

## Ten Questions about being an advanced practice physiotherapist

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1. Please describe briefly your job role and responsibilities:

Advanced Specialist Paediatric Physiotherapist in the field of Neurodisability – and Paediatric Injector for treatment of focal spasticity

2. Please describe briefly your career pathway so far:

2 years basic rotations in Western General Edinburgh then 20 years in paediatrics (2 years in acute then in community since 2003) across Republic of Ireland and then back to Scotland since 2011.

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

Yes – currently doing Masters in Advanced Practice including modules in Advanced Leadership, Injection therapy and PgCert in Clinical Research

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

Funding and study leave to support access to Masters level education or equivalent – and also no financial or status recognition of extended scope of practice. Have been Band 7 (or equivalent) for over 10 15 years with extended scope practice for 5 years.

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

Ensure there is a career progression pathway in place as it is very it's too difficult in the NHS to get a review of services and progression of post if not already embedded. Nearly all Consultant Physios are MSK linked. Nationally consistent, sustainable and progressive roles and career pathways to support an appropriately skilled workforce which contributes to new models of care delivery would be welcomed in physio in line with new transforming roles right across the profession.

6. What personal qualities/characteristics are important to have for your role as a advanced practice physiotherapist?

Determination, application, leadership, discipline, patience, optimism, resilience ++

7. How do you measure your effectiveness as an advanced practice level physio?

Peer review and delivery of training to other HCPs / presentations at conference. Paper publications. 360° feedback. Leadership opportunities. Academic achievement.

8. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

Perhaps there could be future opportunities to progress to Consultant Physiotherapist in the field of Neurodisability but realistically, a more combined clinical and academic/research role would help reflect the advanced and extended roles now delivered by the physiotherapy profession.

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

- Conferences and Masters level courses
- Joint working with colleagues in acute centres, including orthopaedic and neurology consultant colleagues, development of competencies.
- Over lockdown NHS Education Scotland and ProjectLift have secured access to a variety of free online and virtual resources including 1:1 Coaching, Masters level online courses at University of Glasgow and virtual Ashridge. This has opened avenues for increased diversity of learning.

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

- Try to streamline learning and development opportunities which have the potential to reflect Masters / PhD level studies, as this is required for pillars of practice and recognition across MDTs. Also be aware of local strategy / national drivers as there may be more support available for topical projects.
- Ensure a career progression pathway in place as, despite initiatives for advanced / extended scope roles, it can be difficult in the NHS to get a review of services and progression of posts if not top of the agenda.
- Keep an open mind as you navigate through your career and consider transferable skills for practice development and teaching to compliment and cascade clinical expertise.