

Ten Questions about being a Consultant physiotherapist

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1. Please describe briefly your job role and responsibilities

- My clinical work is for the spinal team providing a service for the management of atraumatic back pain patients in the emergency village in secondary care, recognised as a national exemplar service in the NHS Improvement spinal 'getting it right first time' report. This includes providing an on-call service for the spinal surgeons, physiotherapists and GP's across the local CCG and supporting the team to ensure a 7 day service 52 weeks a year.
- I run the spinal fracture clinics and am the consultant responsible for the virtual spinal clinics, I also support the elective spinal clinics in a tertiary spinal referral centre and run the early injection pathway for the MSK service in accordance with the national low back pain pathway. I set up the spinal ERAS (enhanced recovery after surgery) service and published a paper on this service, I remain involved in supporting the team and ongoing development of this service.
- I lead a team of advanced practitioners in ED, acute orthopaedics/fracture clinic and spines ensuring the team delivers across the 4 pillars of advanced clinical practice.
- I am vice chair of the advanced clinical practice steering group across the trust locally, educational lead for the APPN and communication lead for the national back pain clinical network nationally.
- My research interest is around the identification of cauda equina syndrome in the emergency setting and my first paper on this subject has recently been accepted for publication.
- I teach on the advanced clinical practice and trauma and orthopaedics MSc at 2 local higher education institutions along with local education and the regional registrar training programme.

2. Please describe briefly your career pathway so far

- I graduated from Keele University in 1999 and began working in Blackpool, moving to Salford to complete junior rotations.
- I completed an MSc in Sports and Exercise injury management in Leeds In 2004; I have worked in all levels of sport; including Team GB at youth Olympics, World Student Games and the Olympic Games.
- I was the lead physio for England women's rugby and GB women's Basketball.
- I have maintained my commitment to the NHS throughout my career; in the Emergency Department at Salford Royal and Royal Bolton Hospitals before moving to Orthopaedics in Bolton; CATS and fracture clinics.
- I returned to Salford to take up my consultant post after the Commonwealth Games in 2014 where I managed the medical services for a competition venue.

3. Have you completed any postgraduate education courses relevant to your role?

- MSc Sports and exercise injury management 2006 – dissertation 'The role of ESP Physiotherapists in ED'
- Diploma in injection therapy UCLAN 2013
- Principles of Independent Prescribing – University of Cumbria 2015.
- V300 Non-Medical Prescribing – Bolton University 2009.
- First contact practitioner module UCLAN 2019

4. What have been the challenges in achieving consultant level practice?

Gaining respect from surgical colleagues, showcasing what I can deliver helped me to do this.

5. What advice would you give to a new graduate keen to develop as an advanced practice and consultant level Physiotherapist?

It is very important you get experience in all areas to gain a basic understanding of all areas of physiotherapy, this will also consolidate your knowledge and provide a platform for further education as you develop.

6. What personal qualities/characteristics are important to have for your role as a consultant Physiotherapist?

- The ability to multi-task and deal with constant interruptions.
- High - level critical thinking.
- The ability to see opportunities and facilitate change.
- The vision to support and develop others.

7. How to do measure your effectiveness as a consultant-level physio?

- Clinical outcomes have been presented at national conferences and they are in the process of a peer review for publication.
- My annual appraisal is used to measure my clinical competence and celebrate success, along with an awareness of development opportunities.

- The success of the team and their enjoyment in their work along with opportunities is very important to me and monitored as a team.

8. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

I would like to apply for funding to complete a PhD and this will likely be something I do in the next 5 years.

9. What type of CPD activities do you do at this level?

My clinical education is done alongside the AP team and spinal registrars, along with case reflection with consultant spinal surgeons, ED consultants and medical consultants.

10. What would be your 3 top tips to an experienced Physiotherapist keen to develop as an consultant physio?

- Don't be afraid to throw your hat in the ring when opportunities arise.
- Ensure you have a great team around you and work to constantly develop yourself and the team.
- Seek out a supportive clinical mentor (you may need more than one) along with a strong AHP mentor to help guide you along the way.