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Catherine qualified as an **Occupational Therapist** in 2006 and developed her career working in falls prevention. She left practice for family reasons and enjoyed the opportunity to pursue other interests including travel and community based agriculture. But, when the time was right for her to work in occupational therapy again, she knew there would be some updating of skills required.

“As I was out of practice for 5 years, I was required to do 60 days of updating to re-register with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). This updating period began with a clinical placement on the Stroke Unit at Chesterfield Royal Hospitals.

One of the first things I had to do when I returned to the clinical environment was to undertake an initial interview; it felt ‘crazy’ for a moment and I wasn’t sure whether previous or current learning should be drawn on most – it was of course a bit of both! I followed protocols and procedures specific to that setting, shadowed others, then had a go myself, and soon found that my previous skills clicked in, as did more recent learning.

I found that occupational therapists, working in the acute stroke setting, are now relied on much more to lead discharge planning than they had been when I worked in

falls prevention, but I really like the fact that OT is seen as a crucial part of the patient’s recovery journey, and that our OT goals are central to the goals of the whole multidisciplinary team.

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I’m currently working in intermediate care with Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, and find I approach my profession with renewed passion and dedication. Returnees learn new skills and approaches, and also bring new potential back to the profession. If you are thinking about returning to practice it is very worthwhile, but a steep learning curve, so plan your return carefully and then try to “relax” into it, dedicating enough time for placement and study but also maintaining a work-life balance along the way!”

Are you
ready to
return?