

Caitlin Vogt, Physiotherapist, discusses her transition, learning and development and supports as a newly qualified physiotherapist

Transition from student to registered professional?

Commencing in post as a registered professional, I was excited about beginning my career – towards the end of my final placement I really started to feel ready to take the next step and move on from being a student. However, I was also very nervous about what the expectations were of me. I was beginning in a rotation that I had no experience in previously and was concerned about what would be expected – this also however, made me excited to learn about a new area!

As a newly qualified practitioner it felt great to be a properly valued member of the team and I felt a shift in how I integrated into the team. I felt more confident putting my ideas and thoughts forward to colleagues and found it easier to start conversations with the team. However, I often found it difficult to know what was expected of me as I was comparing myself to other Band 5 members of staff but forgetting they had been qualified and working for 4/5+ years. It was initially overwhelming to take on this feeling of responsibility but I quickly realised it was still fine, and expected of me, to ask seniors for help. I was initially concerned about asking questions as I felt now I was qualified there were certain things I should know – I found it helpful to write things down throughout the day that I didn't understand and built a good relationship with my seniors, where I was able to demonstrate the areas I felt confident in and then ask for more support in areas I felt weaker in.

I have also been trying very hard to navigate a good work/life balance but initially found this difficult as I was so tired. I now try to make sure each week I have something planned outside of work to look forward to/ relax with. With a higher level of responsibility I occasionally find it hard to come away from work and not worry about if I have done something wrong/ thinking about patients. I've found ways to organise my days better to give me reassurance before I leave that everything is done and that I can go home and not think about work.

Impact, learning and support

A few of my student placements were during the pandemic, some of the positive impacts of this for setting me up in my role as a NQP included increasing my confidence with use of PPE; adaptability – getting used to rules/ regulations constantly changing and keeping up to date with this; and working with and supporting staff teams that are very stretched staffing wise.

As a NQP, I have received my NHSGGC Flying Start signifier badge and I find it reassuring that staff I am working with can see that I may need some additional guidance. I also find it nice when I am working with or discussing things with MDT members also wearing the badge.

My supervisor in my first rotation was very good at supporting me as a NQP, introducing me to working in GGC and I was able to ask other team members things about annual leave, weekend working, paperwork etc. My new rotation has structured in services training throughout the rotation to give me an opportunity to develop my knowledge in this area weekly. This is the support I have received so far – I think it would maybe have been beneficial to have a general document with more site wide guidance introducing NQPs to working in GGC – e.g. areas, onward referral, discharge places, how annual leave works etc., this may have been of help and reduced anxiety

Some of the learning opportunities available to me since starting include induction to the areas I have rotated to – for my first rotation I was sent an in-service presentation to complete prior to starting, which was very useful and gave me an idea of what to expect. In my new rotation I have completed my first weekly in-service presentation.

Band 5 staff are left to complete this independently and then a senior comes to discuss any questions. It is really valuable to have allocated time to learn about important areas of the speciality. It also helps work alongside the Flying Start journey.

As a NQP, one situation which impacted on me and I will reflect on as I develop Leadership skills in my career was when due to unexpected senior staff absence I was left on my own to manage the 3 wards myself and my senior normally covered. This forced me to believe in my abilities to perform but also reflect on my abilities and ask for help from other seniors across the wider team if I felt I needed it. It kick-started me into finding what way of organisation worked best for me and enhanced my prioritisation skills. I developed my leadership as I planned my own day and the plan for the HCSW helping me – I needed to utilise any help I was offered effectively and prioritise my patients. I also had to handover patients to staff members from other teams who came to help me and needed to think about where the help would be best used and consider that help may not be offered later in the week. . I can already see this experience has improved my confidence in clinical reasoning and my decision making. This is particularly useful in the current climate where hospital pressures are high.

Flying Start NHS programme

I was made aware of the [NHSGGC: FlyingStartPortal](#) during a teams call organised by Gillian Davies, Interim Rotational Physio Lead. I have recently accessed the [NHSGGC: FlyingStartPortal](#) and viewed the resources, there are great templates to evidence my learning. I don't fully understand the requirements of Flying Start NHS – I am unsure what I should be actively trying to do for my Flying Start whilst I await a facilitator, I am hoping once I get started and see the layout on TURAS then things will fall into place. I understand the type of content I need but I'm not sure how it is then uploaded as evidence. As I haven't been allocated a facilitator, I have recently emailed my line manager to confirm if I have been aligned with a facilitator yet? Once I meet with them I will be able to highlight the areas of uncertainty above and then get started.

I have started relating my learning and development to the Flying Start learning outcomes. I have written a couple of reflections about leadership experiences and asked for peer feedback from colleagues from a different discipline. I have also written up learning experiences I have had (e.g discussions with senior staff about using equipment and what the indications are for it etc). We also have on call competencies to complete, although I didn't previously know this, but one of the competencies is suction via tracheostomy and I have recently learned that this could fit into the clinical practice pillar learning outcomes (as a technique I will use clinically). As mentioned earlier, I have completed reflections, notes and CPD activities (in services, webinars etc) but haven't directly placed these into my Flying Start portfolio. I have previously used a hard copy for things like CPD but would be keen to utilise TURAS/flying start to get used to building an online portfolio.

Over the next few months, I am looking forward to having a chance to prove to myself how far I have come and actually use and utilise the skills I developed throughout university. I am currently enjoying working with different MDT members and building good relations with them, I am enjoying learning about their different roles and how they complement physiotherapy. I am looking forward to working with such a wide variety of clinicians and seeing how they work/what experience they have. I am hoping to form good relationships with colleagues and continue to develop my knowledge through work and discussion with them. I am excited to continue to explore all the different areas of physiotherapy and combine the skills I learn in each different area.