



CONNECT HEALTH Bee-inspired

Katharine Netherton, Senior Physiotherapist & Team Leader, Hammersmith & Fulham MSK Service, talks frankly about her move from the acute sector to the leading independent MSK provider Connect Health.



“Working at Connect is not for everyone. It’s a fast paced way of working - you have to be good to be able to do it, but there is a lot of really great support and training to help you. If you are motivated and want to learn more and develop, you’re likely to go far. If you’re not, then it might not be for you.”

Working for Connect has been the best career move I’ve made

I transferred over via TUPE from the incumbent MSK provider in May 2016, having worked with them for just two months. Prior to this I had worked in a large NHS trust for a number of years. I was apprehensive to say the least as I was aware of Connect and had heard rumours that they didn’t have a great reputation – eg the private guys are coming in to take over our NHS contract.

Initially it was extremely difficult. **There was a lot of change to take on board in terms of the ways in which we worked** and there didn’t seem to be a huge amount of support from the new manager. That said, the Head Office and senior clinical staff came in to talk to us and were very engaging and enthusiastic, which gave me hope that things might get better.

There was a lot of resistance to change in the team – not wanting to change the length of appointments, and not engaging with PhysioLine (our telephone assessment and advice service) as this was totally new.

However I stuck it out, along with most of the team, as I thought things would get better **and slowly things took shape and my fears were allayed**. I got a better understanding of the patient journey, with face to face assessments, the pain and rheumatology pathways, CATs, group exercise sessions and now using new premises like the gym and everything has become a lot better.

We are now offering more injection clinics, shock wave therapy and ultra sound guided injections which are **all new skills for the team – so we have a much bigger skill mix**. It is more satisfying for the clinicians knowing you can direct the patient towards the most appropriate treatment for them and I think the patients like it too. Access and waiting times have reduced and it is now a much more streamlined pathway for patients.

Career development is second to none

I have seen the team grow and develop - there are training opportunities and I took on a joint team leader role in August 2016. Whilst I've retained my existing contract, I was able to change my working patterns, and have been able to work from home which is great. I've also carried out a leadership and development course - that's been brilliant, really interesting and helped me learn and realise I can do a lot more than just normal physiotherapy.

In addition, **I've just taken on a developing Advanced Practice Physiotherapist role** which entails additional training starting in June 2017 over the next year or so.

I really value the training opportunities. In an NHS model I would have been less likely to get an APP job at this stage in my career. **Connect focuses on competency and developing talent.** The NHS career pathway tends to focus more on length of service ie how many years you have worked at a specific level for and it is, in my experience much more regimented, often with few opportunities outside of a standard clinical career.

That said there are opportunities, but they are harder to come by and few seek them out.

There are lots more opportunities at Connect which can take you in any direction, perhaps outside of the more traditional routes. If you are interested in operations or business development or service transition then there is a lot to get your teeth stuck into here.

I love the flexible working patterns

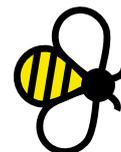
The work life balance is excellent. Because we have PhysioLine there are opportunities to work remotely. We also make sure that everyone works in the local gym one day a week. From July I'll be working alongside a current APP at Charing Cross for one day a week, 2 days working from home, half a day PhysioLine and the rest of time doing management functions such as inductions, timetable management, responding to customer feedback sorting out annual leave etc, as well as two clinical days doing physiotherapy in a GP practice. **There is so much variety in the day - it's always interesting and different.**

Before I joined Connect, I enjoyed my job, but I didn't have the drive and excitement of new challenges.

If you'd like to find out more about working at Connect, contact hr@connecthealth.co.uk



Floor 2, The Light Box,
Quorum Business Park,
Benton Lane,
Newcastle upon Tyne,
Tyne and Wear,
NE12 8EU



0191 250 4580
generalenquiries@connecthealth.co.uk
connecthealth.co.uk