

Lauren Walker

Expert Witness
Occupational Therapist

Brighton



Professional Background

Lauren Walker is a highly experienced Occupational Therapist with over thirteen years of post-registration clinical experience, including more than ten years specialising in hand therapy and upper limb rehabilitation. She has worked across NHS teaching hospitals, private healthcare and independent practice, developing extensive expertise in the assessment, treatment and rehabilitation of adults and children with complex upper limb conditions. Her clinical practice encompasses traumatic injuries, elective surgery and chronic musculoskeletal disorders, including fractures, tendon and nerve injuries, brachial plexus injuries, compression neuropathies, amputations and prosthetic rehabilitation, vascular and lymphatic disorders, arthritis and persistent pain conditions.

Lauren has extensive experience managing highly complex upper limb presentations requiring specialist assessment, clinical reasoning and multidisciplinary rehabilitation. Her work includes rehabilitation following major trauma, reconstructive surgery and complex post-operative recovery, as well as the management of Complex Regional Pain Syndrome, severe hand stiffness, chronic pain and functional impairment. She regularly undertakes comprehensive functional assessment, evaluates activities of daily living, recommends specialist equipment and adaptive strategies, and supports patients to maximise independence following injury or surgery. Through her independent practice, she has also developed expertise in assessing long-term rehabilitation needs, vocational rehabilitation, future care recommendations and the preparation of independent, evidence-based clinical opinions.

Lauren has extensive experience coordinating multidisciplinary rehabilitation across hand therapy, trauma and acute rehabilitation services. She works closely with hand and plastic surgeons, orthopaedic surgeons, physiotherapists, specialist nurses, psychologists, pain specialists, vocational rehabilitation providers, social workers and community rehabilitation teams to develop and deliver individualised rehabilitation programmes. Her work also includes discharge planning, recommending care packages, specialist equipment and environmental adaptations, and coordinating rehabilitation following complex injury and surgery.

Alongside her clinical practice, Lauren has held senior leadership roles within specialist hand therapy services, including Deputy to the Band 8a Clinical Lead within an NHS teaching hospital. She has contributed to workforce development, clinical supervision, service redesign and quality improvement, including developing new therapy pathways, leading virtual hand fracture services and coordinating national quality improvement workstreams across NHS England.

Lauren maintains an active commitment to evidence-based practice through specialist hand therapy education, research and continuing professional development. She has completed advanced postgraduate training in hand therapy, pain science, radiographic imaging of the hand and leadership, and has contributed to research, national service evaluations and conference presentations within the field of hand therapy. She is an Expert Witness Occupational Therapist and is fully trained in the Civil Procedure Rules, including relevant revisions as they arise.



Specialisms

- Hand therapy
- Upper limb rehabilitation
- Traumatic hand & upper limb injuries
- Tendon injuries
- Peripheral nerve injuries
- Brachial plexus injuries
- Compression neuropathies
- Fractures and dislocations
- Upper limb amputations and prosthetic rehabilitation
- Complex Regional Pain Syndrome
- Arthritis and chronic pain conditions
- Reconstructive and post-operative rehabilitation
- Functional assessment
- Vocational rehabilitation
- Future care recommendations
- Specialist splinting and adaptive equipment
- Neurological rehabilitation (stroke and acquired brain injury)
- Paediatric upper limb rehabilitation

Age group

- Adults
- CYP

Career history

- Advanced Hand Therapist, Ad hoc March 2015 – present
Independent Hand Therapist and Occupational Therapist, East Sussex, UK
 - Delivered specialist assessment and functional rehabilitation for complex plastic, orthopaedic, and chronic hand conditions within a medico-legal framework.
 - Provided objective clinical assessment and occupation-based treatment plans supported by current research evidence and clinical guidelines.
 - Produced comprehensive medico-legal rehabilitation reports for insurers and vocational rehabilitation providers outlining upper limb deficits, functional impact and future treatment requirements.
 - Quantified rehabilitation needs including therapy duration, equipment, and associated costs.
 - Liaised with case managers and insurers regarding treatment recommendations and case progression.
 - Formulated goal driven treatment programmes focused on maximising functional recovery and return-to-work outcomes.
- Education and Training Project Manager 2022 – 2026
Band 7 and Senior Quality Improvement Manager, Band 8a
NHS England, London, UK
 - Maintained independent hand therapy and occupational therapy practice alongside this role.
 - Lead national healthcare education quality assurance and improvement programmes aligned to the Education Quality Strategy and NHS 10-Year Plan.
 - Managed complex, multi-stakeholder projects using agile and waterfall methodologies.
 - Synthesised healthcare intelligence data to produce complex qualitative and quantitative analysis and national reports. Presented findings to senior healthcare leadership to support senior decision-making.
 - Overseen project procurement, governance, risk management, and budgets including preparation of business cases and project initiation documents.



Career history

- Presented complex and sensitive information to senior stakeholders, managing challenge effectively.
- Advanced Hand Therapist, Band 7 2018 – 2022
University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust
- Specialist Hand Therapist, Band 6 2016 – 2018
University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust
 - Provided comprehensive assessment and treatment of orthopaedic, plastic, neurological, and chronic hand conditions in a busy outpatient hand service.
 - Autonomously managed diagnostically varied and complex patient caseload.
 - Provided detailed written clinical documentation to support complex surgical and rehabilitation decision-making.
 - Managed the Virtual Hand Fracture Clinic including triage of A&E referrals; x-ray interpretation with hand consultants; patient telephone consultation and diagnosis explanation; treatment pathway management; coordination of surgical and non-surgical pathways; risk identification and escalation; and training junior staff.
 - Deputised for the Band 8a including referral management, scheduling, and PALS complaints.
 - Lead departmental audits and service evaluations.
 - Education Lead responsible for development of the monthly in-service training program and departmental education programme including producing an internal hand therapy competency framework.
 - Line management responsibility including recruitment, appraisal, and performance management.
- Occupational Therapist, Hand Therapy and Burns 2015 – 2016
Queen Victoria Hospital, East Grinstead, UK
 - Provided comprehensive assessment and treatment of complex trauma, plastic, and orthopaedic hand conditions utilising knowledge of plastic surgery protocols, anatomy, physiology, and hand biomechanics.
 - Proficient in standardized assessments: Motor (Oxford MMT, Goniometer, Dynamometer); Sensory (SW Monofilaments), self-report (DASH).
 - Assessed and managed wound care including suture removal.
 - Provided functional assessment and treatment for complex burns patients.
 - Applied diverse therapeutic modalities: education, exercise, splinting, scar treatment, oedema control, desensitization, GMI, and functional activities.
 - Provided clear discharge reports and rehabilitation referrals.
- Rotational Occupational Therapist 2013 – 2015
Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, UK
 - Elderly Medicine, Trauma & Orthopaedics, A&E, Hand Therapy
 - Provided occupational therapy assessment, treatment, and discharge planning (including home visits) to a wide range of specialties within an acute trust.
 - Planned and managed a clinical caseload for an out-patient hand service and in-patient trauma and elective general orthopaedic ward.



Qualifications

- MSc Occupational Therapy, University of Brighton
- Research: Exploring treatment adherence in hand therapy
- BA Political Science, University of Illinois-Urbana

Professional Memberships

- HCPC registered Occupational Therapist (OT67783)
- British Association of Hand Therapy (BAHT)
- Royal College of Occupational Therapists

CPD

- BAHT Level I – Introduction to Hand Therapy (2014)
- BAHT Level II – Management of the Wrist (2015)
- BAHT Level II – Radiographic Imaging of the Hand (2017)
- NOI UK, Lorimer Moseley – Pain Science (2018)
- Level II certificate in Counselling Skills (2019 – 2020)
- Guest lecturer, University of Brighton's MSc Occupational Therapy program (2020)
- Poster presenter, sole author, British Association of Hand Therapy Conference (2020)
- Edward Jenner Leadership programme (2021)
- Clinical Risk Management, Foundation (2022)
- APM, Project Management (2023)
- Continuous Improvement Practitioner (2026)

