



# CONNECT HEALTH Bee-inspired

**Richard Pell**, Senior Service Transition Manager talks about how his career has progressed at Connect



“MSK is a fantastic area to work and if you’re prepared to work hard in the speciality and in Connect, there are many opportunities and transferrable skills to take your career in any number of directions.”

## I joined Connect because I wanted to specialise in MSK

I worked in an NHS Trust in Lincolnshire for a year after qualifying at Northumbria University as a physiotherapist, I joined Connect in 2009 as I wanted to specialise in MSK and knew they had a particularly good reputation around development of staff and in particular the Accelerated Development Programme (ADP), enabling you to upskill in a short space of time, typically 9 months.

If I had stayed in the NHS, it’s likely I would have had to spend a few years working through a series of rotations in areas that I wasn’t as passionate about, with training typically half a day a month, compared to half a day a week with the ADP at Connect.

Because the organisation is solely focused on MSK, all of the training and learning you take from interaction with senior colleagues is related to MSK and the **development opportunities are fantastic**, whether team leader positions or advanced practitioner roles.



## My main interaction with physio growing up was through sport

My interest in MSK was borne out of my keen interest in sport. Having played football all my life, from playing for the England under 18s schoolboys and a scholarship to Kentucky, I continue to play semi- professional football having played for Blyth Spartans, Harrogate Town and currently North Shields FC.

There are definitely some transferrable skills from the football world. I think leadership and resilience are the main ones - you don’t get far in competitive sport if you’re not always striving to be better, and can’t bounce back from getting things wrong. **As a leader you constantly have to think about how your words and actions impact on others, quite often putting others before yourself.**

## I’ve had many roles at Connect

After carrying out the Accelerated Development programme over 9 months, I progressed from physio to senior MSK physio within 2 years.

I also worked in occupational health contracts alongside our NHS services.

I then progressed to a team leader position in NHS services in Newcastle. You are allocated protected management time every week and have a responsibility to line manage a number of other physios as well as supporting the service manager with operational leadership.

## A real stand out for me is the exposure to service performance data allowing you to see the bigger picture

As part of my Team Leader role, I managed our PhysioLine services for a while and was regularly involved in analysing individual and service wide performance data, as well as staff training and service improvement initiatives. I was given the opportunity to be involved in supporting the transition of a brand new NHS service that we had been commissioned to deliver in another part of the country. Thereafter the company identified the need for a Service Transition team, as there was awareness of a need for leadership, direction and manpower on the ground when mobilising new services. In October 2016, I was successful in my application to the post of Senior Service Transition Manager.

## Leadership and change management has been an enormous personal learning curve

Service Transition is very fast paced and you get to learn an enormous amount about the huge variability of how MSK services are delivered throughout the country by a breadth of providers.

When taking on a new service, you encounter people who have been given no information, and they often fill that void with negative perceptions of who we are and how we are going to run the service, and how they will be affected. Change is rarely easy, and there are always some that are resistant. But seeing people you've worked with coming through the other side is one of the most rewarding parts of the job for me; hopefully **my resilience and firm belief in what we do is a factor in helping people through the journey.**

## The best thing about my career is the difference we make

The most rewarding thing is seeing the difference we make to the standards and accessibility of MSK services for all stakeholders – it's better for patients and the tax payer. But it's equally very rewarding to see some of the staff of various levels and backgrounds struggle through transition and **come out stronger and often with a renewed focus and pride in the value we as physiotherapists bring.**

I have ensured that, despite holding a senior management position, I haven't lost track of the bread and butter of what we do. So for half day a week, I have a clinical role. **We're a big business now, but we're nothing without the team of clinicians delivering the service.**

I want to climb as high as I can and I want the same for Connect. If it continues to go from strength to strength by helping the NHS and the physio profession, then it reflects on us all.

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



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