



P&O Day 2021

Gwen, Specialist Prosthetist

I started working in healthcare at 15 years old. I loved my job but I wanted to “do more”, so I went to college to study fashion design and manufacture. I wanted to design clothing that was more user friendly for people with disabilities, but I missed working directly with people. When I learned about Prosthetics and Orthotics everything clicked – it is everything I want in a job: it merges science, design and working with people to improve their lives.

I work as a Prosthetist and do a bit of everything! I work with patients to assess what they need from a prosthetic limb, and what they want to achieve. Some people want to climb mountains, whilst others want to walk up the steps to their caravan. Everybody is unique! We then work together to decide a prescription. There’s lots of problem solving, communication and people skills needed to do my role, as well as being technically minded and good with your hands! I work as part of a larger multi-disciplinary team to rehabilitate patients and ultimately help them regain their independence. I don’t know another job quite like it.

I mostly work with amputees who have lost an arm and/or a leg, but sometimes our skill set can help others too. We see all ages, from babies born without a limb to the elderly, and see a lot of conditions. I see a lot of diabetes and vascular disease, but also work with patients who have/had cancer, traumatic injuries and a variety of other conditions.

I started as an Orthotist when I graduated, but I always wanted to work in Prosthetics. When the opportunity arose I jumped at the chance, and I’ve now been a Prosthetist for 4 years.

I work for the NHS in an outpatient setting with a team which includes rehabilitation consultants, nursing, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, psychology, prosthetic technicians and orthotists.

You get to follow people’s individual journeys from beginning to end and make a real difference. Nobody is a number; we work to provide person centred care, and often know not only the patients but their families too. I am very proud of myself and the whole team, but also of the patients who go above and beyond to achieve what they do, to raise the profile of prosthetics and support each other.

My most rewarding moment so far was being able to shake my patient’s state-of-the-art prosthetic hand for the first time, after they lost all 4 limbs to illness.