



P&O Day 2021

Stephanie Conover, Senior Orthotist

After a short gap in my education, I found P&O in the occupations book when browsing the medical section. Its attraction was the creative hands-on side as well as being a degree-based profession. The fact you can give a patient a device almost instantly, seemed very satisfying – and it is!

Being able to see the results of my work so quickly was appealing. I am a maker at heart and being able to use these skills in a healthcare profession was the overarching attraction for me.

Assessing, casting and supplying patients with orthoses within my general or more specialised clinics is very enjoyable. But I think I thrive most solving a problem which has occurred throughout treatment or that makes normal practice/prescription impossible so therefore needing to think of a different approach. I love that we develop relationships with patients over the years. Seeing children grow up, watching as a patient improves through their rehab which may lead to alterations in their prescription or that even when they sadly decline to come up with new solutions to their new needs.

I love the hands-on parts – casting, altering orthoses, using the larger machinery, having a tool kit is all part of why I love this job. Having a manufacturing workshop onsite is a fantastic benefit.

Every day is different. I currently have focused clinics in scoliosis/pectus carinatum followed by a general orthotics clinic. I also work in an Orthotic Research Locomotion Assessment Unit (ORLAU) where the patients are a little more involved with greater clinical needs. Here, I work alongside physiotherapists, clinical scientists, bioengineers and consultants to assess and provide the best solutions to complex cases.

I am also currently seconded for a day a week to work with Keele University to create the first pre-registration MSc in P&O which is due to start in 2022.

In my time at the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital I have developed my clinical skills, improved services through audit, contributed to department strategies and currently I'm taking lead on student supervision. I am also working with the Shropshire Telford and Wrekin AHP Faculty to increase and improve student placement capacity within the area.

With the prestige of the hospital and a large dedicated department; the gait lab facilities and specialist clinics; a team with high expectations utilising and producing evidence based treatments with innovative clinical solutions, there is always room to learn and no reason to leave!