

MEET LEE WHITFIELD

APPRENTICE ORTHOTIST - PEACOCKS MEDICAL GROUP

Day in the life as a LV6 Prosthetics and Orthotics
apprenticeship - University of Derby - Entering 3rd / final
year



WHAT DOES A TYPICAL DAY ON YOUR P&O COURSE LOOK LIKE?

As a working parent / apprenticeship student.

- 6-7 AM – Get up and deal with the mad family rush of kicking my 6-year-old out of bed, and between me and my wife getting him sorted and feeding the cats.
- 7-8 AM – Leave the house and travel by public transport to the relevant hospital I'm based at that day.
- 8-9 AM – Clinic arrival and preparation, reading through patient notes and discussing with educator/colleague the plan or aims for the day.
- 9-12 AM – Patient appointments with a recent increase to long-arm supervision with myself handling most of or the full appointment.
- 12-1 PM – Lunch/Lectures/Online training.
- 1-4 PM – Afternoon appointments and ward referrals.
- 4-5 PM – Travel home.
- 5-6 PM – Cook dinner and get my child ready for scouts or swimming on some nights.
- 6-7 PM – Child's hobbies/activities or trip to the gym for myself.
- 7-8 PM – Bedtime routine.
- 8-10 PM – Downtime some nights or one or two nights a week of university work.
- 10-11 PM - Bed



HOW DO YOU BALANCE LECTURES, PRACTICAL SESSIONS AND INDEPENDENT STUDY?

My practice educator is accommodating of online university lectures and will schedule my clinics to allow me to attend if they are during clinic hours.

Independent study is more difficult with the apprenticeship format being a full-time 4 days in clinic with one assigned study day to complete online university modules.

This often requires planning some evenings to allow time to complete module content alone.



WHAT I WAS MOST SURPRISED AT, STUDYING P&O

The vast array of conditions, presentations, devices and patients seen on a daily basis and the wide range of techniques and methods employed by clinicians to provide the best outcomes possible for patients.



WHAT I FIND MOST INTERESTING

As a former Orthotics Technician learning the clinical reasoning for the devices I previously manufactured and gaining understanding of their function alongside being able to see the benefit the devices prescribed have on an individual's quality of life.



LEE WHITFIELD | CONTINUED

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MY FAVOURITE PART OF A PLACEMENT DAY

The challenge of trying to work of the best device or prescription for each patient and seeing the impact a device can have on an individual.



SKILLS I HAVE ACQUIRED SINCE STARTING THE COURSE

A range of assessment methods, theoretical knowledge, soft skills and translation of previous technician skills and knowledge into my practice.



PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT

Becoming a P&O apprentice and deciding to put myself out of my comfort zone by applying for the role.

The learning experience has been challenging but fantastic in equal measure and the support of my colleagues has been unbelievable.

This has made me have no regrets in shifting career and moving into a role which allows me to make a measurable, firsthand difference in people's lives.



MOST REWARDING LEARNING EXPERIENCE

A patient requiring bespoke footwear was seen in clinic with a challenging presentation and achieving a comfortable fit had proven to be difficult over several appointments and they were understandably quite frustrated.

Using my previous knowledge of bespoke footwear manufacture I managed to work of the best way of adjusting the footwear to remove the need for a full remeasure. At the next appointment the footwear fit very well, and the patient was very pleased, passing on feedback through my colleague and even asked about the possibility of seeing me for future appointments.

Knowing my help made a difference in this individual's experience and potential quality of life was very rewarding.

This has allowed me to become more confident in myself, trust my abilities and prescriptive judgement.

