



CONNECT HEALTH Bee-inspired

Jess Norris, physio in the North East, explains how she became the first person at Connect to progress from graduate to Senior Physiotherapist within 3 years, specialising in women's health.



“It's been a seamless career progression with no waiting around from one stage to another.”

You get so much support to get you to where you want to be I've always been into gymnastics, being a competitive cheerleader and competing in trampolining at a national level. I come from a rugby-orientated family, so I'd seen physios in action from a young age, and after considering midwifery I committed to a career in physiotherapy. I came straight to Connect from Leeds Metropolitan University in 2014 after I'd gained first class honours in my Physiotherapy degree and straight away I favoured MSK and women's health.

The Connect Graduate Programme was a great opportunity for me

After graduation I thought a rotational post might come up but nothing did, and then I saw the Connect graduate programme for MSK advertised on the NHS jobs website. **I was the second new graduate Connect took on, and I had a lot of support from my team leader and a buddy.** The Graduate Development Programme was three months, and then I started the Accelerated Development Programme (ADP). The latter took around nine months, and every week we'd spend three hours recapping what we'd learnt at University, reviewing current evidence and looking at treatment options for common pathologies. I passed the ADP exam and then became an MSK Physiotherapist, which meant less supervised time and more responsibility.

After a year I was appointed as a Senior MSK Physiotherapist

I was already doing some of the senior role, and I felt confident in my experience and abilities.

I had a lot of support from colleagues who encouraged me to go for the job. I was tested on clinical scenarios, to make sure I could diagnose properly, ruling out any serious pathologies and providing a number of treatment options. I was then offered the job.

I started as Senior in January 2018, and it was a really smooth transition

I do three half day sessions of PhysioLine a week, and the rest of the time out in clinic in the community. I think PhysioLine is a really useful tool. It's not right for everyone, but for example for working people who don't want the hassle of travelling to clinic, or for people who are getting better and just want a bit of extra advice it's great.

I've been given fantastic support to develop my areas of interest

My managers knew I had a special interest in women's health, and so when Connect took on a contract in South Tyneside recently which included obstetrics and pregnancy work they asked me to help develop the service and deliver training. **Working with a colleague, I've taken the initiative to develop the Women's Health service, providing physio to women experiencing pain, helping them to get the best possible care they can.**



I'm quite a passionate person, and I really care about making a difference in people's lives

This isn't just a job to me; it's not about turning up and getting paid, I'm inspired by seeing my patients doing well. About a year ago I was working with a patient who had been living with fibromyalgia pain throughout her body for more than 40 years. I spoke to her in depth about how other aspects of life could impact pain, such as poor sleep and stress, and taught her some exercises and within 2-3 months she'd noticed a significant improvement. I'll always remember her telling me that for years doctors hadn't really listened to her and had just given her painkillers, and she was so grateful to be in less pain after all that time. **It's such a good feeling to know that you can have such an amazing effect on people.**

Connect is a really friendly place to work

All the teams are integrated, and you make friends across different disciplines. You get a lot of support, and other non-clinical members of staff are really helpful, taking the admin off our hands so we can concentrate on spending all of our time with our patients.

The investment in training is so much better than you'd get anywhere else. In-service training is every three weeks, and continues throughout your career. I also love it that you get a day off on your birthday!

I've only just become a Senior Physio, and I'm quite happy to stay in this role for quite a while

There's still lots for me to learn, and I get fantastic support from my Team Leader. I've become someone else's "buddy", and I take on some of the more complex cases from graduates, so it's great to have someone always on hand for me to check things with when I need to. I'd like to become a team leader in the next five years, and with Connect I know that if I continue to prove myself I'll have the opportunity to do that.



“If other graduates with an interest in MSK are reading this, I'd definitely advise them to consider Connect”

It's a great Graduate Development Programme which provides thorough training on MSK conditions, and **it gives you a fast track by cutting out all the rotations if other aspects of physio are not what you want to do.** At the end of it you have loads of options, and you can specialise depending on your interests. There's a culture of investing in people, and helping them to reach their full potential.

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



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