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# Debbie Groves

## Debbie Groves is a Rehabilitation Practitioner in Neuro Rehab Service at Northern Devon Healthcare Trust. In her own words hear about her experiences below.

### I am based in a neuro-rehab outpatient team at North Devon District Hospital, but predominantly outreach to community settings, such as patients’ homes and local gyms. My role entails supporting patients with neurological conditions such as Multiple Sclerosis, Stroke and Functional Neurological Disorders to proactively manage their long-term condition and enhance their self-efficacy to participate in activities that are important to them. This is achieved through interventions such as exercise, postural management programmes, training carers to support with spasticity management, talking therapy and enabling self-management.

### Many of the patients on the caseload have physical and/or cognitive problems. A rehabilitation programme may have been recommended or initiated by an Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist in an outpatient clinic, and I then follow the patient up in the community setting to ensure the intervention is feasible for the patient to manage, support them to embed it into their daily life, and modify and progress the intervention as appropriate. Another aspect of my role is reviewing patients pre and post Intravenous Immunoglobulin (IVIg) treatment to establish how effective the intervention has been, to help inform ongoing treatment options.

I am passionate about the people that I work with, and I am privileged to have been given the opportunity to develop the role I am now pursuing. I started my health career in dentistry, but I soon realised that I would prefer to be more ‘hands on’. I then pursued a role in domiciliary care with the elderly and disabled. After a life event prevented me from pursuing a nursing career, I was appointed to cover a maternity leave in physiotherapy. I loved it and, although I was not in the position to do my physiotherapy degree, I was appointed a permanent band 2 assistant post in 2005.

I am immensely proud to have achieved a band 4 role in the Stroke Early Supported Discharge team in 2010, I was later offered the opportunity 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; within this I was able to focus my dissertation on clinical awareness of functional neurological disorders. This level of academic study has enabled me to achieve my non registrant post.

Having been part of the award-winning neuro rehab team at NDDH, over several years, I am proud to have seen the amazing journeys that many of our patients have travelled, with varying, but truly life changing results at times. Some of these journeys are bittersweet but, to support 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 what I have been able to achieve within my support worker role. I have been encouraged no end by senior staff and management to see my abilities and skills as valuable. This has led me to be an advocate for support staff of whatever grade or profession.**