



# CONNECT HEALTH Bee-inspired

**Timothy Raffle**, MSK Physiotherapist, Occupational Health based in the North East, talks about his journey from Australia to Newcastle and why he chose a career at Connect



“Connect is a fantastic company to work for and we’re able to achieve great results for our patients. If you look at why we’re growing at a huge rate, I think it’s all down to how Connect treats their employees that enables them to get really great results.”

## I’m fascinated how the human body works – how it functions as a machine

I’m from Melbourne, the youngest (and a twin) of 5 siblings and my family tended to get injured a lot through sport, and I mean a lot - with a total of 20 surgeries, 15 knee arthroscopes and many more hips, knees and torn muscles. The more I’ve learnt about the human body, I’ve realised the less we know.

So I worked full time as a physiotherapist (occupational health in Qantas airline and the docks), in addition to sports physio with an Australian football team two nights a week and managing a bar on weekends.

Then I met a Geordie girl who had been travelling around Australia for 2 years but when her visa ran out, I decided to quit my job and go travelling with her. On Christmas Day 2015 we moved to the UK, making a life together in Newcastle. I

didn’t know about Connect but it turned out that the head office was literally 5 minutes away from our home and very soon after, I was working at Connect – on 28 Feb 2016.

### I soon found a job in the UK

Whilst it took a long time to transfer my physio registration and track down personal references, previous lecturers etc, I thought an admin role in a physiotherapy company would suit me until it came through, and I started work as a patient care advisor.

I found the role very interesting and fun, even though it was very different working in an office environment, and the people I worked with found it quite helpful to draw on my knowledge. As soon as my registration came through in September 2016, I simply moved seats at head office and started working on PhysioLine, calling patients rather than them calling me.



## Occupational health is very rewarding as there are more opportunities to be proactive, preventing injury before it happens

An opening became available and I started doing more clinical work and after in-service training, I mentioned I was keen to do occupational work so worked on the new Warburton's contracts when they became live across Stockton, Newcastle and Glasgow. It's very reactive in the NHS so I enjoy the opportunity to go out to the bread factory and give advice to prevent the injury. We treat people at work, so they are not injured at home. It's great to know that our treatment will mean they can go home and not be in pain.

I also work at Caterpillar based in Stockton, who manufacture tractors (a bit different to making bread) and work on an NHS Contract in Gateshead and South Tyneside. I love the variety as I see different populations and I enjoy getting out into different work places seeing on average 16 patients a day.

## Connect puts so much time into training and support

It's different to anything I've done before and as a big company they put so much time and effort into training with lots of support to self improve. The opportunities have been fantastic and the support you get from the clinical team is really good. My visa runs out soon and I've had a lot of support to renew it. The work life balance is great, as we get to socialise regularly. We carry out CPD once a month on a Tuesday with numerous training days and access to our free MSKEdNet.



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

## The main downside for me is the weather

I'm still waiting for my 35 degrees days!

The other downside with any physio work is that you often do a lot of travel and don't get to spend much time with your colleagues. So it really helps to have the social side to keep in touch with everyone. We organise away days, pizza nights, awards and Christmas parties.

## I feel my future career is bright at Connect

Ideally I think the area I can contribute most is in the Occupational health side so I'd like to develop more as a senior physio in that area and move into a team leader role. And I'm really pleased to say that in March 2017 I got hitched and we bought a house in July.

## My advice to others looking to move to the UK

Initially when you come over to the UK you look at the pay and it's not as good on paper, but relatively speaking, it's actually OK due to cost of living which is a lot higher in Australia eg it's 12 dollars a pint! I just love it here - last weekend we went to Paris for a long weekend - a one hour flight compared to 22 hours from Melbourne!

I've found the way that physio works in the UK it's very much evidence based and I'm learning so much more here than in Australia.

**If you'd like to find out more about working at Connect, contact [hr@connecthealth.co.uk](mailto:hr@connecthealth.co.uk)**



0191 250 4580  
[generalenquiries@connecthealth.co.uk](mailto:generalenquiries@connecthealth.co.uk)  
[connecthealth.co.uk](http://connecthealth.co.uk)