



P&O Day 2021

Abby Paterson, Senior Orthotist

While I was in my final years of high school I attended the University of Strathclyde open day looking for inspiration on a career pathway and I stumbled across the Prosthetics and Orthotics degree.

I instantly felt a pull towards this profession with its clinical and practical elements and its involvement with such a wide variety of conditions and service users. The staff were personable, the small class size appealed to me as it would allow stronger bonds to develop between the students and the lecturers and the course itself had links to both the engineering and biomedical departments.

I was initially attracted to the Prosthetic aspect of the degree as I had always followed the Paralympics and had a small understanding of what this work involved. However, once I was accepted onto the course and my learning began, I became extremely interested in both roles and how these roles were very different but based on the same knowledge and skill set.

As I reached the end of my degree, I found that my enthusiasm for Orthotics outweighed Prosthetics and I am lucky enough to say that I have never doubted my career choice and am proud to be an Orthotist.

I graduated from the University of Strathclyde in 2014 and started my first role as a graduate Orthotist in Leicestershire. I was lucky enough to leave University with a secured position.

I started a graduate programme with mentorship and shadowing and after approximately 3 months I developed my own clinic and caseloads. I worked within the Leicestershire team for 2 years before moving to the north east, where I have been for the last 6 years.

When I started my current role, I was still quite newly qualified and happy to take on a new challenge to better myself. My new role included both adult and paediatric clinics as well as more specialist multi-disciplinary team clinics and I was happy to step into such a varied clinical timetable.

I feel this new role helped me to further develop and I have continued to grow as a clinician ever since.

I am currently working in the North East of England for Taycare Medical Ltd, who provides both NHS and private Orthotic services throughout England. Taycare Medical Ltd is based in Leeds, West Yorkshire and is one of the leading Orthotic suppliers in the UK.

I work between North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust and the South Tees NHS Foundation Trust and am part of a local team of 6 Orthotists and a wider team of 20. Our team covers 7 different hospital sites, numerous local school clinics, as well as performing domiciliary visits when required.

As a Senior Orthotist my role is to assess, prescribe and fit orthoses to a wide variety of patients. These orthoses are provided to offer support, pain relief or increased function. The orthoses provided can also assist in a patient's rehabilitation or to improve their long term mobility. My specialist interests include Diabetic Foot Care, Stroke Rehabilitation and available treatment options for of Motor Neurone Disease.

I work with a variety of different service users including paediatrics, diabetics, neurological patients, neuromuscular patients, trauma and orthopaedic patients and those who have suffered spinal injuries. My caseload involves a number of general and specialist clinics, and each day brings a new challenge and sense of satisfaction.

As an Orthotist it is very important to work with other Allied Health Professionals to ensure the patient's treatment and care is optimised and that all clinicians involved in your patients' care understand your prescription and treatment plan. I strongly promote multidisciplinary working where possible; I am lucky to have built very strong working relationships with numerous Allied Health Professionals across the Trusts I work with.

Life as an Orthotist means every day is different and no matter how experienced you become within the Prosthetics and Orthotics field you are always learning and always developing your skills.

This is definitely not a role you will become bored with!