

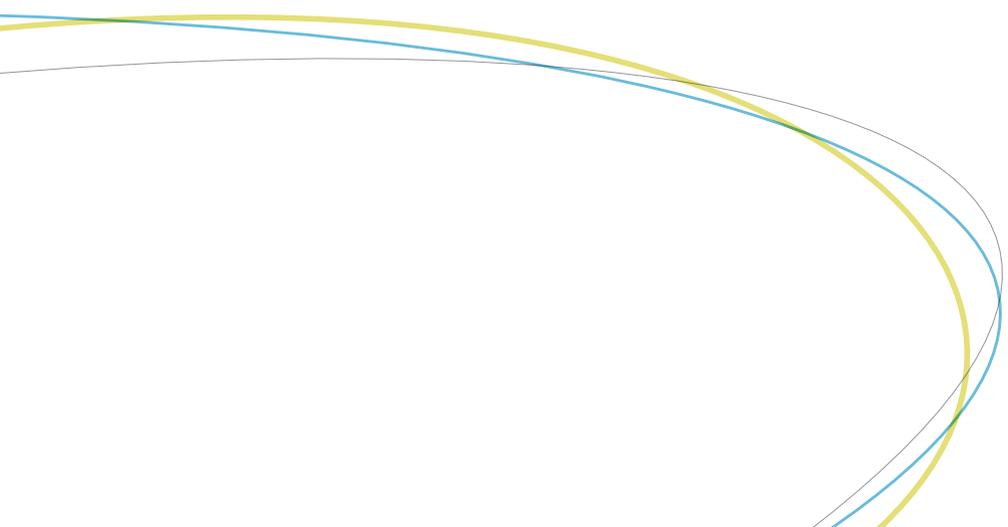
# On your way to the world of work

An essential guide for future graduates and newly qualified physiotherapists on career guidance and support post-studies



# Getting started checklist

You've got your degree but not sure where to begin? We have compiled a useful checklist to help get you started in your new career and make the most out of your CSP membership.

- ☑ Register with the HCPC
  - ☑ CSP physiotherapy jobs - see what roles are out there and set up alerts
  - ☑ Get your ePortfolio in order
  - ☑ Subscribe to the newly qualified network on iCSP  
*(and any others that you're interested in)*
  - ☑ Make sure your CSP web account is updated with your current email and postal address
  - ☑ Find a mentor on eMentoring platform
  - ☑ Graduate Hub – a new resource to support you in your career, whether you're in post already or searching for your first job
  - ☑ Once you have your HCPC pin, **it's time to get chartered!**  
You can upgrade your membership now
  - ☑ Add MCSP to your CV.
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## Foreword

Congratulations on successfully navigating your studies and embarking on the fantastic lifelong journey of being a physiotherapist.

It feels like only yesterday that I was where you are now and looking back on my career, it proves what a varied and rewarding career physiotherapy can be. If anyone had told me when I started my first job as a band 5 rotational physiotherapist that I would have been able to combine roles in the NHS, sport, research, leadership and teaching and now here at the CSP using my knowledge and skills to lead the profession, I wouldn't have believed them.



There's no one way to be a physiotherapist, and not necessarily one clearly defined career path – hold on to that

There's no one way to be a physiotherapist, and not necessarily one clearly defined career path – whatever role, sector, or setting you end up working in it will be right for you and creating innovative portfolio careers is a real possibility. And with the profession constantly evolving, who knows your perfect role may yet to be defined or created. If the pandemic has taught us anything it is this; you have all of the tools at your disposal to thrive wherever our service users need us.

Remember also this is just the beginning and you (and I) are still learning. It is ok that you don't know everything. You'll be learning for the rest of your career, and that's a good thing for you, your patients and your employer. Hold on to that as you take the first steps into your career. Never stop asking questions, being curious and selling yourself, your profession and your skills that you have developed.

This guide will give you some great step-by-step advice as you near completion of your degree and begin your new career. I would like to leave you a few pieces of advice as you set out:

- Find yourself a mentor, someone to guide and support you
- Take every opportunity that comes your way, however it works out you will learn
- Build networks through the CSP and your fellow graduates, social media and in your workplace as you never know where they will lead
- Finally, don't ever assume people know the power and impact that physiotherapy can have. Promote yourself and your profession and show others what is possible.

**Graduation is just the start. Enjoy the journey!**



**Gill Rawlinson** MCSP MSc FHEA

Assistant Director, Practice and Development

Chartered Society of Physiotherapy

 @GillRphysio



# Introduction

Congratulations!

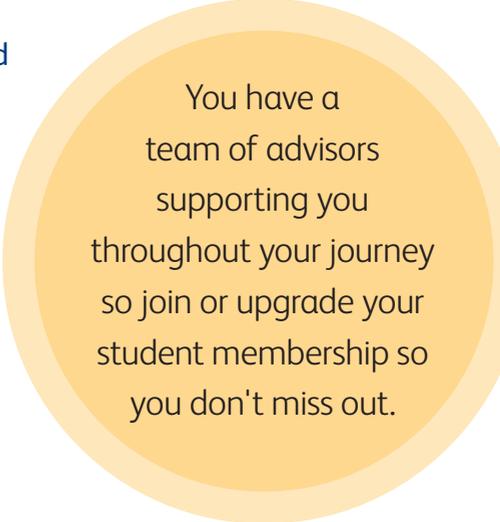
As your studying experience comes to an end, there are many exciting opportunities available to newly qualified physiotherapists, whether that's working in the UK in healthcare, social care or the third sector, or doing the same overseas. The world is your oyster but do you actually know where to start, what the first steps you should take in your physiotherapy career are and how to land your perfect first job?

We have your back at the CSP and have created this essential guide especially for you, collating all the information you need to know, the steps you need to take to guide you through these important first steps in the world of work.

From registration with the HCPC, to preparing for interviews, you will find in the following pages lots of tips towards resources to help you.

And remember, as a member of the CSP you have a team of advisors on hand, supporting you throughout this journey so join or upgrade your student membership as soon as possible to make sure you don't miss out.

**Good luck!**



You have a team of advisors supporting you throughout your journey so join or upgrade your student membership so you don't miss out.

# 1. Next steps after graduation

## HCPC registration

After graduating, and in order to practise as a physiotherapist in any capacity in the UK, you need to register with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

This is the regulating body for 15 health and care professions and their role is to protect the public.

To do this, they:

1. set standards for professionals' education and training and practice,
2. keep a register of professionals, known as 'registrants', who meet their standards,
3. take action if professionals on their Register do not meet their standards.

To register, you can download the application form on the HCPC website ([www.hcpc-uk.org/registration](http://www.hcpc-uk.org/registration)) or contact them directly. Alternatively, your university should keep a stock of registration forms.

Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) contact details:

Email: [registration@hcpc-uk.org](mailto:registration@hcpc-uk.org)

Tel: +44 (0)300 500 4472

Registration has to be renewed every two years and comes with a fee. The HCPC will also require you to complete a professional declaration to confirm that you continue to meet the HCPC's standards, including those related to **Continuing Professional Development** (CPD). Read more on how the CSP can support you to meet the HCPC's CPD requirements on page 32 of this guide.

## PROTECTION OF TITLE

The law protects the title 'physiotherapist', and in order to use this title you *must* be registered with the HCPC. If you do not register, or re-register, with the HCPC you cannot call yourself a 'physiotherapist'. If you used to be on the HCPC register you can call yourself a 'former physiotherapist' if this is relevant to your situation. Offences in relation to protected titles require an intention-to deceive and so the clear use of an unambiguous prefix to a protected title is acceptable.

Finally, the HCPC requires you to have a level of indemnity cover (otherwise known as insurance) that is appropriate for your practice.

## WHAT IS CPD?

CPD stands for 'Continuing Professional Development' and reflects your commitment to developing your knowledge and practice. Wherever you are in your physiotherapy career, developing and maintaining a personal portfolio is an absolute must and a legal requirement to keep your HCPC registration. Many members currently use the CSP ePortfolio as their personal development tool, a great tool that aligns with the HCPC's outcomes based approach.

Visit [www.hcpc-uk.org/cpd/what-is-cpd](http://www.hcpc-uk.org/cpd/what-is-cpd) to read more and [www.csp.org.uk/CPDjointstatement](http://www.csp.org.uk/CPDjointstatement) to access the statement agreed by the nursing, midwifery and allied health professional bodies in recognition of the fact that CPD is fundamental.

## Chartered status (MCSP) and becoming a member of the CSP

Once you are registered with the HCPC, you have the opportunity to become a Chartered physiotherapist, by upgrading your student or associate student membership to Chartered member.

CSP members abide by the Code of Members' Professional Values and Behaviour which sets out the CSP's expectations of all members, being qualified physiotherapists, associates and students. The Code is built around four key principles:

- Taking responsibility for your actions
- Behaving ethically
- Delivering an effective service
- Striving to achieve excellence

Download the Code of Members' Professional Values and Behaviour at: [www.csp.org.uk/code](http://www.csp.org.uk/code)

As a student member, you are automatically transferred to our Graduate Affiliate category on reaching the end date of your studies. Find out more about the Graduate Affiliate membership on page 10.

Being a member of the CSP means you become part of our vibrant community, joining over 60,000 physiotherapists, support workers and physiotherapy students, and get access to exclusive benefits.

Chartered status is a badge of excellence which many employers require or prefer, and patients appreciate. It shows you are part of a UK-wide professional community, committed to the highest standard of practice. You will be able to add the designation 'MCSP' letters after your name, setting yourself apart from your colleagues.

## What does Chartered Membership provide?

### Protection in the workplace

- do the job you love safe in the knowledge you're protected by our **professional liability insurance**
- lean on us if you have a work-place issue and need expert **legal and employment advice**
- **get representation** from trade union officials, if needed.

### Professional Development resources

- access valuable learning resources and keep track of your CPD through the online **Learning Hub and ePortfolio** (see page 37 for more about these resources)
- stay up to date with the latest news in our award-winning **members' magazine Frontline, plus weekly email bulletins, and our quarterly physiotherapy eJournal**



I'd advise all new graduates to join the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy and have active input into the future direction of the profession.

Helen Preston BSc MCSP  
Chartered member since 1996

## Advice and support

- access resources to help you land your first job, with subscription to job alerts and guidance on obtaining your first post
- get **professional practice advice** on complex and specialist enquiries from our experienced team of physiotherapists (by phone or email)
- speak with a CSP rep or steward in your workplace (these are volunteers trained by the CSP)
- grow in your career by getting involved in face-to-face and virtual **networking events** where you can share and learn from peers. You can also get support and encouragement in over 60 **special interest forums** on topics ranging from student placements and equality and diversity to First Contact Physiotherapy and promoting mental health
- join any of our three diversity member networks (DisAbility, BAME, LGBTQIA+) that work to provide a more accessible and diverse profession.

For me, it's the networking and professional development events which really are key to making the most out of my membership. And the advice and support on hand by the CSP is second to none.

Chris Martey MSc  
MCSP Chartered  
member since  
2015



Get started with your journey to becoming a chartered member!  
Visit: [www.csp.org.uk/getchartered](http://www.csp.org.uk/getchartered)

## WHAT IS THE GRADUATE AFFILIATE MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY?

Graduate Affiliate is a member category that CSP student members will automatically move into on graduation when their student membership expires.

We know there's so many things to think about while you're transitioning into the world of work. So we made sure you don't need to worry about your membership! The Graduate Affiliate membership is exclusively for former student members, to give you time while you find your feet in your first physio post or while you wait for your HCPC registration. Plus you retain access to the benefits and services you enjoyed as a student\* for a year without costing you a penny.

The first 12 months are free; thereafter the cost is £5 per month. If you do not plan to get registered right away (as you are taking some time off) you can stay in this category for as long as you need. If you are getting HCPC registered, converting to chartered membership is the next step to take, see more at: [www.csp.org.uk/getchartered](http://www.csp.org.uk/getchartered)

\*Professional liability insurance cover and legal advice are not included in this membership.

## 2. Career advice

Entering the world of work comes with many opportunities which means you will have to decide which options are the best for you.



A physiotherapy degree opens many doors across different sectors and settings. As you go through your career, some roles require you to specialise while others will give you the opportunity to develop a breadth of skills. You'll also have personal considerations, such as location, working patterns, and financial considerations (including whether you were funded by a bursary in Wales for example) **all of which will influence what decisions you make about what job to take.**

It really comes down to which option works best for you. To help you think this through, this section will highlight some of those options. Carry on reading more below to help you decide which direction you wish to give to your career.

And remember – down the line you may even choose not to practise clinically. Research, policy, management, leadership, public health, teaching roles are all common career paths for physiotherapists. It's ok not to know where you plan to be in 5 years' time. Your first post, wherever you work, will be a great opportunity to explore your options.

## Range of fields/specialities

You'll know through what you've experienced either on placement or through your lectures that there's a range of fields to choose from.

### Types of physiotherapy include:

- **cardiorespiratory physiotherapy** – aiming to prevent or improve the symptoms of conditions including asthma, chronic bronchitis, and other cardio-respiratory disorders.
- **geriatric physiotherapy** – focusing on the complex movement needs of older adults.
- **learning disabilities** – as learning disabilities are a lifelong condition and often have additional health needs, physiotherapists will advise on management of long-term conditions, posture care and actively be involved in health promotion. Many are also involved in multi-disciplinary health screening to aid early detection and treatment of health problems.
- **men's and women's health** – focusing on treating conditions related to the reproductive system, childbirth, prenatal and postnatal care.
- **mental health** – providing health promotion, preventive health care, treatment and rehabilitation for individuals, groups and in-group therapeutic settings. Physiotherapists create a therapeutic relationship to provide assessment and services specifically related to the complexity of mental health within a supportive environment applying a model including biological and psychosocial aspects.



Physiotherapists  
have the expertise  
and knowledge to  
safely manage patients  
with multiple health  
conditions

- **neurological physiotherapy** – targets disorders affecting the nervous system, including Parkinson's, strokes and brain injuries.
- **oncology and palliative care** – focuses on maintaining optimal function, preventing atrophy and soft tissue deformities, influencing pain control and fostering independence.
- **orthopaedics** – treating injuries or disorders of the skeletal system and associated muscles, joints and ligaments. It includes pre and post operative rehabilitation, working to reduce pain, increase joint range, improve strength and flexibility and restore patient to full function.
- **paediatric physiotherapy** – rehabilitating children after diseases or injury.
- **public health** – physiotherapists have the expertise and knowledge to safely manage patients with multiple health conditions, enabling them to take up/resume physical activity and exercise.
- **rehabilitation and pain management** – introducing exercises to reduce and manage pain following surgery, injury or illness.
- **sports physiotherapy** – working to reduce pain and reintroduce range of movement after sports injuries.

## Sectors

You will also have to decide in which setting you wish to start your career. This could be in any of the following:

- **The public sector:** this is the part of the economy composed of both public services and public enterprises, including the NHS.
- **An Independent Sector Healthcare Provider (ISHP):** this is a private sector healthcare company that is contracted by the NHS in the provision of healthcare or in the support of the provision.

- **The private sector:** this is the part of the economy that is run by individuals and companies for profit and is not state controlled.
- **The third sector:** this is the part of an economy or society comprising non-governmental and non-profit-making organizations or associations, including charities, voluntary and community groups, cooperatives.

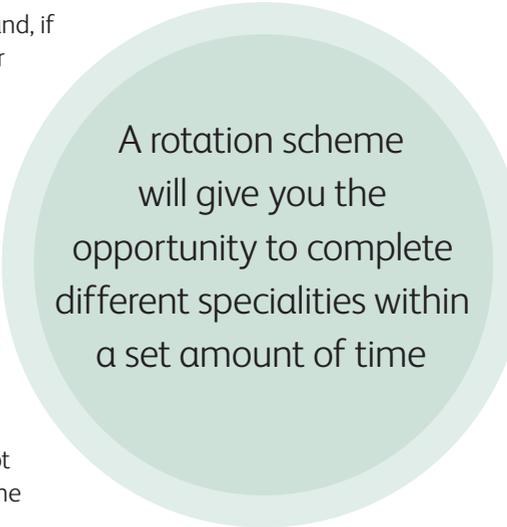
If you choose to work in the **public sector**, you could work in a variety of departments including occupational health, orthopaedics and intensive care. You may work in a hospital department, a GP surgery, or a care home or even a school. You could also specialise in sports therapy, becoming the resident physiotherapist for a sports team, or help armed service veterans with rehabilitation.

Physiotherapists in the British Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force treat and advise service personnel on their injuries and rehabilitation. There are also physiotherapy roles within prison.

Working in the **private sector**, you will have the opportunity to take on your own clients and, if you choose, open your own practice after you have gained enough experience.

You could also work in a range of settings including private hospitals, practices, gyms, health centres, sport clubs and care homes.

The CSP recommends all physiotherapists should receive pay and terms and conditions of employment at least as beneficial as those under the NHS. However, it may not always be possible for you to negotiate the



A rotation scheme  
will give you the  
opportunity to complete  
different specialities within  
a set amount of time

## Rotations, specialising and generalists

*Rotational posts* provide a chance to develop broad experience, working with a range of patients and professionals in various settings. A rotation scheme will give you the opportunity to complete different rotations within a set amount of time, gaining experience in various clinical settings.

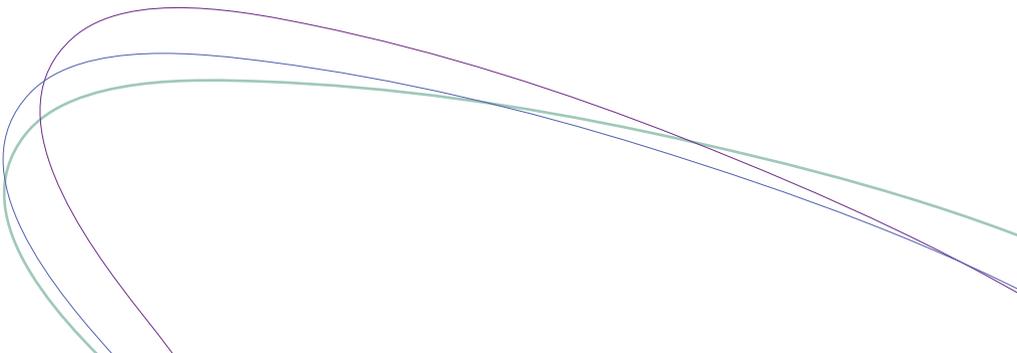
A number of NHS Trusts and organisations from the independent sector do offer *static Band 5 posts* – these are great for those who know where they wish to *specialise*.

There has also been a move towards *generalist* practice, with generalists now valued as much as specialists. With increasing numbers of people with long-term conditions, co-morbidities and complex needs, and a shift to out-of-hospital care, in the future more physiotherapists will need to have developed generalist skills and the capability to practise as generalist practitioners.



My placement experiences allowed me to see that I have a vast interest in many areas of physio. Therefore, a rotational post is my perfect first job as it allows me to continue to build a versatile physio 'toolkit' and to see where my passion really lies.

Julia Roth MSc MCSP  
Chartered member since 2019



## PHYSIOTHERAPY CAREER PATHWAYS ARE EVOLVING

As you can see, many new opportunities are emerging alongside physiotherapy's traditional career structure, as the workforce moves into new fields of practice and undertakes new roles.

Traditional rotational posts have offered an underpinning for professional practice and have an important place within postgraduate career development. As the diversity of the profession grows, we need to acknowledge that this model is not suitable for every graduate. Some students enter physiotherapy education with pre-determined ideas of where they want to work and others do not. Either way, postgraduate career opportunities should reflect the needs of both types of learners. Rotation versus specialising, there is no right or wrong, just what is right for the individual. Clinical skills are a fundamental part of our practice but in order for our profession to thrive we also need academics, researchers, policy makers, entrepreneurs, etc. Think sectors, not just specialities.

Historically, there has been a sense of 'doing your time' before embarking on a non-clinical career pathway; this view should be challenged, the profession needs to empower early career physiotherapists to move into new arenas, their energy and ideas must not be underestimated.

Time to move away from a one size fits all approach and embrace what makes physiotherapy an appealing career, which is the breadth of opportunity it offers.

Reena Patel MSc, CSP Education Adviser

## Other career paths

Teaching, research and leadership roles are other options available.

Budding researchers may choose to pursue roles as research assistants or by taking up clinical academic roles (see <https://tinyurl.com/nihrcaf>). This could see you investigating new approaches or interventions and presenting findings to international audiences. If this appeals, look out for research internships (and funding) to gain valuable experience. To find out more, connect with your regional Council for Allied Health Professions Research (CAHPR) hub and your local universities.

If you wish to continue your studies then a post-registration qualification may be for you. Options include Masters degrees, PhDs, postgraduate diplomas and certificates in subjects such as advanced physiotherapy, clinical education or specialist topics. Apply for funding from the CSP's Charitable Trust to help finance.

For more information visit: [www.csp.org.uk/charitabletrust](http://www.csp.org.uk/charitabletrust)



### 3. Job searching



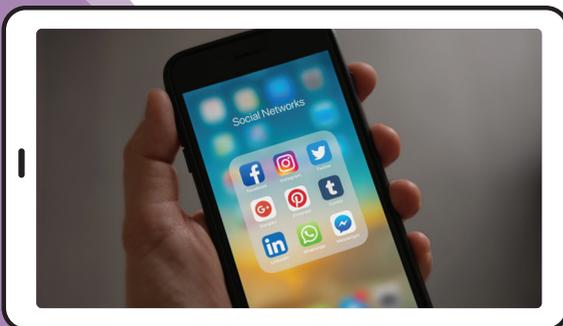
You are now registered with the HCPC and have a clearer idea of the type of roles you are looking for and in which setting. Next steps is to build your professional profile and find organisations currently looking at hiring physiotherapists.

#### Build a professional profile

Starting from the time you begin your physiotherapy qualification, we strongly recommend that you build a professional network and be active with it. **LinkedIn** is a great place to create a professional profile and connect with other professionals. Make sure you link with other physiotherapists you met during your placements, ask for recommendations and post/like/comment/share content relevant to your profile and aspirations.

Same goes with **Twitter**. Get inspiration from other physiotherapy tweeters and follow accounts that you like the look of. Each individual's Twitter page shows the accounts they are following so you can find out more and follow

those accounts too. Don't forget to follow the CSP @ thecsp!

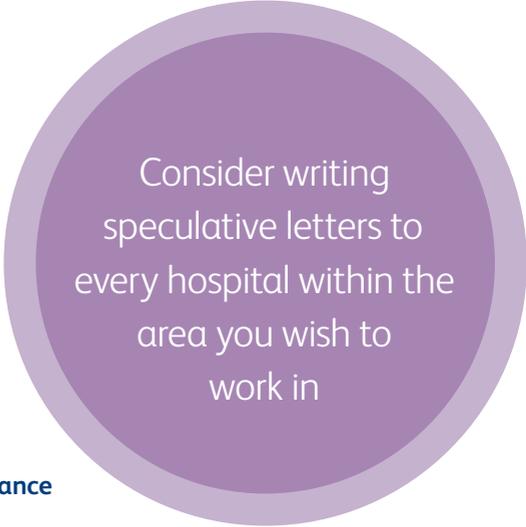


We encourage our members to embrace social media in a productive, safe and professional manner.

We have produced a guide to help you. It is aimed mainly at those who are new to social media or looking to develop their activity, but it also provides guidance on professional issues that may be useful for those who are more established.

Download it at:

[www.csp.org.uk/socialmediaguidance](http://www.csp.org.uk/socialmediaguidance)



Consider writing  
speculative letters to  
every hospital within the  
area you wish to  
work in

## Browse job boards and subscribe to alerts

There are several places you can view current jobs available and set up alerts to receive them directly into your inbox. These include:

- The CSP job board, [www.csp.org.uk/jobs](http://www.csp.org.uk/jobs)
- [www.healthjobsuk.com](http://www.healthjobsuk.com), an independent UK health jobs site
- [www.physiobob.com](http://www.physiobob.com)
- Job ads in Frontline, the CSP's monthly magazine

All four countries also have web based NHS job sites in where vacant posts are advertised:

- England and Wales: [www.jobs.nhs.uk](http://www.jobs.nhs.uk)

This site will enable you to search for vacant posts in England. In addition, a special registration service has been set up in some regions for newly qualified junior physiotherapists who are looking for their first job.

You can register your profile with details such as experience gained during training. Your details will be logged onto a database which employers can search and which enables them to email details of suitable posts to those looking for jobs.

You can also access potential employers' websites as they may have a 'Work with us' or Career section with their current vacancies; visit NHS Trusts and private hospitals (including BUPA).

You should consider writing speculative letters to every hospital within the area you wish to work in, requesting any information on open days, and explore community settings as the number of posts in these is growing. You could also contact independent practitioners on a speculative basis-look at the physio first website ([www.physiofirst.org.uk](http://www.physiofirst.org.uk)) for contact details.

Finally, a number of agencies take on new graduates as locums, and these sometimes result in permanent posts. Take a look at PULSE, [www.pulsejobs.com/uk/allied-health/](http://www.pulsejobs.com/uk/allied-health/), a recruitment agency offering temporary and permanent roles across the NHS and private healthcare sector.

## Specificities for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland's job markets

### SCOTLAND

- Scotland: [www.jobs.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.jobs.scot.nhs.uk)
- NHS job vacancies in Scotland are advertised on the NHS Scotland Recruitment website at [www.jobs.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.jobs.scot.nhs.uk), which should be checked regularly for new posts.

The Flying Start programme is a national development programme for newly qualified nurses, midwives and allied health professionals. It aims to support your learning and build your confidence during your first year of practice in NHS Scotland. For more information Google 'Flying Start NHS'.

## WALES

Welsh university graduates who have benefitted from an NHS funded place through the NHS Wales Bursary Scheme (BOSS) are required to be employed in Wales for two years following their graduation/qualification.

The most up to date information on the Student Streamlining Scheme can be found by searching 'NHS Student Streamling Scheme'.

If you have queries about this, please contact the CSP team in Wales at [cardiff@csp.org.uk](mailto:cardiff@csp.org.uk) to discuss the most recent information and guidance.

Non-NHS funded graduates do not have to meet this requirement and can decide to work in any country following graduation.



## NORTHERN IRELAND

- Northern Ireland: <https://jobs.hscni.net>

Jobs in health and social care in Northern Ireland are advertised on the HSC Recruit website. There is a regional rolling recruitment process for band 5 jobs in Northern Ireland: when more than 5 roles need to be advertised, this triggers a new round of recruitment which is notified on the website and in the Belfast Telegraph.

In order to apply online, applicants must be registered at: [www.hscrecruit.com](http://www.hscrecruit.com)

## 4. Applying for jobs

Always read the job description and person specification carefully and make sure you address in your application how you meet all aspects, whether you're filling an application form or making your CV bespoke for the job.



Use information you've collected in your degree portfolio and draw on practical examples of these to illustrate how you meet each aspect of the job description/person specification.

### Application forms and NHS statement writing

Many employers will send you a standard job application form and prefer this method to sifting through CVs.

Departments that receive many applications will usually use the application form as the first stage of their selection process and draw up a shortlist of people to invite for interview. It is therefore essential to take time and care when completing an application.

Where there is competition for posts, anyone not demonstrating how they meet the requirements of the person specification will not be short-listed for interview. Make sure you tailor your whole application, including the personal statement, to the specific post – including mentioning the employer to which you are applying. If recruiters have any reason to feel you have just used 'cut and paste' they will not feel inclined to short-list you. Equally, take care to ensure you are succinct in your examples – recruiters' time is limited and they will not be inclined to read closely a multiple-page application.

Be precise about your work/placement experience: give clear dates, locations and job summaries.

The NHS website provides guidance on how best to make your application successful: [www.jobs.nhs.uk/advice/success\\_applics.html](http://www.jobs.nhs.uk/advice/success_applics.html) and how to write your application form: [www.jobs.nhs.uk/advice/write\\_appform.html](http://www.jobs.nhs.uk/advice/write_appform.html)

Qualified Physio have written a useful online blog called '8 Steps for the perfect physio or health care application, personal statement and cover letter' which you can easily find on Google.

### CV writing

An up to date and accessible CV is an essential instrument in your job search toolbox, so that you can apply for posts with minimal notice.

There are many schools of thought as to how a CV should be organised. Much depends on the individual and the job you are seeking, but some of these general points may be useful:

- Type the information, spacing sections well, so it doesn't look cluttered.
- Check your spelling and grammar.
- Keep your CV to no more than two sides of A4.
- Include your full name, address, phone number and email address.
- Include a short personal statement to give the reader a snapshot of who you are and what you are bringing to physiotherapy. This statement can either sit as an introductory paragraph, or can work equally well at the end of the CV – pulling the information presented together as a summary.



Make sure you have two references who can comment on your experience and personal qualities

- **Education and training:** list in date order the schools and colleges you have attended since age 11.
  - **Academic qualifications:** list the examinations passed with your grades.
  - **Practice education:** make a note of how your placements were organised (e.g. 8 x 4 week placements, 6 x 5 week placements + one elective). List the placements you have undertaken and the key achievements/learning outcomes for each one. You should also list, under the title 'Positions held', any positions of responsibility, for example, Prefect, society committee member, etc.
  - **Work experience:** include details of any vacation, part-time or voluntary work undertaken, briefly mentioning your duties and what the job involved. Link these where possible to the behaviours/knowledge/skills from the CSP's Physiotherapy Framework (accessible via the CPD ePortfolio – see section 6 of this guide). Mature students should detail any previous full-time employment.
  - **Interests and achievements:** consider what impression it is you want to create before completing this section. List any special skills or hobbies and give details. Include any special courses you have attended.
  - **References:** you may want to include 'References available upon request' at the end of your CV although this is not mandatory. In any case, make sure you have on hand the names and addresses of two people who are willing to be contacted by the prospective employer with a view to commenting on your experience and personal qualities. At the outset of your professional career, most employers will require a reference from your university. Speak to your course leader and another lecturer (or an employer from a clinical job or volunteer work) to gain their permission before using their names. Where possible, try to provide referees who are available at short notice.
- 

## 5. Interview preparation

### 1:1 / panel interviews

#### Preparing for interview

Divide your preparation into three main areas:

1. Identify why you will be able to do the job, with specific reference to the job description and person specification. Think of at least three examples of what you have actually done in relation to each of the areas of the job description and person specification, using examples from different experiences. Think about the impact each of your example had, focusing on your achievements. If you have not had direct experience, think about what you may have done in other areas of your life (domestic, voluntary, student rep roles, etc.), which may have given you transferable skills and experience. Think about your successes, big or small, and the lessons you have learnt from where things haven't gone as well as you had hoped. Draw out information from your portfolio if you have it that can act as supporting evidence for your statements – you may be asked for this at interview.

Think about your successes, big or small, and the lessons you have learnt from where things haven't gone as well as you had hoped

2. Research the employer and the physiotherapy department via the Internet, personal contact, the organisation's annual report, etc. Find out as much as you can about the particular Trust and/or department, which will enable you to prepare some questions to ask at the interview. Trusts place an emphasis on values-based recruitment so look at their values beforehand, especially working in the NHS. Values are often available online on the organisation's website.

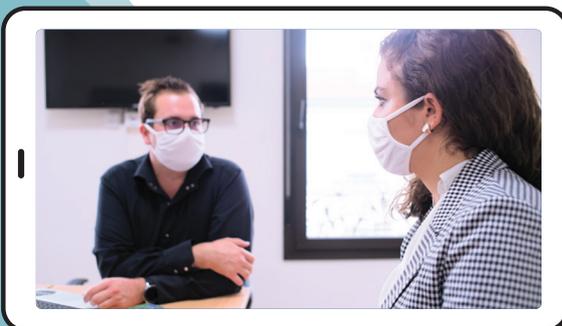


3. Wherever you look to work, get yourself up-to-date on the policies and guidelines relevant to that sector and the contribution that physiotherapists can make, now and in the future. Write yourself notes under these three headings, and then condense your notes into key bullet points that you can go over the night before the interview. The CSP website is an excellent source of information on key developments and policies.

Make sure you are clear about your understanding of clinical governance and its implications for the physiotherapy service. Have a good understanding of the legal responsibilities of the profession and ensure you can demonstrate use of reflective practice:

- Think of answers to the obvious opening questions: Why do you want to work here and/or the NHS? What can you bring to the job? What are your strengths and weaknesses? Do you have any particular development needs?
- Think of a few questions to ask the interviewers at the end of the interview.

Some students claim that they haven't had placements in all core areas and this hinders their job applications. However, now students are gaining lots of experiences and transferable skills, remember to highlight these rather than just simply state what placements you have done. It is important to stress that you can adapt with theory even without having the practice.



### Before attending your interview

Prepare! Make sure you know how to get there, so that you allow enough time. Aim to arrive slightly before the allocated interview time.

Plan what to wear. Interviews should normally be treated fairly formally. Dress smartly so it looks like you have made an effort but also in something you feel comfortable.

Re-read your application so that you remember what you said and are prepared if the interviewers ask you any specific questions about your form. They may, for example, ask about any gaps in your career/education history.

If requested, take your portfolio with you, ensuring you've drawn out an evidence profile from it that supports the examples you listed in your application. While the interviewer may not have time to look through your entire portfolio (and shouldn't really for confidentiality reasons), there may be time for them to look at the pre-selected profile of information you've pulled together.

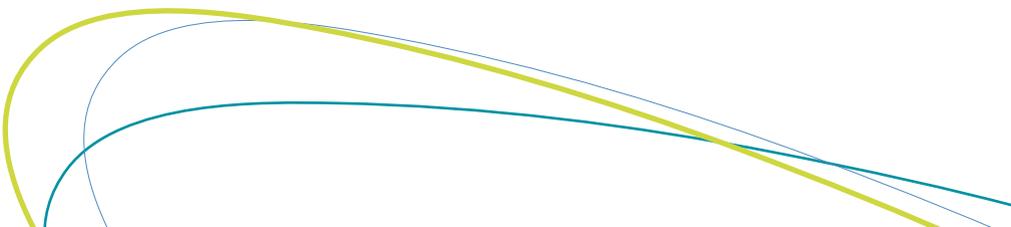
If you have any particular needs for the interview (e.g., if you are visually or hearing impaired, use a wheelchair, etc.), let the HR team know in advance. Interview panels should provide support/access for candidates where required.

### **During your interview**

A good panel will do their best to put you at ease to ensure you present yourself as well as possible. They want to find the best candidate for the job, so there should be no trick questions or attempts to make things difficult for you.

Establish rapport: smile, relax, and address interviewers by name. A panel of at least two people normally conducts interviews.

Make eye contact with the interview panel, especially the person asking the question, but don't hold it long so that the person is forced to look away to break the contact.



Try not to fiddle with pens, your hands, or shift around in your chair too much as this is distracting to interviewers.

A good panel  
will do their best to  
put you at your ease  
to ensure you present  
yourself as well as  
possible

Interviewers will normally write notes during the interview. Don't be put off by this, it is so that they have a record of the interview to refer to at the end – it is not a sign that you have said anything particularly good or bad!

Good interviewers will ask open questions, i.e. questions that don't elicit a one-word answer. They tend to begin with 'How..', 'Tell me about...', 'What...'; 'Why...'; etc. Take time to think about the question you have been asked – it's better to do this than to rush in and realise afterwards that you could have given a better response. If your mind goes blank in response to a particular question, be honest about this and ask if you can return to the subject later in the interview.

Show humour during the interview, but don't overdo it.

Speak clearly, and try not to rush. Be alert to verbal/non-verbal prompts from the panel, which may indicate that you need to either give more information, or have already given enough. Don't talk too much! If the panel do want you to expand further they will use prompts, asking open, probing questions.

Concentrate on your achievements, experience and strengths. Give examples in your answers wherever you can. If you are asked about your weaknesses, try to turn this into a strength, e.g., 'I can sometimes be overly critical of myself if I make a mistake – but I'm conscious of this, and on the positive side it means I always work to as high a standard as possible.'

Use every opportunity to show you are interested in this particular job/Trust.

### At the end of your interview

The panel may ask you if you have any questions for them. Have one or two prepared – about the job or place of work – as this demonstrates your interest in the post (though avoid asking a long list). This is your final opportunity to tell the panel anything important which you think you have missed or didn't have an opportunity to say during their questions.

You could also highlight your evidence profile or portfolio if they haven't already asked to look at it.

The panel will normally tell you when you are likely to find out the outcome. If they don't, it is perfectly acceptable to ask.

### After your interview

Analyse what you did well.

Note down anything you were not prepared for, and think about how you might answer differently in the future.

If you aren't successful, ask for feedback.

## Group interviews

These are becoming increasingly common and can take on many forms.

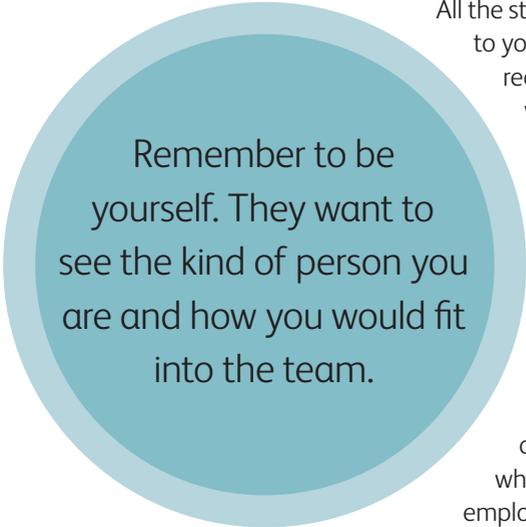
Employers are usually very clear about the criteria they are looking for candidates to demonstrate and they structure a variety of tasks to bring out these features. Employers do not necessarily select the most forthcoming candidates but those who contribute in a considered and inclusive way within the group. It's a good idea to voice your opinion concisely and reasoned. Avoid repeating yourself. Let others offer their opinion, and state whether you agree or disagree and why. Then expand on their answers. If you make a point that someone else has raised refer to their name. Don't be overpowering, encourage the quieter members to give their opinion. Try to get the group to summarise the key points after

the discussion, it makes you look confident and organised. If someone has been interrupted, after the interrupter has finished, perhaps ask them what they were going to say. Try not to dominate as what they are also looking at is interaction and team work and not just the content. Also don't forget to think before you speak and do consider how what you say could be perceived.

Do encourage other people if they aren't being involved but don't single people out. If you find one person is doing all the talking, ask if anyone else has anything to add. This again shows consideration and teamwork.

Importantly be yourself, the observers want to see what kind of person you are and how you would fit into the team dynamics. They are basically looking to assess your reasoning skills, communication skills and how you interact with each other.

The NHS website provides guidance on how best to prepare for an interview: [www.jobs.nhs.uk/advice/interview\\_manage.html](http://www.jobs.nhs.uk/advice/interview_manage.html)



Remember to be yourself. They want to see the kind of person you are and how you would fit into the team.

All the steps above will hopefully lead you to your first job offer. Once you have received confirmation that an employer wants to hire you, it is important that you know what to look out for in a contract of employment. So it is equally important that you are given a written contract by your employer to avoid any confusion or disagreements at a later date over what was originally agreed.

The CSP has created a handy document giving you guidance on what to look for when checking your employment contract before you sign it.

This guide is available at:

[www.csp.org.uk/guidefirstemploymentcontract](http://www.csp.org.uk/guidefirstemploymentcontract)

Below are some of our top tips:

- Keep copies of everything (including the job advert)
- Confirm the employment terms at interview
- If the offer letter doesn't contain terms, then confirm the verbally agreed terms in your letter of acceptance
- Check the written statement of particulars and the contract aren't contradictory
- Make sure the details aren't too vague or too general (e.g., overtime requirements and payments, and details of where you'll be expected to work)
- Ensure the contract states that any change will be subject to full consultation and negotiation
- If you have any doubts raise them immediately with your employer
- If your doubts aren't resolved, talk to the CSP's Employment Relations and Union Services.



## 6. Building skills and experience

Throughout your career, it is important that you carry on developing your skills and build your experience. You will have already started doing it through placements during your study years but this doesn't stop here! Developing professionally is a key part of any physiotherapist's career and even a mandatory requirement from the HCPC as you will need to confirm that you continue to meet their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) standards on a regular basis.



CPD is the process by which professionals maintain and develop their skills, knowledge and competence in order to practise safely and effectively and it can be done in a number of ways.

### Get involved with CSP networks

One great way of developing professionally is to get involved with networks. They bring together professionals with a common interest or in a similar location, organise events at a local or regional level, can sometimes meet physically or virtually and are a great way to be exposed to people at different stages of their careers. As well as joining, you could get involved with them, helping on a voluntary basis. This can expand your network and bring you some invaluable soft skills such as communication or leadership among others.

The CSP has several networks run by a mix of CSP employees and members.

## The CSP Regional Networks and Country Boards

Link up with your local CSP Regional Network or Country Board to benefit from regional events, networking and CPD. Each network has an online presence on Twitter (with some hosting Facebook profiles or groups too). They typically host several online and face-to-face events each year focusing on key professional strategic priorities such as Community Rehabilitation and First Contact Physiotherapy. Many of their events provide CPD on aspects of leadership skills too.

### MEMBER'S PROFILE

CSP Council Member Marie-Clare Wadley believes her local CSP Regional Network (South Central) acted as the springboard for her role on Council, enabling her potential to be realised beyond the remit of her clinical career. If you are passionate about the profession and want to make a difference as well as grow your own CPD and career then the regional networks and country boards are definitely a good place to start.

The CSP Regional Networks also welcome new members to the core team of volunteers who help shape the events and activities – this offers a great opportunity to network locally with fellow members who are all at different stages in their career and work across multiple specialities.

To find your local Regional Network or Country Board, visit [www.csp.org.uk/nations-regions](http://www.csp.org.uk/nations-regions)

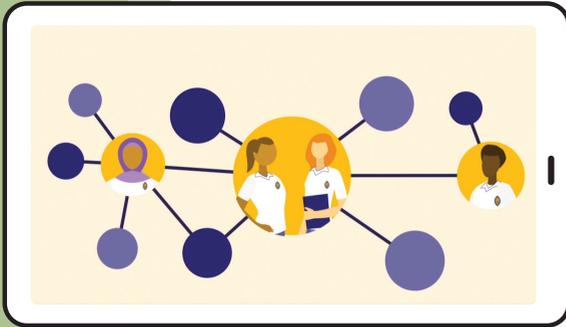
If you are interested in taking an active role in your region or country, please contact [cre@csp.org.uk](mailto:cre@csp.org.uk)

## Resources, support and guidance from the interactiveCSP (iCSP) networks

The CSP website has a selection of iCSP networks that you can sign up to on particular topics or areas of interest that enable you to access resources,

support and guidance from the CSP and its members. The networks also enable you to pose questions to the network community and direct message members.

Visit: [www.csp.org.uk/icsp](http://www.csp.org.uk/icsp)



### ***iCSP Influencers Network***

A network that gives you advice and inspiration on how to influence stakeholders, strategic leaders and decision-makers, to achieve goals such as service transformation, funding, workforce or suggesting a new idea to your line manager. The network features articles from members who have succeeded in influencing at different stages in their career. There is also the opportunity to attend events and find out about training offered by the CSP in this area. To join, log in at: [www.csp.org.uk/icsp/influencers](http://www.csp.org.uk/icsp/influencers)

### ***iCSP Community Rehabilitation Network***

If you work in community rehabilitation or are interested in working in this area, this network is a must. Not only do you have the opportunity to pose questions and network with fellow members in this field, you can also gain latest information, data and resources on the delivery of best practice Community Rehabilitation and be the first to hear about events you can attend on this topic.

To join, log in at: [www.csp.org.uk/icsp/community-rehabilitation](http://www.csp.org.uk/icsp/community-rehabilitation)

### ***iCSP First Contact Physiotherapy (FCP) Network***

This network is designed for anyone thinking of becoming an FCP or working in an FCP service. As well as resources to help deliver and implement an FCP service, there are helpful articles written by members and staff on this important area of primary care, a key strategic priority for the CSP. To join, log in at: [www.csp.org.uk/icsp/fcp](http://www.csp.org.uk/icsp/fcp)

### **CSP Professional Networks**

There are approximately 30 recognised professional networks that represent physiotherapists working within particular specialist areas of the profession, whether it be clinical, occupational or specific interest related. They sometimes include reduced or free membership for students, associate members and newly graduated physios as well as reduced or free entry to courses, workshops and conferences. Joining a professional network is a fantastic way of gaining CPD, peer-to-peer support and networking within your local region with other colleagues.

There is a complete list of groups and their areas of interest, with contact details at: [www.csp.org.uk/professionalnetworks](http://www.csp.org.uk/professionalnetworks)

### **Annual Conference**

Additionally, the CSP runs an annual conference called Physiotherapy UK which offers lots of opportunities to network, broaden your knowledge and share research. For more visit: [www.physiotherapyuk.org.uk](http://www.physiotherapyuk.org.uk)

### **Diversity Networks**

The CSP has three diversity networks - BAME, DisAbility and LGBTQIA+ and they are open to any CSP member who identifies as belonging to one or more of these networks. They are a welcoming and safe space with membership being confidential.

Within the networks you'll be exchanging ideas and information on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) content and events. Together we learn by sharing ideas, and building our knowledge and understanding of challenges and opportunities we face in a safe, supportive environment.



My name is Niko (they/them) and I'm a 3rd year undergrad physio student based in London. I'm also a member of the LGBTQIA+ diversity network at the CSP. The

LGBTQIA+ network is one of three diversity networks at the CSP, the others are the BAME and DisAbility networks. If you're a physio student and you want to connect with people who share similar experiences to you, you should consider joining a network. They are safe and welcoming spaces; the LGBTQIA+ network really helped me to feel a sense of community and belonging in the physio world. If you are interested in promoting better equality and inclusion for marginalised physios within the profession you can also get involved in wider actions through the networks.

Niko Brenner, final year BSc student

We share by talking about problems and successes. The networks offer peer support, for example if you are facing issues to do with coming out, racial or sexual harassment or lack of support if you are disabled.

We organise by planning activity to address discrimination in all its forms and by promoting EDI at work and in wider society.

The networks also have regular content featured in the CSP magazine, Frontline including Black, Disability and LGBT History month specials.

Twitter: @cspbame @cspgbtqia @cspdisability  
[www.csp.org.uk/diversitynetworks](http://www.csp.org.uk/diversitynetworks)

## CSP Physiotherapy Framework and ePortfolio

The CSP offers two useful tools members can use to track and record their learning, helping you to develop as well as meet the graduate attributes of the CSP Physiotherapy Framework.

**The CSP Physiotherapy Framework** is a resource designed to promote and develop physiotherapy practice. A workbook sits alongside the framework and enables you to track the development of your physiotherapy practice by helping you describe, evaluate and evidence the values, behaviours, knowledge and skills you use in your day-to-day physiotherapy practice.

You can get more information on the CSP Learning Hub, which will introduce you to the framework and the set of CPD tools:

[www.csp.org.uk/framework](http://www.csp.org.uk/framework)

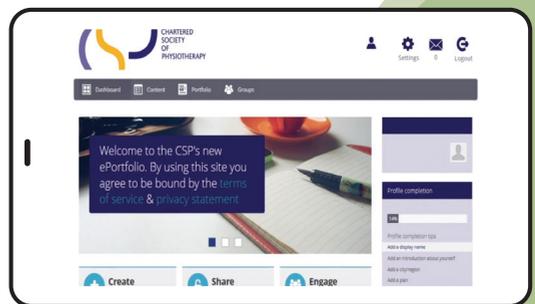
**The ePortfolio** enables members to create and manage a digital portfolio of work, reflections and achievements online. Members can also share elements of their portfolio and interact with others online.

Watch a recorded webinar on 'Using your CSP ePortfolio to support and track your journey into physiotherapy', specifically created for CSP student and new graduated members:

[www.csp.org.uk/eportfoliowebinar](http://www.csp.org.uk/eportfoliowebinar)

For more information, visit [www.csp.org.uk/eportfolio](http://www.csp.org.uk/eportfolio)

The CSP offers two useful tools members can use to track and record their learning, helping you to develop



## Keep an eye on Frontline

The CSP's magazine Frontline contains great articles and features every month. All of them are useful for deepening your knowledge and understanding to help you develop as a physiotherapist and appreciate your place within the profession. There have been many articles written for new graduates over the years so make sure you check out the archive on the CSP website, not just the current edition. And even if it isn't written directly for you as a new graduate, that doesn't mean it isn't relevant!

To help you get started we've drawn together some articles you'll find useful:

- **Looking beyond the label**  
This article is for helping you to define, frame and develop your practice to find the job you want – [www.csp.org.uk/lookingbeyondlabel](http://www.csp.org.uk/lookingbeyondlabel)
- **CPD into action: lifelong learning**  
Some advice for those at the start of their physiotherapy career on laying the foundations for continuous professional development – [www.csp.org.uk/cpdactionlifelongjourney](http://www.csp.org.uk/cpdactionlifelongjourney)
- **CPD into action** Advice and resources to help you complete your CPD cycle – [www.csp.org.uk/cpdaction](http://www.csp.org.uk/cpdaction)
- **CPD: planning your professional development** CSP professional adviser, Nina Paterson presents some practical guidance to help plan and manage your CPD activity and the HCPC audit – [www.csp.org.uk/cpdplanningprofdevelopment](http://www.csp.org.uk/cpdplanningprofdevelopment)
- **HCPC audit: are you ready?** This article provides information on the HCPC audit. Although as a new grad you won't be called within your first two years, it is good to keep the audit in mind and the need to maintain

Frontline offers a wide range of articles, great for developing your knowledge and understanding, delivered to your door every month.

- **Using your transferable skills** Hear from a newly graduated physio about what transferable skills physiotherapy training and practice can offer – [www.csp.org.uk/usingtransferableskills](http://www.csp.org.uk/usingtransferableskills)
- **CPD Practice: your physiotherapy career part 2** CSP professional advisor, Nina Paterson pens this piece specifically for newly graduated physios on taking the first steps in your career – [www.csp.org.uk/newgradsphysiocareer](http://www.csp.org.uk/newgradsphysiocareer)
- **CPD mentoring: It's all about you**  
This article explores the benefits of being mentored and what to expect – [www.csp.org.uk/cpdmentoringarticle](http://www.csp.org.uk/cpdmentoringarticle)

## Volunteering/shadowing

Another way of gaining experience and developing your skills could be done through volunteering, in the UK or abroad, or shadowing current physiotherapists in their workplace.

Do you have any contacts with past placements? Maybe you could contact them to see if you can visit, volunteer or shadow?

Volunteering can help you gain broader knowledge and skills, both clinical and non-clinical, showcase your knowledge and simultaneously raise your public profile. It is also a great way to give back to your local community and the wider society.



In the past, organisations like St John Ambulance in England have opened up specific volunteering posts to physiotherapists, read more at:

[www.csp.org.uk/volunteerstjohnambulance](http://www.csp.org.uk/volunteerstjohnambulance)

Whether you decide to volunteer in the UK or abroad, do not forget to make sure you have appropriate professional liability indemnity: visit:

[www.csp.org.uk/plischeme](http://www.csp.org.uk/plischeme) to read more.

## Enrol with the CSP mentoring scheme

The eMentoring platform is designed to enable CSP members to find a mentor who can support their career and continuing professional development needs, by sharing their knowledge and expertise. A mentor's

role is to champion and support your development by being a role model who can help guide and counsel you through your career.

The platform enables members to search for a mentor based on their skills, area of expertise/ experience and sector.



For more information, visit:

[www.csp.org.uk/mentoring](http://www.csp.org.uk/mentoring)

## Leadership development programme

The Leadership Development Programme (LDP) is a 30-credit master's module available to UK physiotherapists with at least two years' experience as a qualified member. Its aim is to develop leadership capacity within the physiotherapy profession by equipping participants with effective leadership skills and behaviours and prepare them to influence, change and improve healthcare for their patients.

The programme is a two-semester online module run separately by the University of Hertfordshire and the University of Central Lancashire. 48 places are funded by the CSP every year for members who meet the funding criteria. 10 of the 48 funded places are prioritised for those who identify as BAME.

Read more about the programme, at: [www.csp.org.uk/LDP](http://www.csp.org.uk/LDP)

My strong advice to everyone who wants to lead appropriately is to keep learning. Never shy away from acquiring more knowledge because it's achievable, it's power and a great weapon.

Seun Ogunkunle, 2019 Leadership Development Programme Alumni

The LDP has given me a huge boost in confidence, confirming that my voice matters. As BAME applicants, your voice and your views matter.

Julian Chapman, 2019 Leadership Development Programme Alumni

## CSP trade union

The CSP is the trade union body representing people delivering physiotherapy services. This means that, if there is a problem or issue in the workplace, CSP stewards and safety reps can offer advice, support and representation on any matter related to your employment.

Trade union membership gives you a voice at work, and protection when you face issues affecting your pay, your employment contract, disciplinarys, injury or ill health. Where necessary, they can negotiate with your employer on your behalf.

The CSP also proudly represents its members on the national stage, negotiating for improvements in pay and workplace standards.

As well as being supported by the trade union, there is an opportunity for you to take an active role in representing physiotherapists in the world of work by becoming a rep, steward, or a workplace contact, offering you the chance to develop your soft skills.

Becoming a steward has been a great way to support my colleagues at work, especially in such challenging working conditions as we are facing at the moment. So far I have had the opportunity to work closely with members and management to make sure members have their voice heard. Being a steward has allowed me to take part in the CSP's Steward training programme, which has helped me to develop my communication and negotiation skills as well as increase my knowledge around employment law and workplace policy.

Luke Tobin, Ffisioterapydd Cylchdro / Rotational Physiotherapist

**Stewards** strive to improve the working conditions of all members, both locally and nationally, and are supported by staff from Employment Relations & Union Services (ERUS) and CSP safety reps. For more information about becoming a steward visit: [www.csp.org.uk/stewards](http://www.csp.org.uk/stewards)

**Safety reps** advise and represent members on all matters relating to their health, safety and welfare at work. They also make sure your employer fulfils their legal obligations towards their employees and to assist members in getting their health and safety problems resolved. For more information about CSP safety reps visit: [www.csp.org.uk/safetyreps](http://www.csp.org.uk/safetyreps)

If you are interested in taking an active role with the trade union, please contact the CSP's Organisers at [jointtheteam@csp.org.uk](mailto:jointtheteam@csp.org.uk).

In the future, as part of my development, I aspire to train as a CSP steward, advising and representing colleagues who experience difficulties at work. I believe leadership skills are valuable to physiotherapists at all levels and becoming a CSP steward hones these skills whilst also helping your colleagues. Being an exceptional physiotherapist requires mastery of 'soft skills'. Taking on the responsibility of being a CSP steward gives physiotherapists time to advance these skills which improve communication within a multi-disciplined team and result in better patient care.

Francesca, first year MSc student

## 7. More information and support

NHS Health Education England (HEE) has created an online Allied Health Professionals' Universe of Opportunities careers resource to raise awareness of the vast array of opportunities for AHPs to develop their careers. To access the resource, simply Google 'HEE's AHP's Universe of Opportunities'.

Don't forget that the CSP team is also here to support you throughout your career with resources and guidance ranging from professional development to advice and support on your practice and at the workplace.



The CSP team  
is here to support you  
throughout your career  
with resources and  
guidance

Head over to the CSP website:  
[www.csp.org.uk](http://www.csp.org.uk) or contact our  
Enquiries Team at: [enquiries@csp.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@csp.org.uk) or call 020 7306 6666.

## And finally...get networking!

Networking is a powerful tool in career development whether you have a career path in sight or are looking for inspiration.

In the early stages of my career I would tell myself: 'I hate networking'. I would often avoid networking opportunities. It felt very daunting to enter a room full of people I did not know and strike up a conversation when everybody else seemed to know one another.

More recently, I have recognised the value of networking; it has led to new friendships, opportunities and professional growth. Whilst professional relationships cannot be nurtured solely through social media, it is a platform that will enable you to widen your professional network. The pandemic has highlighted the opportunity for greater on-line interaction, which will enable professional networking to be more accessible and inclusive. Consider following people and key organisations on social media to see what their views are, just engaging gets you noticed, and you don't know where it might lead.

Networking does require you to be pro-active and step out of your comfort zone. In my experience, physiotherapists are very generous with their time and are often more than happy to be contacted

My top tips:

- recognise that professional networking is a skill
- be brave – don't be afraid to reach out
- it does not have to be a 'big ask': a short phone call or brief tweet could lead to a life-changing meeting
- CSP professional and diversity networks are a great starting place for you to begin on this journey

Reena Patel MSc, CSP Education Adviser

So put yourself out there and... book conferences, join webinars, get involved with campaigns and step up. Don't forget, networking is a skill. Give yourself time to get used to being out of your comfort zone and remember to reflect on the skills, knowledge and connections you gained and what else you need to progress.



Wherever you are based, we are confident that at least one of the CSP's 50+ networks will spark your interests.

And as you will find, each connection will lead to many more.

**So get  
started  
today  
with your  
physio  
journey!**

Head over to  
**[www.csp.org.uk/getchartered](http://www.csp.org.uk/getchartered)**  
to learn more about  
how to become a  
chartered member  
of the CSP!

3rd Floor South  
Chancery Exchange  
10 Furnival Street  
London EC4A 1AB

**[www.csp.org.uk](http://www.csp.org.uk)**  
**[enquiries@csp.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@csp.org.uk)**  
**020 7306 6666**

 **@charteredphysios**

 **@thecsp**

## THE CHARTERED SOCIETY OF PHYSIOTHERAPY

is the professional, educational and trade union body for the United Kingdom's over 60.000 chartered physiotherapists, physiotherapy students and support workers.

