

Job planning for physiotherapists and physiotherapy support workers

CSP position statement

A welcome development

The concept of job planning for physiotherapists and physiotherapy support workers is welcomed.

Job planning was introduced for Medical Consultants in England in 1991 as a method to profile their specialist contribution to high quality patient care.

The same concept and approach to job planning for the Allied Health Professions (AHP) workforce in the NHS in England was introduced by NHS Improvement (NHSI) in 2017 as part of their drive to reduce variation and improve productivity in NHS AHP services.

Although an England initiative, [the NHSI job planning guidance and approach](#) can be used to implement job planning principles and activity UK wide and in all contexts and settings.

Job planning provides an opportunity to define and acknowledge the capacity required in an individual's role to undertake clinical activity and essential non clinical activities (known as supporting professional activities) such as data collection, CPD, supervision, teaching and research. The latter activities contribute to safe, high quality patient care and are not ordinarily captured in whole time equivalent workforce modelling approaches.

Approach

Job planning should be conducted as an inclusive, collaborative, open and transparent activity between staff and managers.

Physiotherapists and physiotherapy support workers should have the same accessibility to IT resources, time and support for job planning activity as colleagues in other disciplines.

The job planning process should occur annually and be prospective in nature. Initially, it should be undertaken as a discussion, taking full account of the clinical and non-clinical demands and expectations of the individual in the context of their role, over the previous year and those predicted for the year ahead.

There should be a consistent approach to defining clinical activity and supporting professional activities for all staff and in all clinical contexts. Individuals should be supported to work in partnership with managers to identify and address any key issues and concerns regarding proportions of clinical activities and supporting professional activities.

Where digital infrastructure exists, job planning may be part of e-rostering but should not be conducted as a weekly timetabling exercise.

Support

Approaches should exist to ensure that a job plan fairly reflects any agreed adaptations or adjustments to an individual's role where these are required to support performance.

There should be supportive processes in place, through appropriate HR systems, for individuals who are dissatisfied with their job planning process or outcome. This is in order that they may raise concerns and seek resolutions without fear of retribution.

Advanced and Consultant level practice

Advanced and consultant physiotherapy practitioners are expected to work across 4 pillars of practice with research, teaching, management and leadership considered essential elements of these higher level roles. The job planning process provides an opportunity to agree and embed capacity for such supporting professional activities in advanced and consultant level roles.

Similarly, the job planning process provides an opportunity to ensure that the time and resource for essential supporting professional activities for advanced and consultant level physiotherapy practitioners is similar to that afforded to peers in the medical workforce.

Practice based learning

The entire physiotherapy workforce needs to expand and develop to meet demand. As a result a greater emphasis on supporting learners in practice is required.

In addition, new models of learning such as apprenticeships are emerging for pre-registration physiotherapy degrees and physiotherapy support worker development. These models are likely to see learners embedded in the existing workforce, radically altering traditional practice based learning approaches and experiences. Successful implementation of more and new practice based learning is heavily dependent on the capacity of the physiotherapy workforce to manage operational demand whilst supporting high quality learning experiences.

Supporting practice based learning should be part of everyone's job plan to a greater or lesser extent. The job planning process is an opportunity to embed this alongside determining and outlining the capacity required in the physiotherapy workforce to undertake or support high quality practice based learning without an adverse impact on patients and services.

Reflecting local need

Job plans will reflect the way a local physiotherapy workforce meets the specific needs of its patients, services and staff and its variable commitments to learners in practice.

AHP productivity in the NHS in England

This is increasingly being captured through [the Model Hospital](#), and will be used to identify and reduce variation across services. Many services may have warranted variation due to local needs. Job plans should reflect local need and can therefore be used to support triangulation of data and explain variation where necessary.

Physiotherapists and physiotherapy support workers as part of ward based nursing establishments

Where physiotherapy staff are embedded in ward based nursing establishments they are unlikely to be working to a job plan. Careful monitoring of the capacity for individuals working in this way to engage in supporting professional activities is recommended. There is a risk that physiotherapy staff working in this way may have inequitable access to learning and development opportunities compared to peers working to a job plan.

Conclusions

Job planning has the potential to define the constituent parts of high quality physiotherapy care and thereby true capacity for patient facing clinical care in a way that has not previously been captured. In turn, it provides an opportunity to most realistically reflect AHP productivity. In these respects it should be a positive and empowering process for the profession and individuals.

Physiotherapists and physiotherapy support workers should actively engage with job planning activity but should feel adequately supported and empowered to challenge the process and outcome should it fall short of a collaborative and productive exercise.