

INFLUENCING TOOLKIT

THINK PHYSIO act local

Why influence?

"Decisions are made by those who show up"

Everyday across the UK people are making decisions that affect your work and your patients. Influencing is the ability to engage with other people and to convince them to adopt and implement your ideas. We aim to do this by providing decision-makers with relevant statistical and factual information, and by sharing our experience and expertise. Successful influencing is built on relationships and communication between people.

This 'influencing toolkit' has been designed to help you make the most of opportunities to influence the profile of the physiotherapy profession, providing you with the tools and ideas to profile a range of stakeholders. It will help you to build and manage relationships with the audiences who matter to you, and ultimately your patients.

What can influencing achieve?

- Change in policy and priorities
- Create opportunities, such as for funding or contracts
- Raise the profile of physiotherapy services and challenge possible cuts
- Generate understanding of the benefits of physiotherapy
- Extend and grow your network
- Build new partnerships

No special training is required and many of the suggestions included in this toolkit take minutes to achieve. With your will, more decision makers, patients and members of the public will better understand the value of physiotherapy.

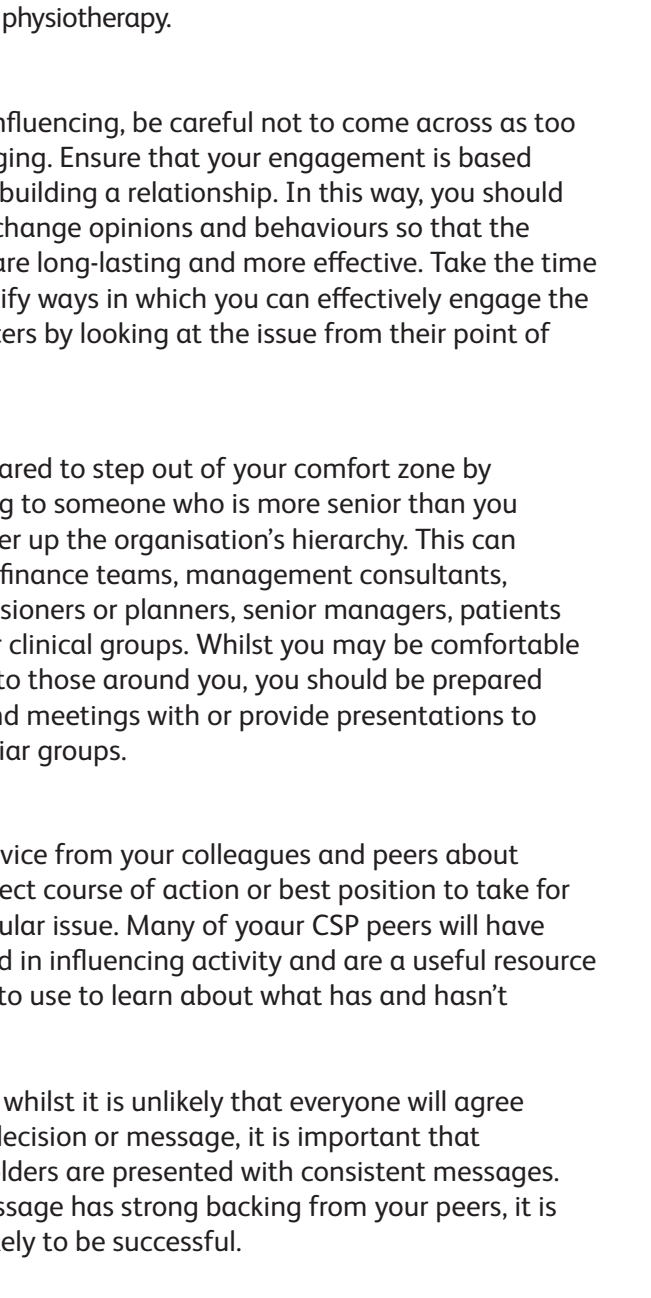
This toolkit includes information on who to influence (p. 2) as well as helpful hints, tips and ideas on how to influence (p. 3). You can also find two case studies from fellow CSP members sharing their experience (p. 7 and 10). There is a section on social media, providing you with the first steps on how to build your virtual network and start influencing online. Finally, you can find a list of useful resources at the back of this booklet.

We hope that this toolkit helps to inspire and motivate you to promote the profession you love.

Who to influence

The healthcare decision-maker landscape is complex and involves a range of influencers. Influencers will vary in significance depending on what your 'ask' is and what you are trying to achieve.

To the right is an example of a 'stakeholder map' which is a useful way to visualise your key stakeholders. The more influential stakeholders are closer to the centre of the map and the less influential ones further from the centre.



Depending on what you are trying to achieve, think about who is most likely to be able to make that change. Looking at these influencers, who are your top five?

What powers do they have?

- Government sets the overall policy and spending priorities
- Parliament approves legal framework and scrutinises actions of Ministers and government agencies
- Regulators have oversight of quality and standards in respect of services, medicines, health professionals
- Local CCG and local authority have power over funding, statutory responsibility and service provision expectations devolved to them
- Local elected representatives have a mix of formal and informal powers
- Patient groups, health campaigning groups and health charities all have the power to 'influence' the agenda.

How to influence

Influencing can take a number of different forms, depending on who you are trying to engage with. It is important to remember that opportunities may not always come to you, so you have to go out and seek these opportunities by asking for that meeting, making that call or sending that email. Many different situations can present opportunities for engagement, so it is vital to always have your 'elevator speech' ready as you never know who you might meet. Coverage in the wider media, such as general print or broadcast, sector or local media and on digital platforms through social media can provide a 'hook' for engagement to get the conversation started. Other key opportunities include conferences, dinners, meetings, roundtables, receptions, launches, celebrations, awards ceremonies, exhibitions and PR stunts.

Remember now is as good a time as any to start changing someone's views, attitudes or beliefs about physiotherapy in a positive way. When done well, influencing can help you to successfully move your cause forward, gain agreement or change someone's mind.

Here are some key tips to help you influence:

- 1 Know your audience** Tailor your engagement for each influencer. Whilst your overall message may be the same, being able to personalise your approach will help make your meeting far more effective. You'll use similar skills to those that you use with your patients when helping them to achieve their goals. Understand the motivations of the person you want to influence and adapt your style, language and presentation to suit them.

Checklist: Before engaging with an influencer, consider the policy and political context for engagement:

- ✓ What challenges or pressures do they face?
- ✓ What policy initiatives or debates are relevant?
- ✓ What changes are taking place in the year ahead? Is there a particular hook for your engagement?
- ✓ What other factors are at play e.g. financial, environmental, social? These factors can provide important context.

- 2 Fine tune your 'ask'** Whoever you are meeting, you need to be clear on what you want to achieve.

Thinking beforehand about what a successful meeting will look like will help you fine tune your 'ask'. Remember that it's not enough to tell someone why they should care about physiotherapy; the chances are they already do. What's more valuable is being able to have a specific 'ask' which helps advance your cause.

Having a prepared 'ask' before the meeting will help streamline your conversation. Most decision-makers will expect you to come to them with an 'ask' - they will want to know what they might be able to do to help you and may even pose this question directly. If you don't have a very clear, practical 'ask', don't worry. The aim of the meeting can be as simple as explaining more about your role, agreeing to keep in touch in the future or asking someone to advocate for physiotherapy services in their conversations with others.

- 3 Make the case** Having data or a patient story to bring your cause to life will help, especially when engaging with people who may not know a lot about physiotherapy. You should not assume that an influencer has a good knowledge or understanding of the benefits of physiotherapy or the pressures on the profession, but by using resources to bring your message to life, you are more likely to captivate their interest.

Creating a patient case study can help to demonstrate the effectiveness of the profession to your employer, external stakeholders and to the public. Capture this by asking a patient what their life was like prior to treatment, how treatment has improved their quality of life, what their plans for the future are and what they are going to do differently as a result. Make sure your patient has signed a consent form and understands how and where you will use their story.

Collect data on cost, patient safety, productivity and efficiency, clinical effectiveness and patient experience. Doing this routinely can not only improve efficiencies and encourage innovation but can also help to build a compelling business case for physiotherapy.

- 4 Pull, don't push** When influencing, be careful not to come across as too challenging. Ensure that your engagement is based around building a relationship. In this way, you should aim to change opinions and behaviours so that the results are long-lasting and more effective. Take the time to identify ways in which you can effectively engage the influencers by looking at the issue from their point of view.

- 5 Step out of your comfort zone** Be prepared to step out of your comfort zone by speaking to someone who is more senior than you or further up the organisation's hierarchy. This can include finance teams, management consultants, commissioners or planners, senior managers, patients or other clinical groups. Whilst you may be comfortable talking to those around you, you should be prepared to attend meetings with or provide presentations to unfamiliar groups.

- 6 Seek advice** Seek advice from your colleagues and peers about the correct course of action or best position to take for a particular issue. Many of your CSP peers will have engaged in influencing activity and are a useful resource for you to use to learn about what has and hasn't worked.

Equally, whilst it is unlikely that everyone will agree with a decision or message, it is important that stakeholders are presented with consistent messages. If a message has strong backing from your peers, it is more likely to be successful.

- 7 Follow up** Once you've had your meeting or event, it is important to follow up with the influencer. If any actions are agreed at the meeting, make sure that you make a note of these for both you and the stakeholder. Send an email or letter outlining the agreed actions and what the next steps are. Even if no actions are agreed, a simple thank you note can also be valuable in continuing to build the relationship. As you would for a patient, keeping accurate records of who you met and what was discussed can be useful in the future.

- 8 When it doesn't go as planned** When influencing, you win some and you lose some. Coping with setbacks is important and even when your message may seem water tight with strong evidence, the decision can go against you. Don't let this put you off pursuing future opportunities - not getting the response you wanted now does not mean that this will be the response in the future. Even a 'negative' response can have positive outcomes, such as an increased awareness of the importance of physiotherapy or becoming the first point of contact on physiotherapy related issues.

Don't be afraid to follow up with an influencer via email or a phone call after a few days if you have not heard back from them. However, be cautious that it does not come across as pestering.

Imagine what could be achieved for the profession across the UK if all 58,000+ CSP members were able to spare a minute each day..

Case study

Melanie Rowland **Chartered Physiotherapist**

In collaboration with other CSP staff, I invited Shadow Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Jonathan Ashworth, to meet with frontline NHS staff at the Braunstone Health and Social Care Centre in Leicester to hear about how vital rehabilitation has transformed the lives of local people.

During the visit, Jonathan witnessed first-hand the importance of patients leaving hospital and being able to access high-quality rehabilitation services to continue their recovery and regain their independence. We also showed him the 'Rehab Matters' film which was powerful in demonstrating the contrasts of experiences of a patient who receives physiotherapy after leaving hospital and one who misses out.

We asked Jonathan to make a proposal of community rehabilitation a core element of Labour's proposals for health and further develop community-based rehabilitation provision. Overall, it was valuable for Jonathan to meet the therapy staff and hear real life stories of local people who have benefited from vital rehabilitation services.

Here are some influencing ideas to get you started:

- If you have 5 minutes**
 - Support a **CSP campaign** by visiting the campaign's section of our website for more information and subscribing to your relevant iCSP network.
 - Put a **CSP campaign poster** on a noticeboard or patient advice leaflets in public areas within your organisation.
 - Build up your **virtual network** by following local commissioning/planning groups, regional networks or influential people on Twitter. Tweet and re-tweet key messages about physiotherapy.

- If you have 15 minutes**
 - Prepare a **patient case study** which supports your ask and demonstrates how your service transforms lives.
 - Write a **letter or send an email** to your local patient body and offer to give a talk at their next meeting.
 - Write a **blog post** on your social media platforms about the benefits of physiotherapy e.g. the health benefits of exercise and how physiotherapists can help.

- If you have 30 minutes**
 - Email your **elected representatives** with responsibility for health to ask if they would be interested in arranging a service visit.
 - Meet with your **organisation's communications team** to discuss ideas with them on how to promote what you do for patients.
 - Contact your **local patient body** and find out what events they have planned in the coming months and whether you can offer a physiotherapy stand at their event.

Making an effective case

In order to be an effective influencer, you need to develop strong messages and 'asks' to stakeholders. You also need to have strong arguments to support your objectives.

These 'asks' could be: help with fighting cuts to your practice, promoting first contact physiotherapy, or generally raising the profile and awareness of the benefits of physiotherapy.

Remember that the person you are influencing may not have a good understanding of what physiotherapists do or the pressures they are under, so it is important to go back to basics and establish some key messages such as:

- What do physiotherapists do?
- Where do physiotherapists work?
- What pressures are physiotherapists under?
- How do physiotherapists work with other medical professionals?
- What are some of the key benefits of physiotherapy?

Be clear and succinct with your message and asks

- What are your key messages?
- What are your 'asks'? What do you ideally want this influencer to do for you?
- Try to get your 'key messages' in at the beginning of the meeting and don't be afraid to repeat these messages in later answers.
- What would success look like?
- How will you promote the visit before and after? Could you write about the visit in a newsletter? Post a picture of it on Facebook or Twitter? Tell your comms team about the outcome of the meeting?
- Could you make the meeting interactive/ participative?
- What materials can you take along? Can you show a CSP campaign video?
- After a meeting, reflect on what went well and what you could do differently in the future.

Social media

Think of social media as an opportunity to build your virtual network and a way of engaging with stakeholders with whom you may not get the chance to interact on a day to day basis. It is a powerful means of communication used by many people you may want to influence. Social media will also allow you to access the latest information and news related to physiotherapy. CSP have a very helpful social media guide which can be found on our website but here are some tips to get started:

Twitter

You can use Twitter to tweet key messages to promote physiotherapy or with a link to any relevant public consultation or health authority proposals.

An example tweet could be: 'Cutting physiotherapy services in [insert place] will put more pressure on GP practices'. Be sure to mention any relevant profiles such as @theCSP or your regional group e.g. @northwestCSP. To help broadcast your tweet, mention other influential profiles e.g. your local newspapers, a local health charity or your elected representative. However, think about the audience that you are wanting to reach and be careful when using acronyms. Instead, use simple and clear language that anyone could understand.

Use hashtags such as #rehabmatters to gain greater exposure for your tweet. Look at @thesp twitter for the latest tweets on physiotherapy campaigns and the hashtags being used. In addition, consider adding a picture or video to your tweet as this makes them more likely to be re-tweeted. Even if you are not tweeting, re-tweet others so that you are promoting the work of physiotherapy.

Other useful accounts to follow could be your CSP regional group, your local commissioning group, your local Patient Participation Group, your local councillor with responsibility for health or a condition specific group such as the British Heart Foundation.

Facebook

Most community and voluntary patient groups, some GP patient groups, local authorities, local commissioning/ planning groups and other local patient bodies have a profile page on Facebook which you may want to join or 'like'. This will allow you to read their latest news and see at a glance what is happening in your area. This can provide a useful opportunity to promote a health campaign such as such as Love Activity, Hate Exercise!, or a health related petition.

Facebook is a particularly useful tool for promoting events as it enables other users to share an event with friends and confirm they are attending. If there is a 'day of action' being organised, make sure that you and others know about it and have the chance to support it. If there's not a 'day of action' organised, consider creating an event yourself.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is an excellent platform to network and 'connect' with fellow professionals. It can also provide you with up to date information on key people in healthcare, give you a platform to share your campaigns as well as present positive opportunities for career development. If you don't already have a profile, set one up and browse for colleagues, past and present.

Google alerts

Signing up to google alerts with some key words is a useful tool to help keep you up to date and spot important news on research and political events that may affect your profession or practice as well as new consultations. By keeping up to date with the latest information, it can provide inspiration for your next campaign, provide the hook to seek a meeting or give you the latest information to help support your ask.

Case study

Dr Neil Langridge **Consultant Physiotherapist, Musculoskeletal Services**

Through my work with first contact physiotherapy I have been able to influence locally, regionally and nationally. Initially through working with GPs and local clinical stakeholders, I used a clinical model to influence their thinking around the concept of first contact primary care physiotherapy. As time passed, I utilised data that I gained via the clinical model to present regionally at events and on social media. At networking events I was able to secure conversations that enabled a quick understanding of the model and plans nationally. This led to the publication of my work in a national publication, podcasts and further interest via national organisations.

This publicity led to my influencing having greater credibility. When I met with national leads, I was able to offer a credible clinical model backed by data, but I then had to review this and offer visionary solutions regarding how it could be implemented widely and in different circumstances. It was important as part of any influencing discussion that I was able to quickly see solutions and offer ones that were safe, viable and evidence based. The model ultimately with many others supporting it in parallel around the country became a national drive within the NHS long term plan.

Who can help?

We hope that you feel equipped to go out and make a difference by influencing a key stakeholder and have realised how quick and easy influencing can be.

This is just a starting point so please have a look at the further resources and guidance listed below or get in touch with CSP enquiries team.

The Campaigns and Regional Engagement team is here to help, please contact us if there's any way that we can support your influencing activity. We have campaigns, printed and audio-visual material and case studies that we can provide you with.

If you do carry out any influencing activity, we would love to hear about it, so please let us know at: cre@csp.org.uk

Further resources and guidance:

- CSP resources**
- Social media guidance www.csp.org.uk/socialmediaguide
- Professionalism resources www.csp.org.uk/professionalism
- Professional advice service enquiries@csp.org.uk
- Other resources**
- NHS Employers social media toolkit www.nhsemployers.org/case-studies-and-resources/2014/04/social-media-toolkit-for-the-nhs

This document can be made available in a format for people with visual impairment. **Tel: 020 7306 6666**