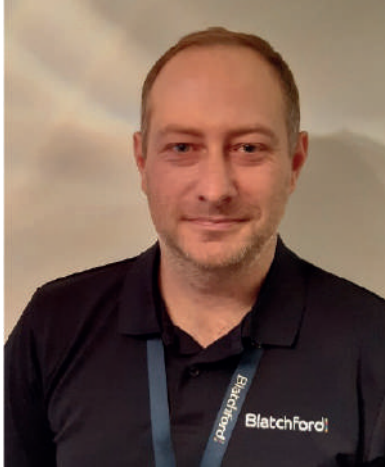




Russell Salt

Apprentice Prosthetist and Orthotist



Russell is currently trained and studying at level 4 and is progressing to level 6 Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) qualified prosthetist/orthotist.

Russell joined the prosthetic and orthotic (P&O) profession 11 years ago as an orthotic technician working at an NHS Trust in the Midlands within an in-house manufacturing team, creating AFOs, KAFOs, spinal jackets and bespoke insoles. He has extensive experience operating 3D scanning equipment and using 3D insole design programs. With three years' experience in manufacturing, he was selected from the workshop team to undertake a two-year assistant clinical practitioner foundation degree, specialising in orthotics. While splitting his time as a technician, he studied and trained alongside registered clinicians to a set of agreed competencies aligned with the HCPC guidance for trainees.

On completing the course, Russell was able to move into the clinical team in a limited capacity under the guidance of the clinicians around him, having his own set clinics. He carries out a vast range of appointment functions such as the fitting and supplying of footwear, insoles, orthoses, and a wide range of off-the-shelf orthotic devices, whilst also acting as the onsite repair/adjustment clinician. He shares his knowledge of device manufacture and adjustment with new and experienced clinicians within the service.

Through his six years as an assistant clinical practitioner, Russell has been able to demonstrate his unique skills by returning numerous times to the manufacturing unit on secondment as the lead 3D design and AFO technician and by covering the administration for the county-wide service.

Throughout Russell's progression he has amassed a great understanding of the processes, requirements and demands of a service and the professionals within P&O, he has a unique view of the orthotic profession that some will not have had. He has seen and experienced the pressures on the administration teams, manufacturing teams and clinicians, and is a strong advocate for supportive working relationships between these teams to gain the best outcomes possible for patients.

Having worked with Blatchford for three years, Russell is now being supported through the next step in his career progression; working towards becoming a qualified and HCPC registered prosthetist/orthotist through the newly created University of Derby apprentice course. Russell believes his route to becoming an orthotist could be a template for future candidates as he states he has *"been able to build a greater preparedness and understanding of the profession and the demands on a clinician in practice than some of the graduates coming through the traditional route may have."*

Here are some photos of Russel taking casts for made-to-measure footwear and cradle insoles, which were taken whilst he was shadowing an orthotist as part of his training.

