



“I had been away from the profession for 25 years but it didn't take long before I felt very at home again.”

Diane Shipp is a **Physiotherapist** working with older patients at the Lings Bar Hospital in Nottingham. Here she tells us about her return to practice journey.

“I trained at the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital in Birmingham, qualifying in 1985 and enjoyed working in physiotherapy for 6 years. My faith has always been very important to me though, and in 1990 I took a month-long mission trip to West Africa which changed the course of my life! I left the NHS to see where God would lead me and spent several years working with young people and travelling overseas to lead teams involved with various short term projects, from the heat of the Sahara Desert to a snowy Russian winter. I then spent 10 years living and working slightly closer to home in Macedonia working on various church and community projects.

After returning to the UK and working in hospitality for a while, I wanted to move back into the healthcare sector and spent 2 years as a Care Support worker at a specialist college for people with a disability.

I applied, unsuccessfully, for a Rehabilitation Support Worker role with Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust but they told me that a Return to Practice (RtP) post was being proposed, and it was subsequently advertised on the NHS Jobs website. I applied and was delighted to hear in May that my application had been successful and my RtP post would start in September and run for one year.

I completed the requirements of my RtP process in 3 months, during which time I did 50 days of supervised practice, 15 days of personal study and 2 days of formal study at the University of Nottingham. I was really enjoying working as a physiotherapist again and whilst I was completing the RtP fixed term contract, the Trust advertised a permanent position, which I applied for and got!

I had been away from the profession for 25 years but it didn't take long before I felt very at home again after all people haven't changed, the skills you need to motivate and engage with people are still the same and human anatomy is still the same!

Every person returning to practice will be different but I would say, focus on the scope of practice you aim to return to and ensure you have good clinicians who will support that supervised practice. If you've been out of practice for a long time like myself, don't underestimate the transferable life skills you now have and try and ensure you have time to do your own study and research to back up clinical experience. I reckon if I can get back after so long - anyone can!”

Are you
ready to
return?