

# Have your say on the future of physiotherapy



[www.csp.org.uk/priorities](http://www.csp.org.uk/priorities)

*In the first stage of the priority-setting process, we invited anyone with experience of physiotherapy in the UK to tell us what questions need answering. We wanted questions that, if researched, could make a real difference to people receiving any type of physiotherapy for any injury, illness, condition or disability, for people of any age.*

*The randomised list of 65 research questions below is the result; and in our prioritisation survey, launching in November, we are asking you to choose the 10 questions that mean the most to you.*

*Some of the questions may relate to the same topic but have a different focus.*

- How are different physiotherapy services provided, staffed and accessed across the UK and what influences this?
- What are physiotherapists' views on the definition of 'physiotherapy', the contribution it makes, its role and remit in different health fields and areas for role growth?
- How safe and effective is physiotherapy when given before or after medical treatment in improving patient and service results, compared to no extra physiotherapy?
- What are the roles and skills of physiotherapists working in different settings and how do they differ from the skills of other health professionals working in the same area?
- When referring patients to physiotherapy, what expectations do other NHS professionals have in relation to its scope and the management offered?
- When training junior physiotherapists, what methods are effective?
- What sources of self-help information available to patients can be trusted and which do patients prefer?
- To stop health problems occurring or worsening, what physiotherapy treatments, advice or approaches are safe and effective? Where more than one treatment/approach works, which work best and in what dose?
- How safe and effective are physiotherapists in emerging roles in terms of improving patient and service results when compared to routine delivery?
- What are patients offered nationally in terms of treatment sessions, appointment times and follow-on care? How is it checked that this is enough?
- What access options best enable patients to engage with physiotherapy services?
- What are the best ways of communicating access routes to patients needing physiotherapy?
- How well do patients recall physiotherapy advice and to what extent do patients follow this advice?
- What technologies help patients to keep checking and/or managing their health after discharge?

- What are the experiences and views of physiotherapists (NHS or non-NHS) in terms of their working environment, work satisfaction and things which affect this?
- In terms of NHS services, what are patient or physiotherapists' experiences and views of these services and if they meet their population's needs?
- How does waiting for physiotherapy affect patient and service outcomes?
- Where common conditions are known to naturally resolve without physiotherapy, how long does healing/recovery take?
- What technologies or aids are used to support patients to monitor their health and/or to engage in physiotherapy?
- What are the best ways to deliver physiotherapy services to meet patients' needs and improve outcomes for patients and services?
- What's the availability of physiotherapy services nationally, how does this compare between specialisms, countries, or to documented need? What affects service availability across the UK?
- What approaches are effective for enabling parents, relations or carers to support physiotherapy treatment or to help patients to manage their own health problem?
- What are patients' expectations regarding recovery, how do these compare to physiotherapists' views and, where recovery is not possible, how is this managed?
- When trying to improve patient and service outcomes, what types of exercises, doses and methods of delivery are effective?
- What tools or devices allow physiotherapists to effectively monitor treatment progress or results?
- What complementary therapies or mainstream exercise approaches are effective at improving patient and service outcomes when used in physiotherapy settings?
- What do patients expect of physiotherapy and understand in terms of remaining healthy, their condition and their role in self-management?
- How does the amount of physiotherapy received affect results for patients and services? What are optimal session lengths, frequency and duration of treatment?
- When health problems are developing, at what point is physiotherapy most/least effective for improving patient results compared to no physiotherapy? What factors affect this?
- What methods are effective for finding: 1) those at risk of getting a health problem, 2) those who need different amounts of treatment or 3) those who may/may not respond to physiotherapy?
- How is the role of physiotherapy promoted in different health fields and settings?
- What training is available to physiotherapists for developing their skills either working with different conditions or using more specialist approaches?

- When used by physiotherapists, what methods are effective in helping patients to make health changes, engage with treatment, check their progress, or manage their health after discharge?
- What physiotherapy treatments, advice or approaches are safe and effective at improving outcomes for patients and services? Where more than one treatment/approach works, which work best and in what dose?
- What are physiotherapists' or student physiotherapists' knowledge or views on different health problems, use of technology in practice, and/or current evidence?
- What types of exercises, doses and methods of delivery are effective in stopping health problems occurring or worsening?
- What knowledge and skills are developed during physiotherapy undergraduate training? How does this training compare to emerging clinical need and what are the implications for post-qualification training needs?
- For different health problems, what symptoms should prompt the physiotherapist to refer on to other NHS services?
- What do the people who fund services and internal budget holders understand about the role of physiotherapy and how do they make funding decisions?
- How are referrals, waiting times and/or patient non-attendances managed, and what affects the uptake of these practices?
- What approaches or technologies do patients believe enable them to start and maintain healthy behaviours/behaviour change?
- What training approaches or packages are effective in developing physiotherapists' skills either in working with special client groups, changing behaviour, and/or using specific approaches? What is the impact of such training on patient and service outcomes?
- Why do patients want physiotherapy and how do they find out about physiotherapy services? What affects the spread of information about services?
- What methods do physiotherapists use to treat patients, to help them gain skills to manage their condition and to use them in their daily lives?
- How is patient progress and/or the results of physiotherapy treatment measured? How is service performance measured and checked?
- What factors predict the onset of health problems, patient responses to physiotherapy or their abilities to make health changes/self-manage? Which patients (if any) are likely to benefit most/least from physiotherapy?
- How possible is it to use new methods to give health information on different health topics and/or to different patient groups?
- To prevent health problems or improve patient and service outcomes, what technologies or strategies are safe and effective?

- What parts of physiotherapy treatments cause behaviour change or physical improvement?
- What are the experiences and views of patients on the different routes to accessing services and the treatment received? Where do patients go to when they cannot access physiotherapy?
- Do staffing levels and skill mix impact patient and service outcomes? What are the best staffing levels and skill mixes in different areas of physiotherapy and how do these compare to current staffing provision?
- What are the physiological effects of different physiotherapy treatments?
- What are the non-attendance rates and/or waiting times for physiotherapy in different physiotherapy specialisms? What factors affect these?
- How possible is it to use new technologies or ways of delivering services and what can help or stop successful delivery?
- What approaches are effective for setting and managing people's expectations as to what physiotherapy should involve?
- How do physiotherapists decide on what their treatment plans include and/or when to refer on? What influences the types of evidence they use?
- What services or groups (NHS or non-NHS) do physiotherapy services refer patients to after treatment? How are these links made and maintained?
- What are the reasons that patients choose to either attend or not attend for physiotherapy?
- What skills and attributes do NHS employers of physiotherapists value in their employees and how they retain valued staff members?
- What are the post-qualification skills of physiotherapists working in different specialisms and what are their training needs?
- What methods of delivering services improve team working and communication within multidisciplinary teams and/or between services?
- What tools are effective for measuring physiotherapy adherence, health problems or treatment results? Where tools are effective, what amount of change is needed to show an important improvement?
- How can access to physiotherapy be improved for groups who have reduced access?
- What is the impact of limiting access to therapy equipment on patient and service outcomes?
- How can access to health technology or equipment be supported in different physiotherapy settings and areas?