

## CURRICULUM VITAE

# Chris Oliver

From destination hopping orthopaedic surgeon to fitness professor

### Dared into medicine

As a young man, I was sprinting and kayaking at national level and everyone said I was going to go to the Olympics. But my mother said you can't make a career out of kayaking, and she dared me to be a doctor. It was all unexpected and not terribly well planned.

### Choosing the right specialty

I thought I'd do surgery because of the practical aspect of repairing things. I realised I didn't want to do bowel or cancer surgery. Then I did neurosurgery and I enjoyed that, but there was so much death and paralysis. I decided I wanted to do orthopaedics because you can put things back together, and I ended up doing orthopaedic trauma.

### Moving around



During my elective period I went to Cebu in the Philippines (left) to learn about tropical diseases, then to Belfast to do plastic surgery, and then the National Heart

Hospital in London to learn some cardiology and medicine. I got a job working in York, Leeds, and Harrogate, and then I did an MD in Middlesbrough on spinal muscle physiology. I went to the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital in Oswestry where I worked with James Richardson—who was a terrific mentor and helped launch my career.

### Health informatics

I came to the Royal Infirmary in Edinburgh in 1997 and ended up working with the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. We set up a masters programme in healthcare informatics which was world leading in its idea of helping doctors and allied health professionals cope with informatics. I'm also keen on social media. My Twitter account (@CyclingSurgeon, below) has 24 000 followers and that's incredibly powerful for communication.



### CAREER TIMELINE

#### 2015 to present

Honorary professor of physical activity for health, University of Edinburgh

2012-2013 Chairman, Cyclists' Touring Club Scotland

#### 2008-2011

National chairman, Intercollegiate Committee for Basic Surgical Examinations

2006-2015 Honorary senior lecturer in orthopaedics, University of Edinburgh

2005-2006 Surgical chairman representing Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh on Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network

#### 1999-2006

Part time senior lecturer in orthopaedics, University of Edinburgh  
First director, faculty of medical informatics, Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh

#### 1997-2017

Consultant trauma and orthopaedic surgeon, Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh  
Consultant trauma fellowship from the Oxford Trauma Unit  
AOTrauma Fellowship, Seattle, USA  
Doctorate of medicine thesis, University of London

1994-1996 Senior orthopaedic registrar, Oswestry and Stoke-on-Trent

#### 1989-1992

Registrar orthopaedic and trauma rotation in York, Leeds, and Harrogate

#### 1986-1989

Senior house officer, registrar surgical rotation at Northwick Park  
MBBS London University and University College Hospital, London

### Work-life balance

When I started to do surgery as a junior doctor, I stopped exercising. My life was all about trying to impress my peers and my father. I got 10 degrees and did over 400 papers and presentations, but I overcooked the work-life balance. By 2006, I was more than 27 stone and had a gastric band fitted. Then I lost more than 12 stone.



### Exercise

When I had the gastric band fitted, I took time off work and I set myself the task of getting fit. Initially, I was going to aqua aerobics with old ladies and riding a bike, and then I joined an Edinburgh cycling group. I built it up and, in 2009, I did the Land's End to John O'Groats cycle. Then I cycled across America in 2013 from Los Angeles to Boston. I'd like to do more and cycle around the world. I'm not sure my wife would appreciate that.

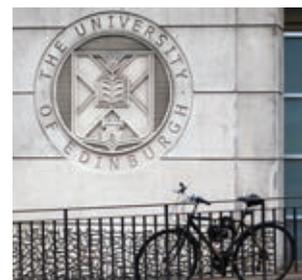
### Politics

In 2012, I became chairman of the Scottish Cyclists' Touring Club and got involved in the politics of cycling. I wrote some government policy documents on how to do active travel. We've done some fantastic projects such as the Play on Pedals project in Glasgow with Cycling UK—by the end of 2016 we had 7500 pre-school children riding bicycles. We want it to be extended across the whole country eventually.



### Physical activity education

In Edinburgh University we did some guerrilla lectures where we found some time on the students' timetable to talk to them about physical activity. We then got an award from the principal to develop physical activity education and that is now on the curriculum. We have just started a *BMedSci* Intercalated in physical activity.



### Advice

I've had a fantastic life as a doctor and it hasn't finished, despite retirement. Never say no to an opportunity and look after your health. I regret that I didn't carry on exercising in my youth.



Chris Ham, 67, has been chief executive of the King's Fund since 2010, and his deft chairmanship of many a meeting has managed to distil a useful message from even the least promising materials. He was professor of health policy and management at the University of Birmingham from 1992 and director of strategy at the Department of Health from 2000 to 2004. Any twist or turn in health policy over the past quarter century that he cannot elucidate probably never happened. He will stand down from the King's Fund at the end of this year, but he plans to go on writing, speaking, and advising.

## BMJ CONFIDENTIAL

# Chris Ham Accountancy's loss

### What was your earliest ambition?

To be the first member of my family to go to university. I achieved it in 1969.

### What was your best career move?

Becoming chief executive of the King's Fund.

### What was the worst mistake in your career?

After graduating I almost trained to be an accountant, but I saw the error of my ways and eventually began a career in health services research.

### How is your work-life balance?

I don't think of work and life as different. I love my work, and it's central to my life.

### How do you keep fit and healthy?

I've become a keen cyclist at weekends, and during the week I walk as much as I can. I also try to get a good night's sleep.

### What single change would you like to see made to the NHS?

I wish that politicians would provide sustainable, predictable funding. Reforming and improving the NHS from within should be the priority.

### What do you wish that you had known when you were younger?

That it's OK to make honest mistakes as long as you learn from them.

### Do doctors get paid enough?

Yes, but they're not valued enough.

### What living doctor do you most admire?

I particularly admire doctors who put themselves at risk by going to areas of conflict to help victims of war. David Nott is a wonderful example.

### What single change has made the most difference in your field?

The speed and ease of communication with colleagues, enabled by my iPhone.

### What new technology or development are you most looking forward to?

A cure for dementia.

### Where are or when were you happiest?

With the family at home or in west Wales, where we go regularly to relax.

### What personal ambition do you still have?

To be a wonderful grandfather to our three grandchildren.

### Summarise your personality in three words

Optimistic, driven, curious.

### Is the thought of retirement a dream or a nightmare?

A nightmare, which is why I plan to carry on working and contributing for as long as it remains the stimulus it's always been to me.

### If you weren't in your present position what would you be doing instead?

Writing, speaking, and researching about what's happening in the NHS and finding opportunities to influence and advise on what I believe needs to be done.

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