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# Maria Rowsell

**Maria Rowsell is a Physiotherapy Associate Practitioner.**

My career started in 1984 after a career advisor introduced me to the government Youth Training Schemes (YOP/YTS) leading me towards Physiotherapy at Queen Alexandra Hospital (QA).

During my 4 monthly rotations in wards and departments I shadowed registered Physiotherapists and MDTs at QA Hospital within their specialities giving me opportunities in surgery, acute medicine, hydrotherapy, elderly medicine, and outpatient physiotherapy etc. This experience was insightful, giving me confidence towards applying for my Physiotherapy Helper role under the Portsmouth primary care group. My role as a Remedial Helper was therapist-led, and lacked structure and training, fortunately, my Senior 1 (B7) was keen for role development.

I helped identify our training and learning needs and implemented the initial in-service training sessions. I valued these speciality rotations as they gave us invaluable knowledge and experience through joint working with skilled clinicians and feeling valued within the MDT.

Today I’m a Physiotherapy Associate Practitioner in the Community Neurology Service (CNS) team at St Mary’s Hospital in Portsmouth, working with patients towards achieving their full rehabilitation potential through assessing and identifying needs, goalsetting and establishing treatment plans. Further, I support with weekly triaging of patients, and manage my own caseload of patients.

I feel supported and valued within my role with ample opportunities for supervisions, training opportunities and we value teamwork and engagement in team projects and setting yearly objectives. Recently, I’ve been involved in a successful pilot, supporting our Lead Physiotherapist in supervising one first year Physiotherapy student. Based on this success, my involvement with student supervisions will be ongoing, and I am expecting another student in June. We are constantly reviewing opportunities for student learning and Support Worker inclusion.

I’ve gained various skills working through the COVID-19 Pandemic despite the associated difficulties including redeployments to Jubilee House and the End of Life team. My new role as a Support Worker was tough, however, I felt confident relying on my skills so I could support patients in meeting their therapeutic needs.

My 38 years in the NHS have been enjoyable; experiencing my role evolve, and witnessing the challenges brought on by the pandemic.

The future of our CNS service and care provision looks interesting as the Pandemic settles because of the service changes we have made allowing us to continue meeting patient needs. For example, there may be opportunities to move towards a virtual model in some areas allowing for virtually delivered therapies and supervisions, freeing some clinician time for planning and more urgent face to face contacts and better opportunities for students.

My career has been an enjoyable and fruitful one, and despite initially having reservations about providing my case study until Rujeko (AHP Support Worker Lead) met me to discuss the expectations, I am hopeful my experiences can help other AHP Support Workers feel positive about their career paths, developing within their roles, and confident about exploring opportunities within.