



CONNECT HEALTH Bee-inspired

Martin Mason, MSK Physiotherapist based in South Tyneside and Blyth, talks about the training and development, career pathways, support and variety at Connect.



“ I can confidently say that I’ve learnt more at Connect in one year, than I have in all of my previous jobs over the last three years.”

I was told from physios in my previous job that Connect was great for training and support - and they were right.

I joined Connect two weeks before Christmas in December 2016 and I have to say it’s flown by. Originally from Edinburgh, I’ve always had a keen interest in nutrition, health and keeping fit, having worked as a lifeguard and fitness instructor, and I would play every sport (other than cricket) that I could fit in to my day with friends and colleagues. I have also taken up mixed martial arts which I love. However I could do without the regular beatings from sensei Darren.

I did a masters in Physiotherapy at Queen Margaret University, after a Nutrition degree and started my career as a physio in the community in Dundee. After roles in acute older people’s medicine at the Freeman Hospital, Newcastle, and then stroke rehab at the Centre for Aging and Vitality, I worked in the Community Response and Rehab Team (CRRT) for Newcastle Hospitals Trust and was there for a year.

What prompted the move to Connect - I needed more of a challenge

Whilst at CRRT, I worked with a great team of nurses, OTs, physios and social workers but it lacked variety and I noticed after 6 months I had got as much as I wanted out of the role. I saw that Connect was recruiting and after discussing it with my girlfriend (now my fiancée) realised that MSK is an area which has always intrigued me. Part of the job description included the Accelerated Development Programme (ADP) which sounded really good to me so I applied for the role.

The Accelerated Development Programme was the real clincher for me

I was a little apprehensive about working in MSK, due to a bad experience on placement, however I felt it was time to face my fears. The ADP sessions are every Wednesday morning 9-12, at the head office in Newcastle. The first module included the cervical and the upper limb. We move logically downwards to the shoulder, elbow, wrist, etc. You learn everything.



It's similar to university but now it's solely about MSK and very in-depth, covering subjective and objective assessment and management of certain conditions. **Tammy was an excellent teacher and the peer support and camaraderie was brilliant** - everyone has been really helpful.

I wasn't looking forward to PhysioLine

I had a negative preconception about PhysioLine, as I was told by many of my previous colleagues that it wasn't a good idea as patients aren't even seen. However, when I went through the training I thought it was only a good thing. **It reduces time constraints in clinic as the subjective assessment is already complete.**

There are lots of benefits to working at Connect

The other great thing about working at Connect is the variety. **I see many different conditions which certainly keeps you on your toes and it's a great way of increasing your MSK skill set.** I also love getting a day off on my birthday.

On top of the ADP, I attend the regular in-service training - these take place on Tuesday mornings every 3 weeks and it's a good time to see all the team and socialise as well as learning something new.

I enjoy being out on my own in clinics working as an autonomous practitioner. In some of my previous roles, you didn't get the same freedom and working at Connect, it finally feels like I'm actually doing physiotherapy, as opposed to just walking down the street with an elderly person.



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Advice to others in my position

So my advice would be if you know you want to do MSK, **come to Connect and don't hesitate! No matter what your skill level they will support you.** Looking back I would have definitely have applied earlier.

Working at Connect offers excellent opportunities and the company looks after you - I didn't get the same feeling in the NHS. **Connect is well managed and the support is so much more advanced and integrated here.** I'm always getting updates such as new evidence and I'm kept in the loop with everything.

Whilst I took a sideways step in terms of salary, the benefits outweigh this. **The training and development, career pathways, support and variety is so much better.** The work life balance is OK - it's a healthy amount of stress and time flies by as you have to work hard.

So what does my future hold?

I'm coming to the end of my ADP and I will get my pay-rise as a result. **I feel the next step is Senior Physio with some hard work in front of me.** I'm getting married in summer 2018 in Northern Ireland to the girl of my dreams (I was not forced to say that, honest) and would love to carry on with my martial arts and perhaps do the Great North Run in the next couple of years.

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



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