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# Nicola Wastie - AHP Support Workforce Officer-AHP Support Workforce

I started my career with the NHS back in 2007 as a band 2 Podiatry Clinic Assistant.

My job role involved supporting the Podiatrists with several tasks, some of which included sterilization of instruments, dealing with patient enquiries, logging calls with GP’s, assisting patients to and from clinic and holding limbs as and when required. I also assisted in nail surgery on a rotational pattern alongside my other colleagues, normally about once a month. 6 years later we were re-banded to a band 3.

As the years progressed, patient caseloads have almost doubled and admin tasks such as triaging and booking appointments have taken over and the role has become almost 95% admin, with just a small amount of time in clinic, assisting in nail surgery or occasionally wheeling a patient over to other departments.

A few years ago, it was decided to undergo a restructure and the 3 teams were divided into 6, to assist the team leaders it was also decided to recruit band 4 Lead clinic assistant. As there was no opportunity for me to progress clinically, I decided this was the route I needed to take, and the opportunity I needed to enable me to progress. Within this role I manage 7 members of my team and support them to do their job to the best of their ability. Over the years I have seen the number of podiatrists drop and recruitment become an issue, due to lack of podiatrist attending degree courses and covid. This added additional pressures to the podiatry registered workforce, now being at about 40% vacancy rate.

Towards the end of last year, I saw the opportunity for a 6-month secondment to complete a scoping exercise on behalf of the trust for HEE on AHP support workers. I was excited and thrilled about the prospect of actually being able to make a difference, can our support workforce help with the current vacancy rate? It may not ease the strain immediately, but to help support, support workers and enable them to grow, progress and develop their careers, is an exciting opportunity. It is never too late to make these changes, we have an amazing support worker workforce within the trust, and I am sure they will be as thrilled as I am in the prospect of having the support and recognition we deserve.

**Being an AHP support worker is such a rewarding job, and with the new framework being implemented there will be more opportunities available to progress and develop your career further should you wish to, and the option of becoming a registered professional being a bonus.**