynamic and ever-changing working environment
- The opportunity to be a part of a warm and supportive team
- Potential to be involved in ground-breaking research programmes



# Working and living in North Devon

Boasting a stunning coastline, magnificent national parks and charming market towns, Devon offers a quality of life few other English counties can match. Add in excellent transport links, picture-postcard villages and outstanding countryside and you can see why our location has such appeal!

## Barnstaple

Barnstaple is the largest town in North Devon. Once a major trading port, it's a friendly town with many fine old buildings and a traditional covered Pannier Market. Barnstaple is a good base for exploring North Devon's brilliant beaches and the 180-mile Tarka Trail. The train ride to Exeter on the scenic Tarka Line is pretty too.

## Exeter

Exeter is a small city with a lot to offer, consistently rated among the best places to live in the UK. The city is the county's administrative capital and, most would say, its cultural capital too. A thriving, forward-looking city, Exeter is home to the world-leading Met Office, boasts Sandy Park Stadium, home to the Exeter Chiefs, one of the country's top rugby clubs and winner of the European Champions Cup in 2020.

## Exploring other towns and villages

Devon is one of the largest English counties so the Royal Devon covers a wide area, excluding the unitary authorities of Plymouth and Torbay. You may find yourself living and working close to our acute hospitals in Exeter and Barnstaple, or in one of our community hospitals or teams across North, West, East and Mid Devon.

This includes:

- Bideford
- Braunton
- Crediton
- Exmouth
- Holsworthy
- Honiton
- Ilfracombe
- Lynton
- Okehampton
- Sidmouth
- South Molton
- Tiverton
- Torrington
- Axminster

# What to do next

Our friendly recruitment team are on hand to provide advice and guidance about applying for a career in therapies. We would love to hear from you.

Telephone: **01392 356194**

Email: **[ndht.recruitment@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.recruitment@nhs.net)**

You can find out more about working at the Royal Devon, including a list of our latest vacancies by visiting our website.

**<https://royaldevon.nhs.uk/join-us>**

If you don't see the job for you then please get in touch, we may just be able to put you on the right path for your career journey.

“

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”

**Gethin Lynch**  
MSK Consultant Physiotherapist

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Bring your best,  
we'll take care of the rest

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Email: [rde-tr.recruitment@nhs.net](mailto:rde-tr.recruitment@nhs.net)

<https://royaldevon.nhs.uk/join-us>

