



CHAMPIONING PRIVATE PHYSIOTHERAPY

Working with Physio First

Our Strategy and Culture

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CHAMPIONING EVIDENCE-BASED COST-EFFECTIVE PRIVATE PHYSIOTHERAPY
WITH PHYSIO FIRST MEMBERS IN A CHANGING HEALTHCARE MARKETPLACE

physiofirst.org.uk



Our strategy and culture

Dear Reader,

It is very important to our Physio First's Commercial Team that we share our ethos and values together with a summary of our overall strategy ahead of trying to get to grips with the details of a mutually beneficial relationship. This is so you can familiarise yourself with who and what we are before engaging. Also, this gives you the opportunity to share your values with us because any relationship works better where values are sufficiently aligned.

We are very clear about our organisational intent (our "why") which is **to support and promote a community of quality private physiotherapists.**

So, to work with us it is helpful to understand 3 things:

1. that it is our intent that guides everything we do
2. that we have an organisational culture that is based upon our agreed values and which articulates the standard of behaviour to which we hold ourselves and against which we judge our ability to work with a commercial partner
3. that we run ourselves with the discipline and structure of a commercial organisation even though we are technically a not-for-profit volunteer led organisation

This explanation is to provide enough context so that any future contact is more likely to lead to a successful relationship.

Whilst it is the leaders of Physio First who set our culture and strategy (that is our volunteer executive committee who are elected from among our members), Physio First is a membership trade association that is run by members, "with" our members. The real value of being a member is the level of engagement, especially with our member benefits.

It will also help to know that we feel that we can only do business with organisations that are sufficiently culturally and strategically aligned i.e. where organisations that take the time to understand our strategic direction of travel and our values and feel they sufficiently align with their own.

We understand that complete cultural and strategic alignment is unrealistic, but it has to be sufficiently aligned otherwise, experience tells us, no matter how well intentioned, any relationship will be too difficult to manage in the mid to longer term.

Deciding that there is insufficient synergy is not, a criticism. It is perfectly acceptable for us not to have sufficient synergy with you, or your organisation as different organisations have different priorities and different values, and that is fine. But if there is insufficient synergy then it is much better to only expect to work on a transactional basis, if at all!



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So, to conclude my introduction, by providing the information here and below I hope that we have given you sufficient insight to be able to judge whether you think there is merit in spending the time and energy in trying to construct a functional (i.e. fit for purpose) relationship with us at this point.

So please do read on and let me know what you think.

Best regards,

Belinda Holloway

Hon. Commercial Officer

Physio First

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Our story

1. Who are Physio First?

Physio First, formed in 1952 as the Organisation of Chartered Physiotherapists in Private Practice (OCPPP). We are the trade association of self-employed Chartered physiotherapists and a dynamic professional network of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy. We have approximately 2,000 members across the whole of the United Kingdom, the vast majority of whom are practice principles (i.e. business owners). So, as Physio First, we represent ONLY physiotherapist led (as opposed to investor led) businesses.

As a professional network of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, we are formally recognised by the Council of the CSP as representing self-employed Chartered physiotherapists. To find out about Physio First's history, [click here](#).

Physio First is run by our members and we pride ourselves on representing a community of private physiotherapists who work *with* our members as opposed to for them.

Our elected Physio First executive committee, supported by fellow volunteer member post holders, our employed office team and commissioned professional advisors, proactively work together as an integrated team to deliver our strategic intent and member value proposition. We benefit from professional management, coaching and support, the creative use of AI and pride ourselves on being an extremely functional (i.e. fit for purpose) organisation. We are well-structured, use project planning and capacity management tools and systems which includes Membership Relationship Management (MRM) software.

Our Community Representative team, like our executive, volunteer team are all self-employed private physiotherapists. Their role includes understanding and communicating our organisational strategy, member value proposition and culture; leading upon planned and aligned local or targeted events and assisting with our education, recruitment and retention strategies.

2. Our strategy explained

Our commercial discipline ensures that our strategic intent, **to support and promote a community of quality private physiotherapists**, is clear at all times.

Our 2022 3-year business plan set 5 business goals

Goal 1: To move our Data for Impact (Dfi) and quality assurance schemes from Physio First to where the cost, development and benefits can be shared with other stakeholders in the private healthcare marketplace.

Goal 2: To deliver our November 2022 refined Member Value Proposition (MVP), which is to offer ‘everything you need to provide quality private physiotherapy within a trusted community’

Goal 3: To formulate a strategic commercial relationship with The Physio Co-op as it develops from a start-up business.

Goal 4: To develop our Skills Exchange Programme so that

- 1) they become regular occurrences throughout the UK
- 2) we can maximise the new member recruitment opportunities they present and
- 3) we are in a position to assess whether we might run a large annual face-to-face event that is based on them.

Goal 5: To continue to research and if cogent establish a viable business case to:

- 1) facilitate Physio First Quality Assured Clinics to provide third year undergraduate physiotherapy students interested in private practice to gain clinical experience with them
- 2) persuade such students, with the support of their universities, to become Members of a new Physio First Student Network and thereafter be listed as contacts for Physio First members to consult about work opportunities and their employment needs into the future.

All of which we are working through.

Member recruitment

As per our Commercial Strategy, Physio First’s top commercial priority is to recruit more members and principally this is where our Strategic Commercial partners must help.

We have an organically growing database of over 3,600 potential members with whom we communicate up to several times a month which we need to refresh and expand. An aim to benefit both Physio First and our partners.



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Member engagement

To champion our Intent, **to support and promote a community of quality private physiotherapists**, we need to increase our members' level of engagement. We measure engagement by looking carefully at how many of our members visit our website and/or open (like, share or respond to) our communications, take part on our very lively member-only forum and take up or participate in our member benefits.

Working creatively around member engagement with a Strategic Commercial partner is something we would love to talk about as, with the right strategic and cultural fit, it is usually possible to create or augment new member benefits. You will see that we highlight our "trusted partnerships" in our summary of the value of membership of Physio First, in what we call our Member Value Proposition (see below).

Of course, a relationship is two way, and we fully expect to work together in a way that results in increased sales and/or recognition that will produce a sufficiently valuable win / win for us both.



PHYSIO FIRST

Everything you need to provide quality private physiotherapy within a trusted community

Membership enables you to

Demonstrate quality through independent analysis of your patient outcome data



Share & receive practical advice with a community of like-minded private physio's

Developing personally, professionally, and commercially



Staying informed and influencing our marketplace

Benefit from the support of trusted partner organisations



Quality Assured Practitioner and Quality Assured Clinic schemes

Our quality assurance schemes are a very important and valuable benefit for Physio First members and, as per our Goal 1 are subject to a huge amount of work “to move our [them] from Physio First to where the cost, development and benefits can be shared with other stakeholders in the private healthcare marketplace “.

Download the e Booklet to read all about QAP and QAC [here](#).



To put it simply, our quality assurance schemes allow our members to benchmark their independently analysed patient treatment outcomes to demonstrate how well they are doing against over **120,000** data sets that inform the quality baseline. So, our quality kitemarks prove the effectiveness of their individual and/or clinic’s treatment, which is something that, as Physio First, we want to extend to the whole healthcare sector.

The accumulated data sets have also enabled us to produce some very powerful commercial statements that apply to those members who participate and which we are encouraging them to use to promote themselves and/or their practices – see this infographic:



PHYSIO FIRST Quality Schemes

Physio First is the trade organisation for chartered physiotherapists working in private practice; with approximately 3,000 members. Physio First members have been collecting data on patient outcomes across the UK since 2014. These straplines are based on analysis of data downloaded from January 2020.

Quality Assured Practitioner (QAP) and Quality Assured Clinic (QAC) allow private physiotherapists and clinics to demonstrate the quality of their treatment.



The ground-breaking schemes from the trade association for chartered physiotherapists in private practice, Physio First, in conjunction with the University of Brighton, are robust ways of measuring the quality of private physiotherapy practice. They use an online standardised data collection system, alongside validated patient reported outcomes.

#QUALITYMATTERS

PRIVATE PHYSIOTHERAPY TREATMENT FOR MUSCULAR DYSFUNCTION CAN BE JUST AS EFFECTIVE, REGARDLESS OF AGE



This statement is based on an analysis of data from 3,251 patients seeking treatment for muscular tenderness /dysfunction. A one-way ANOVA demonstrated that there was no significant difference in FPS change scores between age groups [F(3,3247) =1.12, p =.34].

BEING SEEN FOR TREATMENT BY A PRIVATE PHYSIOTHERAPIST WITHIN 6 WEEKS OF PAIN OR INJURY RESULTS IN A BETTER OUTCOME

This statement is based on an analysis of data from 51,975 patients. Patients who experienced their symptoms for 6 weeks or less experienced a greater FPS change score compared to patients who had experienced their symptoms for more than 6 weeks (t = 27.1, df = 51973, p < 0.1, D = .41).

90% OF PATIENTS ATTENDING FOR PRIVATE PHYSIOTHERAPY RECEIVE A MINIMUM OF 3 DIFFERENT TREATMENT MODALITIES



This statement is based on an analysis of data from 54,991 patients.

Of these patients, 49,647 patients (90.3 %) received three or more treatment modalities.

OVER 80% OF PATIENTS RECEIVING PRIVATE PHYSIOTHERAPY SUCCESSFULLY ACHIEVE OR EXCEED THEIR AGREED GOALS



This statement is based on an analysis of data from 53,932 patients. Of these patients, 43,389 patients (80.5%) achieved their goals.



ALL AGES SEEKING TREATMENT FOR LOW BACK PAIN EXPERIENCED AN IMPROVEMENT IN CONDITION

This statement is based on an analysis of data from 4,612 patients seeking treatment for non-specific low back pain (NSLBP). A one-way ANOVA demonstrated that there was no significant difference between age groups in the FPS change score [F(3,4608) = 2.02, p = .11]

95% OF PATIENTS SEEKING PRIVATE PHYSIOTHERAPY TREATMENT ARE SEEN WITHIN ONE WEEK



This statement is based on an analysis of data from 52,193 patients who were seeking the first available appointment. Of these patients, 49,794 (95.4%) were seen within one week.

TREATMENT OUTCOME IS DEPENDENT ON HOW QUICKLY PATIENTS SEEK PRIVATE PHYSIOTHERAPY, THE SOONER THE BETTER!



This statement is based on an analysis of data from 54,290 patients. The percentage of patients that were successfully discharged following treatment was significantly greater in those who experienced their symptoms for six weeks or less before commencing treatment (67.4%) compared with patients who had experienced their symptoms more than six weeks (57.7%) (X2 (1) = 543.3, p < 0.01).

3. Our culture explained

Our culture expresses our values and represents the standard of behaviour against which we are to be judged and against which we judge others. First published in 2012, we strive to live up to it in everything we do, every day – so it is not just a well-intentioned sentiment, but how **we do business!**

We judge cultural synergy in any potential commercial partner by reference to their behaviour i.e. anything they say, write or do.

Although entitled “**Doing business through relationships – through respect, no blame, good communication, structure and planning**” and is reproduced in its 1-page entirety here, it boils down “to trust”. Physio First representatives can be trusted to behave in this way, and we want to work with others who we can trust to behave in the same way:

Respect: Total respect for each individual who volunteers and/or is employed by Physio First by behaving with integrity and in a way that:

- Helps all feel valued and trusted*
- Demonstrates respect, even if in dispute with them
- Empowers
- Makes it easy to identify, declare, communicate about and then manage any personal interests e.g. self-promotion or promotion of anything in which an individual has an interest that could conflict with the interests of Physio First

No blame: We operate a no blame Culture, which means that we try to demonstrate trust* and accept that if anyone makes a mistake:

- Internally we feel very comfortable to communicate our mistake as soon as it has happened as we can expect everyone in Physio First to respond by rushing to help and not to blame
- Externally we hope that they or we would feel the same

* There are two aspects to “trust” i.e. 1) trust in honesty 2) trust in competence. When using the word “trust” one has to be precise as to which meaning is intended.’ In this instance, the use of the word “trust” throughout Physio First’s explanation of our culture refers to both meanings.

Communication: Physio First as a group of people understand:

- The value of excellent communication
- That relationships are founded on integrity, trust* and good communication and that the better the communication the better the relationship
- The importance to always strive to:
 - Provide and seek both **clarity** and **context** all of the time
 - Listen – really proactively listen!



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- Look at the proposition from the other persons position – also a measure of respect
- Reassure that there is no such thing as a stupid question and that each meeting is a safe place
- Provide complete openness and demonstrable trust*
- Meet deadlines whether self-imposed or agreed
- Encourage energy through optimism and discourage pessimism (e.g. long faces, complaints without suggested solutions, criticism without balanced affirmation).
- Coach** rather than tell
- Our need to embrace a “modern attitude” i.e. evidence-based thinking and the creative use of technology to resourcefully use our limited TEM

**Coaching means “asking the right questions” as opposed to “telling what to do” the distinction being that “coaching elicits the right answer for the person being coached in which that person takes greater ownership from having defined the answer for themselves”.
(Source Business Coach Jon Wigley December 2014)

Structure: We hold the 3 structural elements to any organisation in equal importance i.e. Operational (Blue), Support Services (Red) and Strategic (Black):

<p>Operational (Blue) That aspect which for commercial organisations brings in the money but which in Physio First (Trade Association) terms is our delivery of our member benefits and services (e.g. weekly bulletin, community meetings, webinars, Skills Exchanges, member advice and support to include legal advice/templates, Journal, ,.</p>	<p>Strategic (Black) The need to take time to “think” rather than “do” and to plan where we are going and to monitor our progress on a regular basis by reference to our Business Plan</p>	<p>Support Services (Red) From Office procedures, to rules about meetings, to our CRM, job profiles peer reviews, appraisals and accounts.</p>
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Planning: Through detailed planning of our business, we reduce risk, frustration, conflict and misunderstandings. Planning, coupled with our culture of no blame, good communication, and structure enables us to form and nurture successful commercial strategic relationships.



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4. Our executive described

We have 8 defined volunteer roles that make up our Physio First executive committee. Our Hon Commercial Officer is one of them who is supported by other employed and volunteer roles who together we call our commercial team.

All but one of our executive officers are practising self-employed private physiotherapists who deeply understand and appreciate the issues facing the self-employed private physiotherapist led businesses today.

Our executive committee meets regularly and it's their role to lead our organisation, in line with our strategic Intent and Member Value Proposition. To find out more about our executive, [click here](#).

Any Strategic Commercial agreement that our commercial team are happy to recommend will be circulated to our executive committee for approval, before a partnership is signed and launched.

5. The role of our Hon Commercial Officer

The role of our Hon Commercial Officer, in addition to his or her executive committee responsibilities is to “lead us on our income generating activities to gain the financial resource to meet our intent and member value proposition”.

Our Hon Commercial Officer receives most initial contacts from commercial organisations and, where appropriate leads Physio First on the journey through the various steps i.e.

- ensuring that any approach to Physio First is responded to with the opportunity to read this paper, so that there is at least some context as to what is involved
- reviewing any offer with whatever assistance is needed from members of the Physio First commercial team that does include financial due diligence
- making sure that all communications with those who approach us are in line with our own culture



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6. Our Commercial Strategy

Following Physio First's annual reviews of our data driven commercial strategy it has become obvious over the years that:

- Although welcome, a “commission-based relationship” is no longer appropriate or sustainable because:
 - o to properly “earn” a commission, Physio First would have to endorse a product or service which it is very hard to do and stay within our culture i.e. how could we ever really know whether a product or service is as good as, better than or best?
 - o unless linked to the uniqueness of our Member Value Proposition, how could Physio First ever influence any of our members' buying priorities in this new age of very powerful digital influencers?

So, we do NOT want a commission-based relationship but rather one that will help us towards our intent and add to our Member Value Proposition.

- So how does this piece of information relate to our commercial strategy? By helping us to recruit more members and retain the ones we have, we expect to secure sufficient income to support Physio First.
- This means that it is imperative that any potential commercial partner takes the time to understand all the member benefits that make up our Member Value Proposition (reproduced above) as our expectation is that our strategic partners can and will promote Physio First membership through them and, by understanding this, it will be much easier to navigate our way to a successful conclusion.

For details of our suite of member benefits see [here](#).

So, once we have concluded discussions based on the above and (hopefully) produced an agreed hypothesis upon how our relationship is likely to produce value for both your business and Physio First, the next phase will be to look at how the value of our relationship is communicated to Physio First members.

7. The role of our Hon Communications Officer

Our hypothesis is that the value of a relationship with Physio First for any of our commercial partners going forward will be in the reaction that Physio First members (and those they influence) have to the communications they receive both from Physio First and our commercial partner.

An essential feature of our strategy is that all Physio First communications going internally to our members or externally to the wider marketplace, will go through our communications team led by our Hon Communications Officer to make sure all align with brand Physio First

So, this means that the “what does our potential commercial partner get?” from any relationship with Physio First is very dependent upon how we communicate with and about them.

What we mean here is probably easiest described by an example. If company A has a product and through discussion with Physio First finds that there is:

- sufficient strategic and cultural synergy
- a relationship that is likely to produce value for the company, Physio First and its members

then, remembering that Physio First cannot say that their product is better or best (without specific evidence) but can very publicly and very frequently communicate what the company is doing that aligns with Physio First i.e. something that helps us deliver on our intent and Member Value Proposition.

We would all agree that just because we and any possible partner may think we know where the value in our relationship might lie, the only way to really know is to test this is by amassing the data.

So, every Physio First strategic commercial relationship going forward will be based upon the following 3 steps i.e.

- 1) establishing that we believe that sufficient strategic and cultural alignment exists which includes fully understanding Physio First’s intent and Member Value Proposition
- 2) agreeing that there are opportunities to help Physio First deliver on its Member Value Proposition leaving Physio First able to communicate at agreed levels about the company and how it is assisting Physio First with these
- 3) agreeing as part of the relationship to make it dependent upon the evidence that demonstrates its value, which we call a Build-Measure-Learn approach. This means including in our agreement how we believe we can measure the value of our relationship and to take time out together to assess this which is likely to include:
 - a. how many more unit sales and members joined as a result?
 - b. which communications have had the most impact, in terms of engagement?



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and to learn from and react to these.

In this way we go into our relationship expecting to iterate things between us to find the value which, if we can, then great, and if we cannot, then neither of us wastes resource in carrying it on at this time allowing us to part friends ready to do business at a later date.

So, the role of our Hon Communications Officer is to be intimately aware of the nature of our relationship with our strategic commercial partner and of the metrics that as Physio First we have agreed to compile, to be used to determine its value. But it will be for our commercial team, led by our Hon Commercial Officer, to lead upon the B-M-L reviews.

8. What's next?

So, all that remains, is to thank you so much for reading all the way to the bottom.

To the extent that you feel that you understand where we are coming from and would like to develop a business proposal that is something that would help to open our conversation, please contact us.

Knowing that you have at least read this document and looked at our Member Value Proposition and still feel it worthwhile to explore a relationship with us will feel like a great place to start.

Again, thank you and best wishes,

Belinda Holloway, Hon. Commercial Officer, Physio First

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