

Physiotherapists within RDA: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ sheet)

1. Q. I've heard there are rules about using physiotherapists. What are they?

RDA must respect the Rules of Professional Conduct of Physiotherapists.

Chartered physiotherapists are governed by the advice given by the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists (CSP) and the Health & Care Professionals Council (HCPC).

In order to be covered in their work by the insurance of CSP, physiotherapists must be members of both organisations and show evidence that they are maintaining their skills and working within their area of competence. This means they must attend training and document their work related studies. The HCPC endorse the CSP qualification and audit bi-annually.

2. Q. What is the difference between a physiotherapist and a hippotherapist?

A physiotherapist is trained to work with the physical activities of people, either with the aim of helping them be more active and comfortable or to help them recover from injury or other physical problems.

A hippotherapist (from the Greek 'hippos', meaning horse) uses a horse as an aid to deliver physiotherapy. 'Hippotherapist' is not a recognised or protected professional term. Hippotherapy is currently practised in the UK by chartered physiotherapists who have undertaken additional specialist training and who are insured to do the work.

3. Q. I've heard people ask if a physiotherapist is ACPTR. What does this mean?

The question arises from confusing a physiotherapist's qualifications with their membership of a professional network and is, in any case, based on outdated information.

Chartered Physiotherapists in Therapeutic Riding and Hippotherapy (CPTRH) is the new name for the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Therapeutic Riding (ACPTR)

CPTRH is a professional network of physiotherapists with an interest in using the horse as an aid to their physiotherapy skills. CPTRH provides study days, conferences and a training course in hippotherapy as well as international links.

Full membership of CPTRH is open to chartered physiotherapists (£35 in 2017). Associate membership is open to occupational therapists, retired therapists and members of other professional bodies involved with therapeutic riding e.g. RDA (£25). There is also a discounted student rate (£15) and overseas membership open to physiotherapists working in therapeutic horseriding abroad (£45)

4. Q. Do physiotherapists involved with RDA have to be members of CPTRH?

No. It is desirable for a number of reasons but not essential that a physiotherapist operating within RDA be a member of CPTRH. See also answer to question 1.

5. Q. Why should physiotherapists in RDA consider joining CPTRH?

CPTRH is a recognised professional network and membership offers access to training courses, which can be part of meeting requirements for continuing professional development (CPD), and full access to the CPTRH website that includes a discussion forum and details of the latest research. Joining CPTRH provides opportunities to network with physiotherapists interested in working with horses and to gain professional support.

6. Q. Do physiotherapists involved with RDA need to have completed the CPTRH hippotherapy training course?

No. Physiotherapists can be involved with RDA without having completed the hippotherapy training course. They will work within their areas of competence to meet the requirements for insurance of the CSP. Many physiotherapists will be willing to support RDA by advising within their areas of expertise e.g. working with children, or providing information about particular disabilities, but they will recognise that they do not have the skills to give advice about the equine aspects of RDA activities that relate to physiotherapy.

7. Q How do I know who has the skills to practise hippotherapy?

CPTRH has a register of physiotherapists who have completed the CPTRH hippotherapy training course. For further information contact: Elspeth O'Donnell, Secretary of CPTRH.

<http://cptrh.csp.org.uk/contact-us>

Choose 'Membership Secretary and Executive Committee Honorary Secretary' from a drop down menu.

A physiotherapist who has qualified to practise hippotherapy with a qualification from abroad would be able to practise in the UK as long as they were registered with the CSP and HCPC and worked within their area of competence.

The organisation of hippotherapy training varies in other countries and in some places people who are not physiotherapists may train as hippotherapists. If they want to practise in the UK they would not be entitled to full membership of CPTRH or insurance designed for physiotherapists.

At time of writing (July 2017) several occupational therapists have been accepted onto the CPTRH hippotherapy training course. A small group of occupational therapists is exploring setting up their own interest group with similar aims to CPTRH.

8. Q. You talked about physiotherapists being restricted to practise within their area of competence. Does this mean a physiotherapist cannot work in a riding arena unless they have completed the hippotherapy training course?

They can only offer hippotherapy if they are qualified to do so. They can offer advice on areas they feel are within their scope of practice (area of competence). For example: if a physiotherapist's main area of expertise is treating sports injuries, it may be outside their

scope of practice to give advice about a child with a neurological condition. Physiotherapists have a professional duty to decide whether they are working within their scope of practice; if they work outside this they may be open to litigation.

9. Q. Our physiotherapist has retired. Does this affect their professional status and what s/he can do?

A retired physiotherapist must still be registered with the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) to practise. They would be covered by RDA insurance if they provided general information about a particular disability and its effects, or the benefits of riding for that disability.

They cannot provide advice about specific individual participants unless they have retained their membership of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists (CSP) and the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC).

The physiotherapist has a professional duty to decide whether they are working within their scope of practice; if they work outside this they will not be insured.

If your query has not been answered by reading this FAQ sheet please contact

Denise Robertson, Head of Therapy for RDA.

drobotson@rda.org.uk

The information in this FAQ sheet has been agreed by RDA and CPTRH.

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