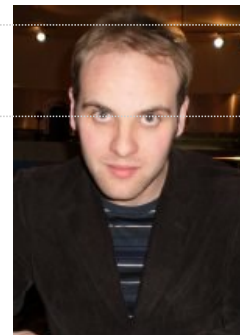


David Edwards

BSc Physiotherapy (Hons), 2003

Specialist Respiratory Physiotherapist for the COPD Service at Central Manchester Foundation Trust

“I came to Birmingham to study because of its excellent reputation as a university, and especially because of the reputation of the physiotherapy course”



What are your career experiences since graduating from the University of Birmingham?

I started work as a Junior Physiotherapist at Newcastle Upon Tyne NHS Trust in August 2003, with rotations in Acute Medicine, Surgery/ITU, Paediatrics, Musculoskeletal Outpatients, Cardiothoracics and Neurosciences. I was keen to specialise in respiratory care as a senior physiotherapist but as a result of a lack of available posts within the trust, I took a Band 6 post as a musculoskeletal and community physiotherapist in Newcastle, starting in October 2005. I worked there until May 2007, gaining experience within outpatients, cardiac rehabilitation, community and GP Clinics. However, I kept an interest in respiratory care and in May 2007, the chance came to move to Manchester to work as a rotational senior respiratory physiotherapist at Manchester Royal Infirmary. I completed rotations in Acute Medicine/Pulmonary Rehabilitation, Cardiothoracics and Surgery/ITU/Critical Care Rehabilitation before taking up a post as a Specialist COPD Physiotherapist in the newly-formed COPD service within Central Manchester, which I started in June 2009.

What is the best thing about what you are doing now?

I have the opportunity to work with a unique and challenging cohort of patients with severe chronic lung disease, helping them to manage their condition utilising a number of specialised and holistic approaches, including pulmonary rehabilitation groups, chest clearance techniques, breathlessness and anxiety management, oxygen assessment and home assessments and adaptation. I also have the opportunity to work closely with highly specialised and experienced nurses and rehabilitation assistants, as well as having an excellent relationship with the respiratory consultants. The close team working and multi-faceted aspects of the job provides a great opportunity and challenge which I really enjoy and find extremely motivating. I also have the opportunity to work within palliative care for the COPD patient, which is a particular interest of mine.

What was the best thing about your time as a student here?

Learning with other like-minded students within a productive and challenging environment. I especially enjoyed the unique experience of working in the old Morris House building! Having the opportunity to learn from enthusiastic and inspirational lecturers, as well as the fantastic choice of clinical placements, including away placements in Shrewsbury and Nottingham which were some of the best times I had on the course. It was also great fun balancing this out with an active and varied social life, with both the physiotherapy students and others at the university. Of course, the full-time nature of the course made this a considerable challenge, but we all worked hard, played hard and had an amazing time!

In what way did living and studying in Birmingham live up to your expectations?

I came to Birmingham to study because of its excellent reputation as a university, and especially because of the reputation of the physiotherapy course. Though I always found my time studying and training at Birmingham fascinating and informative, I only really came to fully appreciate the experience I had been given when I started work as a qualified physiotherapist. I found that I was quickly able to adapt to a wide variety of working environments without difficulty and had knowledge and skills to allow me to develop further and take a great deal of pride and expertise within my work. One of the key things I have found is that studying at Birmingham has allowed me to develop a flexible and adaptable approach to all areas of healthcare, which has been of great use in allowing me to work within complex and challenging areas of physiotherapy.

As for living in Birmingham, I absolutely loved it and wouldn't have swapped it for anywhere! I made some amazing friends at Birmingham who I still keep in close contact to this day. The university facilities were fantastic and the guild of students was legendary (Who could ever forget Fridays at Frenzy and Saturdays at Fab?!) Also, living in a vibrant and multi-cultural city was an incredible experience for someone living away for the first time.

What advice would you give to current students studying on your degree programme?

Get the most out of your clinical placements. If you apply yourself and make the most out of every minute, you'll find it provides you with skills to assist you many, many years into your qualified practice. And make the most of every moment you have both academically and socially, they're some of the best days of your lives and soon you'll be looking back and reminiscing. So enjoy every bit of it!

How did you grow as a person by coming to University? Did it change your life in any way?

I came to university thinking I was pretty grown up and that I knew loads. But through being at university, facing new challenges, expectations and a whole new way of life, you quickly grow so much as a person and learn vital lessons in both your profession and your personal life. There were times I felt on top of the world and times that I felt insecure, but it all adds up into the most incredible experience. The three years at Birmingham changed me as a person and helped shape the person and professional that I am today. It was the most amazing experience of my life and I wouldn't change a moment of it!