

Health & Safety advice to new graduates & students: MSDs injuries at work



Past CSP research findings on our members showed 68% suffered a work-related musculoskeletal disorder (MSD) or injury during their career and that 1 in 16 will likely leave the profession due to their injury. Newly qualified graduates seem to be most at risk of an MSD injury. Within 5 years of graduating around 32% sustained an injury with 12% being students on clinical placement. National review on NHS staff health and wellbeing also shows MSDs are the primary cause of at least half of all sickness absences in the NHS.

Our research also showed around 44% of our members was not risk assessed in their current post. Risk assessments on manual handling (MH) tasks is crucial to highlight & eliminate, if possible, potential MSD hazards

To limit your own risk of injury at work we ask that you consider the following:

1. When you commenced your employment or clinical placement did your manager/supervisor conduct or arrange for a MH risk assessment of your post /clinical placement– which included assessing your training needs & personal requirements?
2. Do you have an ongoing training programme that will continue to develop your skills, knowledge and experience within manual handling situations as part of your CPD?
3. Was your risk assessor competent i.e. are you aware of their credentials? If they made recommendations – did your employer implement them?
4. Are you aware what the reporting systems are for accidents, injuries & near misses?
5. Do you have access to Back Care Advisers that can assist you in addressing any issues you have in your physiotherapeutic practice or problems with manual handling?
6. Do you feel confident that you can acknowledge your own personal & professional limitations in MH and will actively seek advice and guidance when you require it? If not, why do you feel that you cannot? Useful professional advice is provided under chapter 4 “Delegation, Guidance & Advice” of the CSP publication *Guidance on Manual Handling in Physiotherapy 4th edition 2014*, available as free download on the CSP website www.csp.org.uk
7. Is there appropriate MH equipment provided for your needs and are they adequately maintained?
8. If injured - do you have direct access or know how to seek a referral to your employer's or if you are a student, your HEI's Occupational Health Services?

If you answer no to any of the above questions, or are not sure, then please talk to your safety rep, or if a student on clinical placement, your HEI tutor. They are there to support you and protect your health and safety when working or on clinical placement.

DO

- Attend your MH training and provide feedback if the training did not meet your needs.
- If you can - raise your concerns with colleagues if you think their practices are putting you or themselves at risk. Being assertive will not just help you but could prevent other new graduates & students who come after you incurring an injury.
- Report your injuries/pain symptoms or any near misses. Make & keep a copy of your incident form.
- Talk to your safety rep or if you are a student, your course tutor – they are there to help & can intervene on your behalf.

DON'T

- Be complacent or apathetic about your safety – if you know what you or others are doing is risky – STOP! Do not risk your future career.