

Scotland *needs* more physios

There is now an urgent need to expand the supply of physiotherapists to the NHS in Scotland.

Vacancy rates are at record rates, **averaging 10%** across NHS Scotland. Staff shortages lead to longer patient waiting times, reduced capacity, additional pressure on staff and services, increased sickness and absence and loss of staff from the NHS.

Scotland's ageing society creates a growing population of frail elderly and those with multiple long-term conditions that require physiotherapy in acute and community settings.

The transformation of primary care has been driven by the Scottish government to extend multidisciplinary teams in primary care, including the expansion of over 300 First Contact Advanced Practice Physiotherapists (FCPs).

These new posts can take on the GP musculoskeletal caseload to free up GP time. FCPs have been shown to increase GP appointment times from ten to fifteen minutes, improve efficient referral and reduce repeat appointments.

But the physiotherapy staff for these posts are being drawn from community MSK service, and not being backfilled.

Expanding community rehabilitation is becoming central to addressing the challenges facing the NHS in Scotland by preventing hospital admissions, enabling early discharge from hospital and reducing reliance on social care.

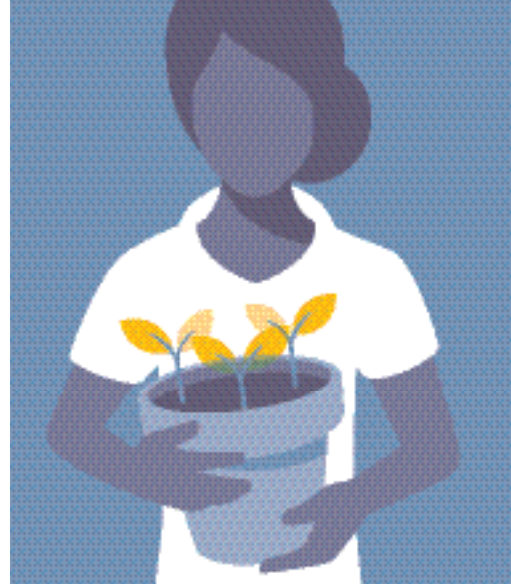
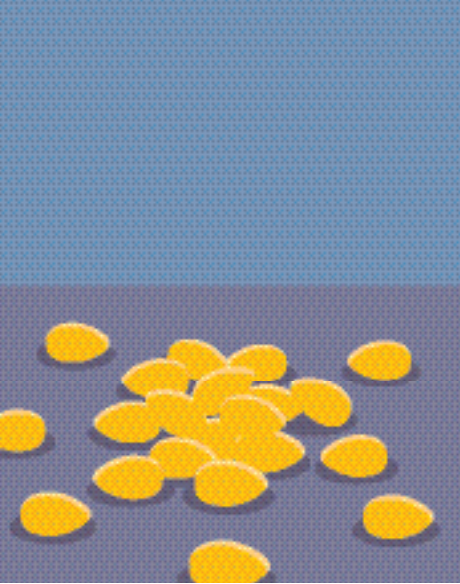
Physiotherapy is an essential part of community rehabilitation services by supporting people to enjoy their quality of life, remain independent for longer and sustain healthier communities.

Effective workforce planning is essential and has been inadequate in Scotland. This has meant that while England has increased undergraduate physiotherapy training places by 96% since 2013, Scotland's undergraduate programmes have seen **virtually no increase** in the last decade.



There are now more self-funded second-degree graduates in physiotherapy from Scottish Universities than fee funded first degree graduates.

Almost **twice** the number of graduates (20%) are not domiciled in the UK fifteen months after graduating compared with England (11%).



What we are calling for

Scotland urgently needs more physiotherapists.

The CSP is calling for a planned expansion of physiotherapy training places in Scotland.

Such expansion should seek to widen participation and diversity to reflect Scottish society, and ensure a workforce supply capable of meeting the demand in the NHS and the health needs of Scotland.

Physiotherapy workforce expansion can be achieved by:

- Making physiotherapy a controlled subject for workforce planning in higher education and responding to all available data to determine supply numbers and timescales required.
- Establishing funded 'earn and learn' routes to provide training opportunities to staff and diversify the workforce in NHS Scotland, learning from the development of apprenticeship models in other parts of the UK.

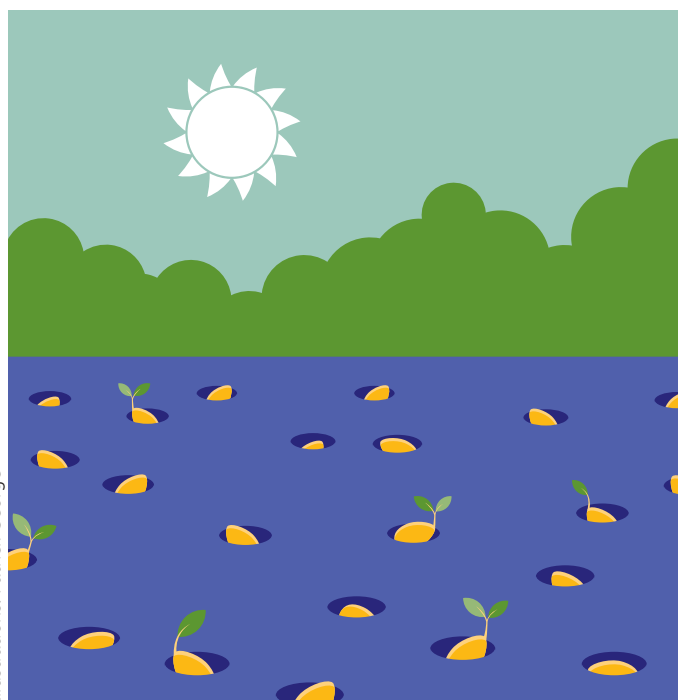
- Maintain the funded MSc physiotherapy health board bursary scheme for Scottish domiciled students as an addition to total graduate numbers.
- Provide education routes and funding streams to support advanced practice physiotherapy to optimise roles and transform primary care.

How it can happen

- Without the required workforce, none of the wider ambitions for health and social care can be realised. The Scottish government has a crucial role to play in addressing the above physiotherapy workforce needs of Scotland.
- Alongside other allied health professions, the physiotherapy workforce must benefit from better planning, more education opportunities at all levels, and supported leadership in the NHS.
- Systemic changes to education and training models to deliver expansion and new routes to qualification and advanced practice must be driven by collaboration across the health and education sectors with an inclusive and ambitious programme for change.

How you can hear more

Contact Kenryck Lloyd-Jones ljonesk@csp.org.uk to arrange a meeting or to find out more about the pressing need for an expansion of the physiotherapy workforce in Scotland.



Illustrations: Patrick George