
Competencies and Training Requirements of First-contact Physiotherapists

1. Professional competency of first-contact physiotherapists is crucial to ensure patient safety and public confidence of the newly introduced direct access arrangement.

2. Pre-requisite Competencies and Training Requirement of a first-contact physiotherapist:
 - (a) *Be registered as a physiotherapist in Hong Kong with at least 2,000 hours of clinical practice, and hold a valid practising certificate; AND*

 - (b) *Complete a structured training programme meeting the requirement(s) recognised by the Government (see **Table 1**), AND pass the examination for accreditation, in order to ensure clinical competency in identification of red flag conditions and familiarize with the operation of cross-disciplinary collaborative care in local primary care settings.*

3. The name and practice location(s) of accredited first-contact physiotherapists who have enrolled in the sub-directory for physiotherapist under the Primary Care Directory / Registry (PCD/R) will be listed on the website of Primary Care Directory / Registry (PCD/R).

Table 1 Requirements for Structured Training Programme for First-Contact Physiotherapists in Primary Care Setting

Topic	Learning Outcomes
1. Direct access physiotherapy service: - Allied Health Professions Ordinance [Cap 359] ²⁷ - Code of Practice for Physiotherapist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe key amendments to the Allied Health Professions Ordinance and Code of Practice for Physiotherapists regarding direct access arrangement, including specified circumstances and emergency situations ▪ Understand the key responsibilities of First-Contact Physiotherapists providing direct access physiotherapy service
2. eHealth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understand the rationales, objectives, and core elements of key eHealth functions for proper patient care, including informed consent, documentation and referral ▪ Use eHealth platform to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Obtain valid informed consent ○ Adequately document salient information from each consultation ○ Issue valid and appropriate referral letters to other healthcare professionals ▪ Implement measures to secure patient privacy and information security in accordance with Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance
3. Clinical care pathway for first-contact assessment and management approach to common musculoskeletal problems in the primary care setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understand the rationales, objectives, and core elements of the clinical care pathway for first-contact assessment and management approach to common musculoskeletal problems in primary care setting for ensuring patient safety and optimising health outcomes ▪ Implement first-contact physiotherapy service according to clinical care pathway, integrating cross-disciplinary management approach for safe, holistic, and comprehensive patient care ▪ Perform essential assessment at the initial consultation to formulate a provisional diagnosis and determine the suitability for direct access management ▪ Differentiate between conditions appropriate for physiotherapeutic management and those requiring immediate and/or further medical assessment and/or intervention ▪ Apply evidence-based interventions for the management of common musculoskeletal problems in a primary care setting ▪ Perform essential review assessment at follow-up consultations to evaluate progress, adjust treatment plans, and identify any emerging complex needs requiring referral to further medical care
4. Identification of red flags in physiotherapy management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explain the screening roles and responsibilities of first-contact physiotherapists, compared to the diagnostic roles and responsibilities of medical doctors ▪ Apply medical screening principles to conduct efficient and effective patient examinations, and reach appropriate referral decisions ▪ Identify critical findings of subjective and objective examination that require urgent and/or early communication with medical doctor(s) ▪ Demonstrate effective communication strategies with medical doctors and patients regarding clinical findings and care plans Understand risk factors and presentations of key medical conditions to support clinical reasoning and diagnostic justification

Note 1: The Primary Healthcare Commission (PHCC) will assess the eligibility of all structured trainings through its governance structure

Note 2: The list of learning objectives is not exhaustive and will be continuously reviewed and updated to reflect advancements in primary healthcare practice

Note 3: Full fulfillment of all learning objectives is a mandatory requirement for a structured training to be deemed eligible