

Real-life story - Emily Holding

Emily has been a qualified band 5 physiotherapist for just over a year. She is in a 'rotational' post and is currently in her third six-month rotation.



Emily Holding Band 5 physiotherapist

Employer or university TBC

Salary range Unknown

How did you feel before you started?

My first rotation was in a spinal outpatients department. I was nervous about knowing enough, being responsible enough and whether my new colleagues would have faith in my abilities. Working in outpatients requires making a possible diagnosis from fairly brief doctor's notes, so can seem a bit daunting to the newly qualified physiotherapist.

This is unlike work on the wards which usually involves working from a diagnosis that has already been made, such as providing a rehabilitation plan for someone who has had a stroke. However, as a newly qualified practitioner you're given less difficult cases and have longer to assess a new patient. You quickly learn that you're not supposed to know everything.

How does being newly qualified compare to being a student?

Being newly qualified feels like a big jump, but in many ways it's less stressful. You don't have an assessor continually looking over your shoulder. You have more time to think about things before deciding a plan of action. You can begin to try different techniques and see which work better for you, rather than just following what your clinical educator did. You're also able to build up better relationships with patients and unlike on a student placement, work with them long enough to see them improve from your treatment, which

is very rewarding.

For at least the first 18 months of my career I'm working on rotations. Each one is in a new and different area so I always feel nervous! However I now feel much more confident about my knowledge and skills. I've seen a large number of patients now and have developed strategies to help me make an appropriate treatment plan for them.

Remember you are not expected to know everything from day one.

What support have you received?

I have a 30-minute supervision session every week where I can discuss more complex patient cases or ask my supervisor to observe me and give feedback.

What learning and development opportunities are there?

There's funding available for continuing professional development (CPD). I can attend conferences, such as the Physio UK Conference, or courses that cover things like acupuncture or pilates.

Each week we have an in-service session where we take turns to present a topic to our colleagues. This is usually an interesting condition or treatment that you have come across not regularly seen in your department that will be of interest to your colleagues, or we present back from a training course or conference.

What tips do you have for other newly-qualified practitioners?

Buy yourself some pocket books with easy-to-follow guidelines on key physiotherapy topics. Sometimes in a busy clinic you may need to remind yourself of conditions or treatments.

Remember you are not expected to know everything from day one, but you are expected to be professional with good time-management and organisational skills. You have a responsibility to your patients to keep to time.

Relax and try to enjoy it. It's satisfying to have the independence to deal with patients in a way that works for you and to see them get back to their previous level of function.

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