

I work for the National Health Service as a Physiotherapist. My role is varied and I work with a wide range of people with physical and mental health problems. If you wanted to define the role of a Physio you would say 'It is to seek to identify and maximise movement potential through health promotion, preventive healthcare, treatment and rehabilitation'. My work is particularly influenced by the **National Health Service Act 2006**, **Darzi Report**, the **Mental Health Act 2007** (part of the **Equality Bill**) and the **Health and Social Care Act 2008**.

Some physiotherapists are employed by the National Health Service, but others choose to work in the private sector, working independently in private practice, clinics, hospitals and GP surgeries. Voluntary organisations may also employ physiotherapists to provide expertise in organisations that support people with long term conditions.

My day starts in an outpatients' clinic, treating people with spinal and joint problems. I need to have some information on the client's general health and be aware of any conditions they may have before I can begin treatment. Under the **Data Protection Act 1998** any information that I request must be treated confidentially and not shared with other professionals without the permission of the client.

I need an awareness of the work and lifestyle of a client to identify how a condition has started and to ensure that any exercises I give them to do at home will be possible. I also need to be sure that they (or their carer) understand what I'm asking them to do.

Later in the day I will do some work with patients in the hospital, focussing on those who need respiratory system treatment. This may include working with children with cystic fibrosis and using airway clearance techniques, or it could include working on the rehabilitation of a patient after major surgery. When working with children my work is influenced by the **Children Act 2004**. It's important that the parent understands the purpose of the treatment and I may teach them to do a procedure that is straightforward, so that they can continue the treatment in the home. The treatment of any patient will involve a multi disciplinary team. That team will work together to ensure consistency in the treatment plan, involvement of the patient and, where appropriate, their parent/carer in the decision making.

As the work of physiotherapists can be so varied and we work with such diverse groups of people of all ages and backgrounds it's essential that we have patience, compassion and dedication. For example, when we're working with people with learning disabilities or dementia, we may need to repeat how to do simple tasks several times and so need to be understanding, positive and enthusiastic to motivate patients. Good communication skills are also essential for physiotherapists, as my work is not just about physical treatment. To get the best results I need to build a rapport with patients, their families, other health professions and social workers.