



Healthcare Science Week

Day 3 - HCS Workforce & Options

Welcome to Day 3!

Today we will be focussing on the HCS Workforce and options. We're delighted to share articles from Erin Lynskey, Senior Clinical Photographer at University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust, and Joanna Rycroft, Clinical Exercise Physiologist, Sport and Exercise Sciences at Liverpool John Moores University. In her article, Erin gives us an insight into her life as a senior clinical photographer, how she got to where she is today and what she likes most about the role. Joanna shares what it's like to work in Clinical Exercise Physiology and how important this specialism is within Healthcare Science.

To complete the day, we have a quote from our AHCS President, Prof. Brendan Cooper, who gives a great reflection on the Healthcare Science Workforce community and the power of working together.

Today's inspirational quote

**“Life is a matter of choices,
and every choice you make
makes you.”**

- John C. Maxwell

An American author and speaker



Erin Lynskey

Senior Clinical Photographer at
University Hospitals Birmingham NHS
Foundation Trust



I am a senior clinical photographer; my role primarily consists of photographing both inpatients and outpatients so that their photos form part of their medical records aiding with their treatment and care. We see patients from all specialities, on the wards, in theatres or in our studio.

I am also the lead for the teledermatology service, a service that we have developed over the past few years, seeing patients with potential skin cancers for the two-week wait pathways. We do this in partnership with Skin Analytics and has been pioneered using AI technology. The service feeds into the Trust's digital transformation plans, allowing us to be innovative and develop the future of the profession ensuring it has a place in the future of healthcare. I went to university and studied media arts. When I left university, I didn't really know what I wanted to do, so I decided to travel the world working as a cruise ship photographer. While doing that role, I was in charge of the private studio that specialised in connection and photographing people with meaning. I was getting to take more than those cheesy cruise ship snaps! From that point on, I knew I wanted to utilise photography to help people. So, when I finally decided to come back to land, I started for looking for a job to do just that.

My partner suggested I look at clinical photography. He trained here at UHB and had seen clinical photographers around the hospital. So, I did some research and started applying for roles. My first clinical photography job was at another trust in Birmingham, but I moved to UHB years ago. I would say I fell into this career path, but I'm really pleased I did because it has ended up being a very varied and interesting career.

Joining UHB has been incredible. I've had the opportunity to be a part of something enjoyable and innovative, and I have been able to develop professionally as well. From the moment I started at UHB I've been given lots of opportunities to step up, and develop, whether that's through additional learning, or a course. Over the last three years, with the development of the teledermatology service, I have been involved from the start; this has allowed me to develop people management, as well as project management skills, that ordinarily I wouldn't have had the opportunity to do so.

I love the actual clinical side of the job. We get to see a side of medicine that not very many people get to see unless they specialise in that area, but we get to be a fly on the wall for it.

For example, one of my colleagues has developed a photographic protocol photographing surgeries from start to finish for an online educational platform. I've been able to help with a couple of those – one time I got to photograph someone perform a decompression on someone's spine!

I also really enjoy the people management element of the job. It's given me the opportunity to develop my leadership skills. We get to do PR work as well. A few years ago, when the then Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall, came to visit the vaccination hub, I went along to take photographs. I ended up getting an amazing photograph of the Duchess of Cornwall that ended up on the Clarence House Instagram page – that was really cool!

There are times where you have to check yourself and remind yourself that actually the things that you're seeing aren't things that people would see on a daily basis, and that people aren't used to seeing stuff like this, especially when training new people in the role. We see trauma patients, including burns and traumatic injuries in A&E. We see safeguarding cases, not only for adults, but for children as well. There are times where this job isn't easy; and you have a sobering moment that can be really difficult.

The world of clinical photography is always looking for new people to join the profession. With the rise of mobile phone technology our role is more important than ever to ensure our skills are utilised to provide clinically accurate images for patients. We also have to be innovative and embrace new technologies.

Clinical photography is a great role if you like science and art – you don't have to compromise, you can do the two together, and we are accredited healthcare scientists. We are members of the Institute of Medical Illustrators, which is our professional body and there is a small community of us nationally, and we are working towards the future of the profession.

The role itself is a hard role, but it can also be very varied, interesting and can be very rewarding. There are times where you do get to see the continuity of care, where you'll see the same patient throughout their healthcare journey, and sometimes it's just a moment on their pathway. But no matter what, our role is important to the patient's care within the healthcare setting and we are contributing something every day towards that.

Find out more the range of career opportunities with #teamUHB here!

[Join #teamUHB](#)

Acknowledgement:

Thank you to the University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust for sharing this article, originally posted on the UHB NHS Foundations Trust LinkedIn page. See [here](#) for the link to the original page.

Joanna Rycroft

Clinical Exercise Physiologist, Sport and Exercise Sciences at Liverpool John Moores University



As the NHS and other healthcare providers are put under increasing pressure to manage the burden of a physical inactivity epidemic, there has never been a more pressing need for Clinical Exercise Physiologists (CEPs) to support the health of the nation.

Registered CEPs are qualified health professionals proficient in exercise testing, prescription and delivery of evidence-based interventions for the prevention, treatment and long-term management of acute, sub-acute, chronic and complex conditions. Clinical Exercise Physiologists work with patients to optimise health, physical function and quality of life, whilst promoting long-term health through lifestyle modification and behaviour change.

CEPs often work within healthcare and rehabilitation services as part of a multidisciplinary team, which may also include doctors, specialist nurses and physiotherapist, across sectors and settings. Examples of areas CEPs may work include:

- Oncology, with patients with different types of cancer and at different stages of treatment.
- Cardiology, with patients with heart disease, high blood pressure and following a heart transplant.
- Respiratory, with patients with conditions such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and cystic fibrosis.
- Frailty, with patients with conditions such as osteoporosis, a history of falls and a fear of falling.
- Renal care, with patients with conditions such as chronic kidney disease
- Mental health with patients with conditions such as anxiety, stress and psychotic disorders
- Metabolic, with patients with conditions such as obesity, diabetes including gestational diabetes.
- Musculoskeletal, with patients with conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis, osteoporosis, musculoskeletal pain/injuries and disabilities.
- Neurological/neuromuscular, with patients with conditions such as stroke, dementia, Parkinson's disease and multiple sclerosis.

During the COVID pandemic, many CEP services and businesses transferred delivery to online platforms to ensure patients could continue to access valuable support. Many of these virtual services have continued, with some services and businesses now opting for a hybrid model of delivery. Whilst there are advantages and drawbacks to both methods of delivery, growth in the number and size of CEP services is clear to see.

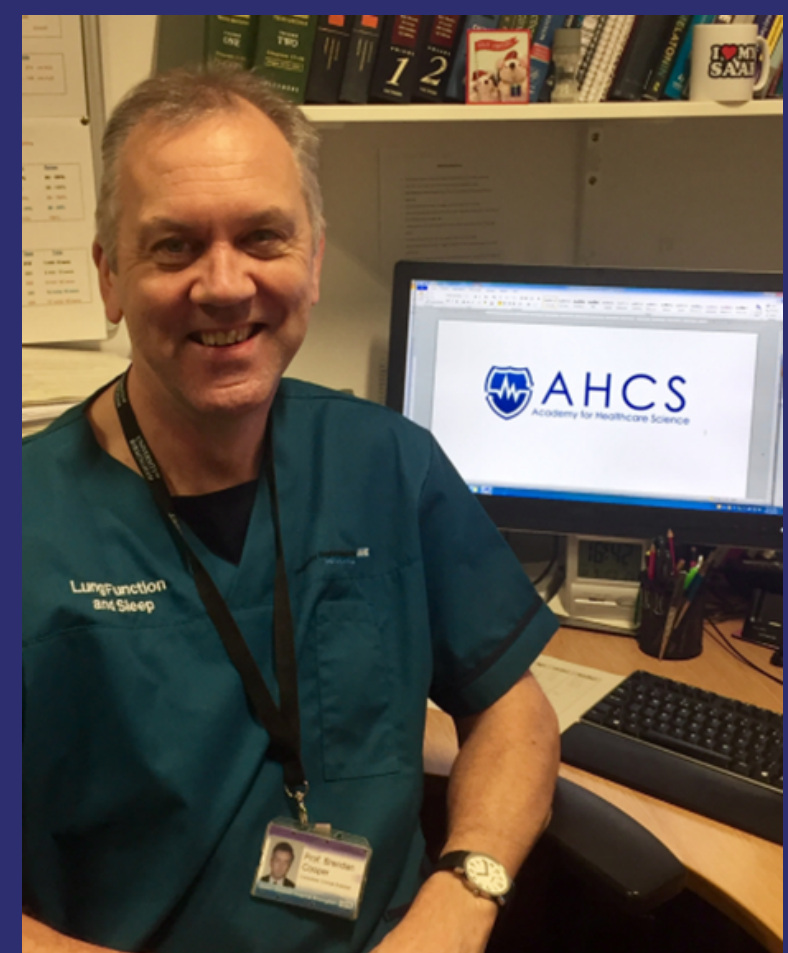
Working as a CEP, each day is different, and no two patients are the same. It can be an incredibly rewarding career, with opportunity to make a real difference to people's lives and help them during what can be a very distressing and uncertain time. Patients often describe feeling a lack of control when faced with long-term illness. Exercise can be a powerful tool to help patients get back to or continue with activities and hobbies they enjoy, helping to rebuild their confidence and restore an element of control in their day-to-day life.

Whether a CEP is working face to face with patients or remotely, assessment of individual patient needs and design and delivery of exercise programmes, incorporating a combination of resistance, cardiovascular and flexibility training, forms a fundamental part of the profession. Some patients may attend group classes or one-to-one sessions with their CEP and then complete prescribed exercise between sessions to ensure they are meeting their physical activity goals to maximise their outcomes. Creating sustainable habits and motivating patients to make such changes to their lifestyle remains a key factor in the success of the work of a CEP.

Professional registration of Clinical Exercise Physiologists began in 2021, with CEPs applying through an AHCS equivalence pathway. In September 2023, the MSc. in Clinical Exercise Physiology offered at Liverpool John Moores University was accredited by the AHCS, becoming the first university to offer a graduate registration route. A key area of CEP-UK's work is advocating for AHCS-registered CEPs to provide equal standing with other registered healthcare professions.

The Inaugural CEP-UK Conference takes place on Friday 5th April at Manchester Metropolitan University. The theme of this year's conference is 'The Evolution of the Clinical Exercise Physiology Profession' and the event will bring together industry experts, academics and professionals from the Clinical Exercise Physiology field. To register or find out more, click [here](#).

"If Healthcare Science could be considered as our globe, the different specialisms would make up the countries, the professional body Chairs and Presidents would be the capital cities and the people who populate those countries - our healthcare scientists - would share a common international language - the language of science - unifying thoughts and theories, understanding and knowledge for the good of our patients. In a divided world, the bond of being scientists in healthcare, as a collective, will enable us to be heard and achieve great things for our people and patients. Welcome to Healthcare Science Week 2024."



Prof. Brendan Cooper
President at the Academy for Healthcare Science

