

Healthcare Support
Worker careers



Royal Devon
University Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust



Make a difference

as part of the **Healthcare Support Worker** team at the Royal Devon

Find your purpose, kickstart your NHS career and make a real difference to the people you care for.

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A warm welcome from our Chief Nursing Officer



Hello, I'm Carolyn Mills and I am the Chief Nursing Officer for the Royal Devon.

We are incredibly proud of our Healthcare Support Workers (HCSW) who form an essential and well-respected part of our healthcare teams across a number of dynamic settings, providing dignified, compassionate and personalised care to over 615,000 people.

You will be part of a warm and friendly team who will care for you whilst you care for others. We will invest in your training and development alongside offering you great benefits, flexibility in your work and excellent opportunities for you to progress.

Whether you are interested in following a progression pathway into nursing, midwifery, therapies, or just perfecting your role as a HCSW, there are many exciting options to explore when you start your career with us.

We look forward to working with you.

About the Royal Devon

It's a very exciting time to join us. 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.



Start your career with us

Are you looking to start your career in healthcare? You've come to the right place. Working in a Healthcare Support Worker role is an excellent way to discover a career path that's perfect for you.

You don't need any previous experience. We provide all the training you need to get started, which means you can learn and progress whilst also being paid.

We'll welcome you into the fold with a bespoke package of learning, support, and a full induction programme, equipping you with all the tools you need to reach your potential. Plus, you'll have a designated 'buddy' to work with whilst you learn the ropes.



Izzy
HCSW at RD&E
(Wonford)

I love being there for patients, showing them compassion when they are going through something tough and working alongside my team, as well as showing my initiative working individually.

One of the career progression opportunities you have is the Trainee Nursing Associate Course which I'm about to start. I wouldn't have been able to have done this without my team supporting me and encouraging me to take the next step.

We are incredibly proud of our HCSW workforce, your contribution is vital for delivering exceptional patient care in our acute settings, and out in the community as part of our Urgent Community Response teams. It is important to protect your wellbeing, so we will always be on hand with support alongside your warm and compassionate team of fellow professionals.

Once qualified, your role can be tailored to suit the hours you need, whether you need the flexibility of shift patterns split across weekdays, weekends, and nights, or part-time hours to fit around family and study time.



Nicola
Response and
Recovery Support
Worker, North
Devon

I was inspired and encouraged to apply for a Healthcare Support Worker role in the community by the nursing team who cared for my Mum. It's something I'd always wanted to do but had never taken the plunge.

I've now been in the role for 4 years and plan to stay in it for many years to come. As someone with no previous care experience I was supported with lots of training and development. As a mature learner, I'm proud to be completing a level 3 apprenticeship.

I find my role rewarding and fulfilling, I love to care for patients and support their families. It really is a privilege to care for patients in their homes where they want to be.

What is a Healthcare Support Worker?

Healthcare Support Workers (HCSW) are at the frontline of patient care, playing a hugely important role across a variety of settings. They help patients with social and physical activities ranging from personal care to taking routine observations.

Healthcare Support Workers cover a variety of roles including healthcare assistant (HCA), nursing assistant, theatre support worker, maternity support worker, and more.

Urgent Community Response teams see people in their own homes, providing essential short-term care to our most vulnerable patients.

Band 2 Healthcare Support Worker

If you are 'new to care', you'll be joining us as a Band 2 Healthcare Support Worker. This means you'll be concentrating on helping people with personal needs such as washing, dressing, feeding, and making sure they feel comfortable.

This is fundamental for your patients' wellbeing, dignity, and independence, bringing them one step closer to going home to their loved ones.

As your confidence grows, so will your skillset. You'll soon be able to assist your team with things like removing cannulas and other interventions as you work towards achieving your Care Certificate.

Band 3 Senior Healthcare Support Worker

Equipped with more experience and the confidence to work more independently, you'll be taking on more clinical tasks such as cannulating patients, running electrocardiograms (ECG) and other interventions.

You'll be kept busy with routine observations, running specimens to pathology, transferring patients and helping to keep everything running smoothly. You'll still have time to deliver personalised care, learning the likes, dislikes and individual needs of your patients.

How do I become a Healthcare Support Worker?

You don't need experience to get started! We'll provide all training on the job.

Next steps

Achieved Band 3 status? Great, you're on your way to a Band 4 position.

Choosing a Nursing Associate route will mean you'll be working as a Band 4 Trainee Nursing Associate, studying towards a Level 5 Foundation Degree.

You could also opt for the Assistant Practitioner route which will take you in a different direction, whether this is within therapies, radiology or another role.

What does the day-to-day role look like?

You'll start with a thorough handover before your daily tasks begin. For ward-based staff, this will mean greeting your patients and assisting with care, whether this involves helping them eat, drink, go to the toilet or take care of hygiene needs.

In other settings, this may mean preparing the clinical area for the day, checking patient lists, and setting up equipment.

For our Urgent Community Response Team, the HCSW role may see you helping with wound dressings or assessing a person's recovery at home.

The role does involve elements of personal care to protect your patients' dignity and help them feel comfortable and safe. For example, caring for an unwell patient suffering from incontinence may be daunting at first, but never underestimate the power of fresh bedsheets, clean pyjamas and compassion.

Work is fast-paced and incredibly rewarding, yet you may experience situations that are stressful, sad or overwhelming at times. You'll have plenty of support to overcome challenges and protect your wellbeing.

At the end of your shift, you'll have a chance to debrief with your colleagues and leave for the day knowing you've made a huge difference to your patients.

www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/careers/explore-careers/healthcare-support-workers/



Where will I be working?

A HCSW role is so incredibly varied that you could find yourself working across all kinds of different specialties. Here are just a few of the areas you may work in:

- Medical and surgical wards
- Community settings including community hospitals and patients' own homes
- Emergency Department, Medical Assessment Unit and Intensive Care Unit
- Radiology
- Theatres, day case surgery and endoscopy
- Oncology
- Pathology
- Paediatrics
- Outpatients
- Maternity (including antenatal, day assessment, labour ward and postnatal ward)
- Therapies (physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy and dietetics)



Pamela
*Pastoral Support
& Learning
Facilitator,
Vocational
Education Team
(North)*

I returned to work with the NHS in 2017 as an Apprentice Healthcare Support Worker at the Royal Devon, having previously worked at another trust in the 1980's as a Nursing Auxiliary.

Whilst completing my level 2 Apprenticeship for Healthcare Support Workers, I also achieved my Care Certificate. I attended college once a week and applied my learning while working on a ward.

Completing my HCSW apprenticeship enabled me to apply for the Trainee Nurse Associate Apprenticeship through the Trust. On completion of this degree I was able to apply for an NMC PIN for registration and work as a Nurse Associate.

In February 2023 I applied for a role on the Vocational Education Team as Pastoral Support and Learning Facilitator. I now get to support Healthcare Support Workers using my own experience in the role and make use of my teaching qualifications from my previous career.

A day in the life of a HCSW

What does a typical day in the life of a HCSW look like? There are different shift patterns available, whether you would like to spread your shifts out throughout the week, work longer shifts across fewer days or mix it up week by week.

Here is an example of what a longer shift could look like for a HCSW.



7am – I've arrived to start my shift in Radiology, where I work as a Radiology Support Worker. After changing into my uniform in the locker room, I wash my hands and get ready to start the day. I greet my colleagues and check the rota to find out where I'll be working.



8.30am – I've made sure we have everything ready for our appointments in the area I'm working in. We are expecting a few inpatients too, so I've requested patient transfers with the wards and booked porters. Next, we check that the equipment and clinical area is clean and set up to use.

My team are really supportive, which is helping me work towards my Care Certificate. Once I have this, I'll be able to progress to being a Band 3 Senior Healthcare Support Worker which is really exciting. Soon I'll be learning how to do some clinical tasks alongside my usual role.



9am – I go to reception to greet our first patient. I check their name, D.O.B and address, and show them through to the changing rooms where they can change into a gown. I explain what they'll need to do, and help put them at ease.

Once finished, I help the patient down from the table and follow our usual procedure to make sure they are looked after until they have left the department safely.



1pm – It has been a busy morning of appointments. Our clinic is finished for the day, so we carefully follow our usual procedures to leave the room sterile.



2pm – After my lunchbreak, I'm helping our team in the recovery area this afternoon. Recovery is where our patients stay for a short time after interventional procedures. My role is to help the patients with their needs, chatting to them and making sure they feel safe and comfortable. I also help my team with other tasks such as cleaning up, making sure we have enough equipment, and other important jobs that help the department run smoothly.

It's fast paced but time passes so quickly, I've built a rapport with my patients and it's a good feeling to know I've been able to make a difference to their experience today.



7pm – Our last patient has just been collected and everything is clean and sterile for tomorrow. I join in with handover before going to get changed ready for home. It has been a busy, but rewarding day!

Urgent Community Response (UCR) team

Transforming people's lives starts at home, and that's why the work of our Urgent Community Response team is so vital for our services. Urgent Community Response Teams are community-based and their primary focus is to enable a person to stay safe and well in their own home.

We also support people during periods of ill health if their medical needs can be managed safely out in the community.

This crucial role has great variety where no two days are the same. You'll be caring for our most vulnerable patients across a wide geographical area that encompasses sleepy seaside villages and bustling market towns.

You will be making a huge difference every day, whether you are guiding someone's healing after an operation, or making sure an unwell person with dementia can stay safely in their familiar environment. Dignified, compassionate care is our priority, and our specialist care and support mean that those receiving End of Life care can stay at home with loved ones and avoid hospital admissions.

About the Urgent Community Response team

The Urgent Community Response team (UCR) provide short-term care and support to people in their own homes and care settings. Helping individuals stay in their familiar environment enhances recovery and provides a dignified and compassionate service to those receiving end-of-life care.

Our service keeps families together safely at home, removing the added worry and stress of repeated trips to hospital.

As well as collaborating with patients, their families and carers, we work with a wide range of professionals ranging from paramedics and community-based specialists through to teams and departments within the acute care setting.

What's great about this role?

Starting your career within the Urgent Community Response team is a great way to boost your skillset and gain first-hand experience, leading to a rewarding career in whatever direction you choose.

There are also many other benefits too:

- Excellent support and guidance from a wide team of experts
- Great variety in location and environment
- Opportunities to develop comprehensive skills
- Individually tailored training packages
- Autonomy to manage your own caseload as you grow in confidence

As a HCSW out in the community, you'll be building unforgettable relationships with your patients, following their journeys and discovering how your care makes a powerful difference to their wellbeing.



David
*Urgent
Community
Response*

I joined the NHS in 2018 as part of the Urgent Community Response team (UCR) as a Band 2 Healthcare Support Worker. My team helped me on my career journey, tailoring training to my needs, and the Trust supported me with my Level 3 Healthcare Diploma.

Most of this training took place during work time and I was able to expand my skills, clinical competencies and health knowledge. I began working as a Band 3 Support Worker once qualified.

I strove to learn more, pushing myself and furthering my skills as I progressed along the Assistant Practitioner pathway. This helped me to discover a passion for Occupational Therapy, having worked as part of a multi-disciplinary team alongside various professions such as speech and language therapy and other professions.

I will soon be starting my next adventure as a student Occupational Therapist with UWE Bristol, where I'll be able to study whilst working alongside my current team.

I have been very well supported during my time with the UCR team, who have always been there for me. Not only have I learned new skills, I have discovered my passion and I'm excited to be following this career pathway. If you have the willingness to learn and develop your skills, this is the perfect role to help you grow.

Your career, your way

Working in a Healthcare Support Worker role is an ideal vantage point for exploring the different careers available within the NHS. We are proud to nurture a workforce of real homegrown talent, many of whom discovered their dream job during their time working as a HCSW. 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 our learning and development opportunities. This all starts with a fantastic induction programme, after which you'll be teamed up with a 'buddy' to find out more about your specific clinical area.

What training and support can I expect?

Throughout it all, you'll be supported by a team that feels just like family. Learn from experts in their field as you join forces with different professionals, working shoulder-to-shoulder as you deliver the best health and social care for your caseload. This will help guide you as you discover your career passion, and we'll provide everything you need to progress.

Your bespoke learning journey

You'll be supported to create your own personal development plan. This is used to identify your individual training needs, which can be met from the wide range of learning opportunities available such as clinical skills, management development, coaching and mentoring, IT skills and much more.

How do I get started?

You don't need experience to get started!

Come on board as a Band 2 Healthcare Support Worker and we'll provide bespoke training on the job that's carefully tailored to your role.

Care Certificate and Level 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care

Working towards your Care Certificate is one of the first steps you'll take towards advancing your career. We'll help every step of the way, providing dedicated time to practice your skills, and equip you with key guidance and protected time to study. This usually takes between 6-12 months.

When you have achieved your Care Certificate and providing you have Maths and English GCSE's or equivalent, we will support you as you study for your Level 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care. Once you've gained clinical experience and qualified, you will progress to a Band 3 Senior Support Worker.

Next steps

As a Band 3 Senior Support Worker, you'll have a choice of career pathways to choose from.

You may be inspired to follow a nursing career pathway, which could include a Trainee Nursing Associate role and once qualified, Nursing Associate. Or perhaps if you discover a passion for Allied Health Professions, which include Occupational Therapy, Podiatry, Physiotherapy, Radiology and more, you'll become a Trainee Assistant Practitioner and once qualified, Assistant Practitioner.

Both of these roles involve studying for a Level 5 Foundation Degree Apprenticeship, after which you'll be able to build on your training to become a qualified Nurse or Practitioner.

The Royal Devon will help you realise your ambition, helping you to gain plenty of experience as you grow and learn.

At a Glance

Working Bands

Band 2

What experience is required?

No previous experience required

Qualifications

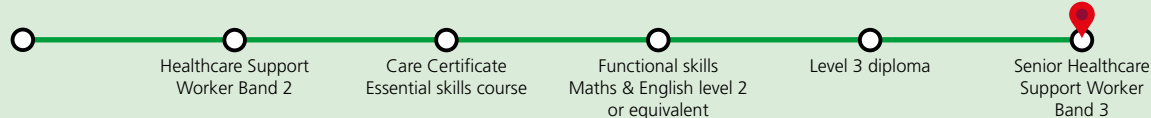
Working towards Care Certificate

Next steps

Senior Support Worker, Trainee Assistant Practitioner or Trainee Nursing Associate

HCSW progression routes

No previous experience required



Senior healthcare support worker (band 3)



Enhance your career even further

These are just some of the career pathways within reach once you qualify:

- Qualified Nurse
- Midwife
- Speech and Language Therapist
- Occupational Therapist
- Dietitian
- Physiotherapist
- Radiographer
- Trainee Healthcare Scientist
- Other Assistant Practitioner roles



Gawain
HCSW, North Devon District Hospital

My name is Gawain Ruby and I work as a Healthcare Support Worker on the Staples Stroke Ward at North Devon District Hospital.

A career change in my forties was daunting at first. I had over 20 years of experience in retail, local council, and more recently, pest control, and this involved lots of driving and long distance. I wanted a job to fit around my young family that let me be closer to home, but also meant I could help people.

I came to a careers event and was lucky to interview on the day and secure a role as a Healthcare Support Worker. I didn't need previous experience because the Royal Devon provides all learning and training on the job. I'm currently completing my care certificate and working on modules and competencies.

There are so many opportunities to learn, and I have a lot of choice about where I want to take my career.

My team are brilliant and supportive, they helped me get settled and gain confidence in my role by assigning me mentors and buddies - their friendliness makes coming to work such a great experience.

What I enjoy most is being able to provide dignified care to patients and I like feeling like I can really make a difference.



Anne-Marie
Registered Nurse

I started working as a Healthcare Support Worker, around eight years ago as I've always loved caring for people.

HCSWs spend the most time with the patients, and they're often the first people to detect when the patients are unwell, they are the eyes and the ears on the ward.

The more and more I worked in the hospital, the more I wanted to become a nurse, but I wasn't sure how to get there. I was supported and encouraged to apply for the Nursing Associate Apprenticeship which I completed. A few years later I had the opportunity to undertake the Nursing Degree Apprenticeship and I qualified as a Registered Nurse in March.

There are so many opportunities for HCSWs to take if they wish to.

Benefits

HCSWs make a huge difference to the lives of patients every day and your role will deliver a sense of purpose, fulfilment, 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
- Enhanced benefits after five years



What can I expect to get paid?

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 are usually paid within Bands 2 to 4.

Band	Earning
Band 2	Up to £23,615
Band 3	Up to £25,674
Band 4	Up to £29,114

From Agenda for change pay rates for 2024/25

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/



Annual pay awards

Every year your pay will be reviewed at a national level, taking into account the current financial climate and other contributing factors.

Pay awards are applied to all staff including new starters and those on probation. As an example, the 2023/24 pay review recommended a pay rise of 5%.



Enhance your earnings

Alongside working up through your pay band, there are lots of different ways to increase your income whilst working in an HCSW role.

Our Eastern Services Bank and NHS Professionals (NHSP) for Northern colleagues is like an internal recruitment agency made up of a wide range of staff who want to work flexibly or pick up some extra shifts. This helps us to keep our services running smoothly as it means we have talented people to provide temporary cover wherever needed.

Joining our Bank or NHSP is a brilliant way to boost your pay and enjoy flexible shifts in a variety of settings. This is great for staff who wish to pick up some extra hours to boost their income. Plus, the extra experience can support your career progression.

Also, if your work includes Saturdays, Sundays, public holidays or overnight shift patterns (8pm – 6am) you are entitled to an extra allowance.

Get in touch to find out more.

Working and living in 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. Northern Devon boasts some of the country's finest surfing beaches and the beautiful landscape of Exmoor National Park. There's also the 180-mile walking and cycling Tarka Trail, and excellent rail links to Exeter via the scenic Tarka Line.



Exeter

Exeter is a small city that is consistently rated among the best places to live in the UK. 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.



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. For a full list, please see our website.



Education in Devon

There's plenty of choice when it comes to education too from outstanding state schools and colleges as well as highly rated private options. We also have strong links and partnerships to the county's top-rated universities including; the University of Exeter, the University of Plymouth, Plymouth Marjon University, and the University of Bolton in partnership with Petroc.



What to do next

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

Email: rduh.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 www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/careers



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.

