Guidelines

for

Employing Newly Qualified Physiotherapists

in Private Practice

CPPP approved - July 2011
Graduate Employment Working Group – approved June 2011
Board Approved - August 2011
1. POLICY STATEMENT
It is the policy of the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists (ISCP) to implement these guidelines for employing newly qualified physiotherapists in the private practice setting.

2. PURPOSE
The Society has developed these guidelines to assist Chartered Physiotherapists who are practice owners who currently employ or are thinking about employing newly qualified physiotherapists.

3. SCOPE
These guidelines apply to members of the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists who are working in private practice and operating as employers.

4. LEGISLATION and relevant Documents
5. Guidelines for drawing up a contract (in process)

5. GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS
1. Member: a current member of the Society
2. A graduate (or newly qualified physiotherapist) – for the purpose of this document – is a physiotherapist who has qualified in the past academic year or one who has less than one year’s cumulative employment experience. The graduate of more than one year’s experience will not require that same level of support.
3. Chartered Physiotherapists in Private Practice: an Employment Group of the Society for members working in private practice who are practice owners.

Physiotherapists who have successfully completed their undergraduate education in any of the accredited physiotherapy schools in Ireland are deemed competent to work as autonomous practitioners and as such are automatically eligible for membership of the Society.

The Society, as the sole professional body for Physiotherapists in Ireland, is seriously concerned about the dearth of employment positions in recent years for newly qualified physiotherapists. It established a Graduate Employment Working Group in 2006 when it became apparent that the graduates of that academic year were finding it difficult to get jobs as physiotherapists. The Group comprises graduate representatives and representatives from the Employment Groups and the physiotherapy schools among others.

Chartered Physiotherapists in Private Practice (CPPP) recommended that graduates would gain three years physiotherapy employment and experience in the public sector prior to working in Private Practice. However changes in the provision of physiotherapy within the public sector have resulted
in many new graduates seeking to start their professional careers in the private sector, an area usually served by more experienced colleagues. As more Private Practitioners are now employing more graduates, CPPP has expressed concerns about employing graduates and graduates have expressed concerns about working in private practice. The Graduate Employment Working Group has identified and agreed that there is a need for guidelines for both the private practitioner as the employer and for the graduate as the employee.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 As a member of the Society
Chartered Physiotherapists, whether employer or employee are bound by the Rules of Professional Conduct incorporating the Code of Ethics and the Guidelines for Professional Behaviour

6.2 The Employment Group
Chartered Physiotherapists in Private Practice (CPPP), as the Employment Group for private practice owners, offer support to any member who wishes to mentor graduates

6.3 Practice Principal’s responsibility as an employer
Employers have to comply with obligations under the Employment Legislation

Employers have a responsibility to promote an environment for graduates’ initial employment that promotes a culture of close clinical supervision/mentoring, and that encourages new graduates’ professional development. Emphasis should be placed on developing clinical reasoning skills and reflective practice as well as the graduates’ understanding of their professional, legal and ethical responsibilities, especially in the areas of informed consent and confidentiality.

Employers have a duty to ensure that graduates are not asked to work outside their scope of practice.

6.4 Graduate’s responsibility as an employee
Graduates have a responsibility to understand the limits of their individual scope of practice and their levels of professional competence, and to practise within these (Rule 1.8).

Graduates should seek to practise in environments where they have access to consistent supervision and mentoring to assist them in understanding the professional demands made on them.

FIRST CONSIDERATION
Private Practitioners need to consider their own business plan/structure and to calculate the cost of employing a graduate based on a fair salary and employer obligations to ascertain if the practice can sustain the employment of additional physiotherapist/s.
7. GUIDELINES for Private Practitioners as Employers

7.1 Recruitment
The appointment of graduates into a practice is underpinned by sound, basic recruitment processes. These should ensure clarity and transparency.

The development of a job description and personal specification, plus a publicised process for considering applications and appointing a successful applicant, prior to beginning to seek applications for a position should ensure that applicants have a reasonable understanding of the post for which they will be considered.

The provision of material on the physiotherapy practice will help applicants to gain an understanding of the kind of clinical and business environment they would be entering if appointed.

Such arrangements, while forming good recruitment practice, should streamline and enhance the effectiveness of the employment process into the practice. It will reduce the effort involved in subsequent recruitment exercises.

It is also essential to establish, from the outset, the basis on which an employer wishes to recruit graduates and that the arrangements for appointment and employment match this. For example, it might be a plan to recruit:
- one graduate
- Several graduates
- On a one-off basis
- On a rolling basis (say annually, or every two years)
- On a time-limited basis (e.g. on a year’s contract).

7.2 Establishing inclusion Criteria:

The following points need to be included in the job description and any advertisements for a position. The criteria can be checked before interviewing and before appointing.

The graduate:
(i) Is a current member of the Society
   (This can be checked online on the website. Alternatively, graduates can be asked to provide their certificates of membership).
(ii) Has professional liability insurance with the Society’s Insurers
(ii) Has a current First Aid certificate.

The criteria above also become part of the checks that need to be done again before appointing.

In addition the graduate will need to supply a current Garda vetting check. It does not indicate that there is anything that might be of concern in the context of their work as a physiotherapist involving their direct contact with children and/or vulnerable adults. If Garda vetting is in process, the self-declaration form is acceptable as an interim measure.*

The employer needs to have a policy in the case of a self declaration form in regard to whether the employee can treat children or vulnerable people.
7.3 Interviewing
At the interview it is advisable to ask about the following to ascertain the sense of the contribution a graduate would be able to make in the practice’s activity. These may include:

(i) The clinical placements they undertook as part of their physiotherapy degree.
(ii) The particular clinical skills they developed as part of their degree and further skills they would like to develop.
(iii) How they would manage certain clinical conditions evidenced-base practice
(iv) What they think they would be able to contribute to the practice (recognising that there might be areas – such as those relating to their research project/proposal – in which they would be able to share useful insights with practice colleagues)
(v) Professional aspirations (both short- and long-term)
(vi) What administrative tasks they have had experience of, e.g. booking appointments, ordering stock.

7.4 Appointing

Terms and conditions of appointment
The graduate employee has the same employment rights as any other new employee. The employer and the employee must comply with the current Employment legislation.

Following the interview and assessment process and prior to appointment, the following matters including relevant statutory obligations have to be addressed through a contract of employment:

- Salary level
- Probationary period (and arrangements surrounding this)
- Leave entitlements
- Expected hours of work
- Term of employment
- Arrangements for CPD
- Appraisal arrangements (linked to professional development planning)
- Disciplinary and Grievance processes
- Particular expectations around activity once they leave your employment (including, potentially, setting up a practice of their own).

Refer to Guidelines for developing a Contract of Employment for further information (in process)

7.5 Following appointment

7.5.1 Basic Forms of Support:
The following recommendations aim to establish good, supportive working arrangements for the newly appointed graduate:
i. The Introduction of an induction programme. This should include the practical implications of confidentiality issues and specific practice procedures. The graduate may not be familiar with many of the various booking in and business procedures, health and safety procedures and the clinical processes that are in use in a practice.

ii. Supply a level of clinical supervision appropriate to the individual graduate’s skill level, in addition to informal and formal CPD.

iii. Work with the graduate to establish his/her CPD portfolio, paying particular attention to the areas that apply to the clinical setting in which he/she is currently working.

iv. Draw up a professional development plan using the learning contract template with the graduate that includes objectives for their initial and longer-term practice and arrangements for supporting and reviewing their fulfilment of these.

7.5.2 Additional Forms of Support

(i) Graduates will also need to be assisted in transitioning to employment in the Private Sector. The graduate may find the change particularly difficult. Mentoring arrangements that enable you to engage in regular patient reviews with new graduates are strongly advised. These will help to understand the graduates’ development within the practice and to help them to identify and address their professional development needs.

(ii) Encourage graduates to:

- Take responsibility for their own learning/CPD
- Contact their peers within other working sectors.
- Join relevant Clinical Interest Groups.
- Consider other ways in which they might usefully engage in networking with their peers e.g. Branch meetings etc
- Explore the possibility of joining the local HSE Physiotherapy Departments for access to in-service training (as agreed by the Chartered Physiotherapists in Management, CPM)

7.6 Organisational issues within the practice

Ensure that a good level of understanding develops within the practice as a whole as to how graduates are being integrated, and related arrangements for how they practise and with what levels of support. This is especially important if calling on other members in the practice to help provide mentoring support and when asking others in the practice to supervise when the person responsible for supervision in out of the practice.

An ethos of Dignity at Work must be promoted at all times.
8. REVISION

| For Committee approval | (i) CPPP | √ |
|                        | (ii) Graduate Employment Working Group | √ |
| For Board approval     | 13th July 2011 – deferred – 17th August | √ |
| For Review             | Board meeting of August 2013 |
| Other Documents        | None |
| superseded by this one | |
| Access to Document     | Website: Inventory of Documents |
| Location of Document   | Office: Shared File - Inventory of Documents File |
| Related Documents      | (i) Rules of Professional Conduct incorporating the Code of Ethics and the Guidelines for Professional Behaviour |
|                        | (ii) Guidelines for Drawing up Contracts (in progress) |

9. REFERENCES

As per Section 3

10. APPENDICES

10.1 Mentor Meeting Contract
10.2 Learning Contract Feedback Sheet
## Mentor Meeting

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### Content:
- **Documentation Audit**
- **Assessment skills:**
  - Discussion □
  - Practical □
- **Treatment skills:**
  - Discussion □
  - Practical □
- **Clinical Reasoning skills**
- **Evidence-based practice**
- **Other**
  (Please detail)___________________________
  _________________________________

### Agreed objectives:

### Signed:
- Applicant: ________________________ CP Mentor: ________________________
Chartered Physiotherapists in

Learning Contract Feedback Sheet

Physiotherapist Name:  
CP Mentor:  
Date:  

*Please list negotiated learning outcomes for the placement as itemised in the learning contract*

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Signature:__________________  Signature:__________________
(CP Mentor)                    (Physiotherapist)