



Royal Devon  
University Healthcare  
NHS Foundation Trust

Start your  
career  
with us

Healthcare  
support workers



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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 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.



Carolyn Mills  
Chief Nursing Officer

## 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.





## 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.

We are incredibly proud of our HCSW workforce, your contribution is vital for delivering exceptional patient care. 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.



**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 opportunities you have as a HCA 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."

## 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.

### Band 2 Healthcare Support Worker

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

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.

### 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.

### How do I become a Healthcare Support Worker?

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

[www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/join-us/choose-your-career/explore-roles/nursing-and-midwifery/nursing-associates](http://www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/join-us/choose-your-career/explore-roles/nursing-and-midwifery/nursing-associates)



[www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/join-us/choose-your-career/explore-roles/nursing-and-midwifery/trainee-assistant-practitioner](http://www.royaldevon.nhs.uk/join-us/choose-your-career/explore-roles/nursing-and-midwifery/trainee-assistant-practitioner)



## 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.

Some aspects of the role may be less pleasant, but they are an essential part of protecting your patient's dignity. 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.



**Pamela Willerton**  
*Healthcare assistant apprentice*

"While I am working on the wards I receive excellent mentorship from staff, who actively encourage me to learn. I am lucky enough to be part of the orthopaedic department, who are collectively an awesome team.

I have had the opportunity to complete my Care Certificate as well as online and face-to-face training relevant to my role and I am released to college weekly to gain my QCF Level 2 Diploma in healthcare.

Shadowing has been offered and there was such a wide range of disciplines on offer it was agonising trying to choose. I eventually decided to try a GP practice, community paediatrics and A&E.

I would like the NHS to be my new career and I'm looking forward to the opportunities available to me once I have finished my apprenticeship."

## 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
- 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)



## A day in the life of 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!

## 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.

### Care Certificate

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, and once you have achieved this, you'll take on a Band 3 Senior Support Worker role.

### 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.

## Apprenticeships

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. Perhaps you'll be achieving Level 2 Units or studying to become an Assistant Practitioner or a Nursing associate. Either way, you'll be able to gain plenty of experience as you grow and learn.

If you haven't got this, not to worry. You can boost your qualifications or take an access course independently, we recommend contacting your local college or education provider to find out more. There are some charities and organisations that provide this for free depending on your circumstances.

### Where could this role take me?

With experience and further training, you could follow one of our progression paths to qualify as an Assistant Practitioner or Nursing Associate. Both career routes involve studying for a Level 5 Foundation Degree Apprenticeship, after which you'll be able to follow a progression path that leads to a qualified Nurse or Practitioner position.

### What if this route isn't for me?

We'll propel you forwards along your chosen career route, whether this is in nursing, midwifery, radiography, healthcare sciences or something different.

There are a huge variety of jobs within the NHS including HR, hospitality, digital services and more, providing you with plenty of opportunities to find your ideal career.

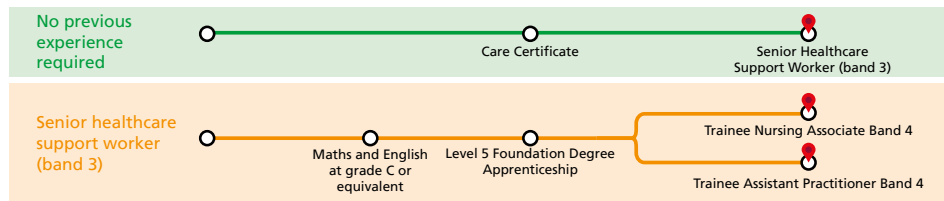
[www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/study-and-training/nhs-apprenticeships](http://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/study-and-training/nhs-apprenticeships)



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



### HCSW progression routes



### 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



**Paula Doidge**

“I was attracted to the role of a Healthcare 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.”



**Sarah**  
**Senior Healthcare Assistant in Bideford  
district nursing team**

"I've been working as a Senior Healthcare Assistant in Bideford's district nursing team since June 2021, however before that I worked for East Midlands Ambulance Service as an urgent care assistant and ambulance driver.

With the ambulance service, you never knew what the eventual outcome for the patient would be. I wanted to be able to follow the patient journey from start to finish providing holistic care from diagnosis and treatment to rehabilitation. You get that with community nursing. It's really nice to get a complete understanding of what's going on with a patient.

Another aspect that I really enjoy is getting to see people in their own environment rather than a hospital. They're their natural selves and that can help to speed up their recovery. If I can prevent someone from going into hospital then I've done a good job.

Right from the start I got a lot of support from other nurses and the team I work with and you can also contact the GP on the patient's behalf, keeping the GP informed and acting like their eyes and ears which is especially important at the moment. You get a lot of on the job training, I'm learning catheters at the moment and the nurses I work with will grab me to do one whenever the opportunity arises to give me the experience. They back you 100%. They're real team players.

I've just been asked to progress to do my Level 3 QVQS (NVQ equivalent) so I am well supported and encouraged to progress. I'd definitely say that it's encouraging you to do the best that you can rather than forcing you to move up. After this, I'll get the chance to do my Level 4 but I'm not rushing. I want to build my experience with the patients, develop a really firm foundation of knowledge and get everything spot on for them and then I'll think about progressing when I'm ready. The more I know, the better it is for my patients.

Being a community HCA is a really structured way of learning and the role is so varied every day. There are so many things that I do now that I had no idea were involved in the role! I've been able to start at the bottom and work my way up, making sure that I'm the best I can be at each level before I move on. This has been really important to me because I'm not that confident academically. I've been able to ease into each stage gradually, building my expertise as I go, with a really supportive team behind me.

To anyone thinking about joining our community nursing team, I'd say do it! I absolutely love my job and you have a supportive team behind you every step of the way and at every level. If you're ever having a down day, we're all there for that person. If you have a tough visit, there is always someone you can call or talk to afterwards. You're part of a team that really cares."





# Benefits

HCSWs make a huge difference to the lives of patients every day and your role 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
- 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 £21,318
Band 3	Up to £23,177
Band 4	Up to £26,282

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)



## 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 2022/23 pay review recommended a pay rise of up to 9% for many working within Bands 1-4 and 4% in higher bands.



## 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 Bank 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 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. 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.

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