Improving patient experience by reducing therapy interventions using integrated therapy roles

**What was the problem?**
Patients needing help from therapy assistants were seen by both physiotherapy (PT) and occupational therapy (OT) non-registered technical instructors. Joint assessment and treatment planning were limited, sometimes duplicating effort, with multiple treatment sessions for patients, increased demand on staff and longer treatment times.

**What was the solution?**
Developing a generic therapy role and training staff in both PT and OT skills so they can carry out an integrated assessment and treatment plan, supported by senior practitioners.

**What were the results?**
Less duplicated effort and waste and better use of resources. Outcomes included:

- about 40% of time released
- improved patient experience
- session times reduced by 50%
- staff time reinvested in additional contacts for other patients.

Releasing staff time increased the number of inpatient interventions across the organisation, resulting in more effective patient flow and enabling the trust to offer services in a different way. For example, it used staff time to run a pre-op hip and knee education group to prepare patients for surgery before admission; patients are now aware of what therapy to expect after surgery and their anticipated length of stay.

**What were the learning points?**

- Engaging, communicating with and involving staff throughout the process are vital to influence and secure commitment to the change.
- Be clear about how much time you require from others – offer support for attending training and for assessor time.
- Allow time for the change to become embedded in normal working practice – for a change in culture.