Job Search for Physiotherapists

Physiotherapy – the graduate job market

The current shortage of NHS junior physiotherapy posts means that many new graduates are not, as happened historically, gaining their first post quickly upon graduation. The Chartered Society of Physiotherapists (CSP) are proactive in working with both NHS employers and government officials in trying to resolve workforce planning issues and to provide support to new graduates in gaining their first post.

Since its emergence as an independent profession, physiotherapy has evolved in a range of practice settings including hospitals, health centres, GP practices, schools, work places and private clinics. New employment opportunities are developing, within the private sector (such as the Health & Beauty industry, specialist manufacturing companies and the insurance sector) academia (Teaching and Research) and also in the charity and voluntary sector. You may find it takes some time to find the post you want. Part time work, temporary contracts and relevant volunteer experience can all help you gain important professional experience.

Where can I find vacancies?

There are a number of recruitment websites for physiotherapy posts. The NHS has three main recruitment websites in England & Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. There is no single source of information that will suit everyone. It is useful to track a range of websites to ensure that you don’t miss a vacancy. See resources section for job website details.

Maintaining your CPD

Maintaining your professional network and contact with your profession is vital. There are a number of ways you can do this:

Peer Support - many new graduates have developed their own informal networks by keeping in touch with university classmates, to provide mutual support for job search and professional practice.

Professional memberships - many clinical interest and occupational groups have free or reduced membership/course rates for new graduates (lists available on CSP website). Active membership of local CSP branches helps you develop contacts with experienced physiotherapists and stay updated about local and professional issues.

Volunteering and work shadowing - there are opportunities both inside and outwith the NHS; this helps maintain your skills, develop your professional reputation and may open up opportunities to join in-service training. These opportunities are usually unpaid, short term in nature and often are completed alongside other part time paid work. The CSP does not formally encourage physiotherapy volunteers within the NHS but does makes some
recommendations for NHS employers offering volunteer placements for new graduates. Some private practices may also be able to offer flexible work experience.

**Alternative Options**

Physiotherapy students develop many transferable skills during their courses and placements which are highly valued by a wide range of employers. Although, historically they have typically started their Physiotherapy careers in rotational posts within the NHS, graduates may also consider the following options:

- **Postgraduate study/research**
  Masters degrees and PhDs can lead to careers in research and lecturing. There is a growing trend for new graduates to go directly into higher level study.

- **Private practice**
  Although graduates should ideally have wide ranging NHS experience before working in private practice, this may be an option if there is appropriate support in place, such as mentoring and a structured training programme offering continual professional development. [www.physiofirst.org.uk](http://www.physiofirst.org.uk) (Formerly known as the Organisation of Chartered Physiotherapists in Private Practice)

- **Private hospitals**
  Private hospitals occasionally advertise vacancies for newly qualified Physiotherapists.

- **Charities and voluntary sector**
  Some ‘Third Sector’ organisations provide NHS services, so this is another option to consider. As with private practice, it would be important to find out what support would be offered to new graduates.

- **Sports Clubs/Gyms/Leisure Centres**
  Sport and leisure organisations sometimes may employ physiotherapists with a particular interest in sport directly. You may also find vacancies with a private practice specialising in sports medicine. Increasingly private practices will consider employing suitable new graduates without NHS experience. Volunteering with local sports clubs (any sport: junior/amateur levels as well as professional clubs are a good starting point) and undertaking accredited CPD courses helps develop your skill set and professional experience. Be creative; check out relevant sports websites for large events and contact organisers to find out about opportunities to get paid/unpaid work. High profile sports events in particular are impressive on your CV.
• **Complementary medicine**
  Physiotherapy skills may be applied to some complementary therapies such as Therapeutic Massage. Additionally Sports Massage Therapy / Remedial Massage with further specialist training.

• **Medical equipment manufacturers and suppliers**
  Opportunities for Physiotherapists may include areas such as Research and Development, Sales and Marketing. Be creative and identify which companies manufacture the equipment you use in practice. See also resources section.

• **Working abroad**
  The CSP can provide information about registration procedures and working practices for many countries. They encourage newly qualified Physiotherapists to gain experience in the UK before taking up posts abroad. Alternatively, recent graduates may consider a relevant volunteering project abroad. Applicants may have to raise a considerable sum of money to take part and it is crucial to research the organisations thoroughly before making any decisions.

**University Careers Service : We can help**

Job search requires planning, research and persistence. A positive result is more likely if you plan ahead, stay positive, review your progress and ask for help if you need it. Remember that the more geographically mobile you can be, the more vacancies you will be able to apply for.

Many universities continue to offer support to new graduates. Contact your university careers service to check on services to graduates. Careers advisers can help you with your CV, covering letters, application forms, personal statements, interview skills and action planning, as well as providing access to careers information.
RESOURCES

Applications and Interviews
- Applications, CVs and covering letters (AGCAS booklet)
- Going for interviews (AGCAS Booklet)
- Looking good on paper (AGCAS Video)
- Making an impact (AGCAS DVD)
- Your job’s online (AGCAS DVD)
- www.csp.org.uk/Library and publications/publications page
  ‘Survival guide in obtaining your first physiotherapy post’ available to CSP members
- www.prospects.ac.uk/links/Appforms
- www.prospects.ac.uk/links/CVwriting

Postgraduate study/research
- www.findaMasters.com
- www.findaPhD.com
- www.jobs.ac.uk
- www.prospects.ac.uk/links/postgrad

NHS Jobs
- CSP website – http://www.jobescalator.com/
  Search for vacancies by category, location, employer, full/part time and permanent/temporary. Track your job search and applications in ‘My Profile’ and use the ‘Job Advice’ section.
- NHS (Scotland) – www.jobs.scot.nhs.uk
  Search for vacancies by region, employer and category.
- NHS (England and Wales) – www.jobs.nhs.uk/
  Search options include keyword, location and salary.
- NHS (Northern Ireland) – www.hscni.net/
  Official gateway for Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland

Jobs General
- www.healthjobsuk.com/jobs
  UK’s largest independent database of jobs in the health sector. Search by job title, county or employer.
- www.physiobob.com
  Physical Therapy and Physiotherapy vacancies in Australia, Canada, India, Ireland, New Zealand, USA and UK.

Private hospitals
- www.spirehealthcare.com
  Vacancies at hospitals previously owned by BUPA
- www.pulsestaffing.co.uk
  Vacancies at Nuffield hospitals
- www.privatehealth.co.uk
  Includes a ‘Health Jobs’ section
- www.bmihealthcare.co.uk
  Includes a ‘Looking for a Job’ section
Private practice
See Professional body for advice/regulations information
  • www.physiofirst.org.uk (Formerly known as the Organisation of Chartered Physiotherapists in Private Practice)

Charities and voluntary sector
  • www.goodmoves.org.uk
    Charity and Voluntary sector recruitment
  • www.thirdsector.co.uk
    Vacancies in charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprise
  • www.voluntarysectorjobs.co.uk
  • www.jobsincharities.co.uk
  • www.charityjobs.co.uk

Sports Clubs/Gyms/Leisure Centres
  • www.acpsm.org/jobs.asp
    Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Sports Medicine
  • www.bases.org.uk (job vacancies section)
    British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences
  • www.fia.org.uk (fia-vacancies section)
    Fitness Industry Association
  • www.sportscotland.org.uk (jobs section/careers in sport)
    Sport Scotland

Complementary medicine
The following websites are good starter sites for investigating this field. They are not recruitment websites. See also relevant links & information from your own professional body website
  • www.fih.org.uk
    Foundation for Integrated Health
  • www.i-c-m.org.uk
  • Institute for Complementary Medicine
  • www.massagetherapy.co.uk
    Information, advice and guidelines on holistic treatments

Medical equipment manufacturers and suppliers
  • http://www.ukspa.org.uk
    UK Science Parks, Regional Search and Vacancy section
  • www.scotbis.com (Find a company/Find an industry)
    National Library of Scotland’s Scottish Business Information Service
  • www.glasgow.gov.uk (search for Scottish Business Databases)
    Links to all of Scotland’s Business Directories

Working Abroad
  • www.csp.org.uk/Library and publications/publications page
    ‘Survival guide in obtaining your first physiotherapy post’ available to CSP members
  • www.apta.org
American Physical Therapy Association
  Australian Physiotherapy Association
• [www.physiotherapy.ca](http://www.physiotherapy.ca)
  Canadian Physiotherapy Association
• [www.physio-europe.org](http://www.physio-europe.org)
  European Region of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy
• [www.physiotherapy.org.nz](http://www.physiotherapy.org.nz)
  Physiotherapists Society of New Zealand
• [www.physiosa.org.za](http://www.physiosa.org.za)
  South African Society of Physiotherapy
• [www.careersinhealthcare.ie](http://www.careersinhealthcare.ie)
• Ireland : General Careers in Health website
• [www.wcpt.org](http://www.wcpt.org)
  World Confederation for Physical Therapy
• [http://www.vso.org.uk/volunteering](http://www.vso.org.uk/volunteering)
  Opportunities in a variety of countries
• [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk) (subsection Jobs & Prospects/Explore working abroad/Country specific information)
  Information on working and studying in over 50 countries throughout the world

**Other opportunities for Physiotherapists**

There are also opportunities for physiotherapists to work in other areas including:

• The Armed Forces; Army [www.armyjobs.mod.uk](http://www.armyjobs.mod.uk)  Navy [www.royal-navy.mod.uk](http://www.royal-navy.mod.uk)  & Royal Air Force [www.raf.mod.uk/careers](http://www.raf.mod.uk/careers)

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