BIOS BRITISH AND IRISH ORTHOPTIC SOCIETY

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Orthoptic Careers Case Study

Meet Deborah

How did your orthoptic career began?

When I was a little girl I was referred to St Paul's eye hospital in Liverpool and decided that I was going to be an 'eye lady' when a grew up, I enjoyed 43 years as an orthoptist and when I retired from my NHS post in 2021 I was managing the community eye services for two boroughs. Alongside my clinical career, I have been an active trade union representative which has been very rewarding.

What is a typical day like in your current role?

As BOS(TU) President I can be called upon to support local reps when representing members or give advice to managers on how to negotiate difficult situations calling on my long experience as both an NHS manager, a clinician and TU representative to help members. As a Trustee have a responsibility to ensure BIOS is well governed and has its members interests at heart. Both roles have enabled me to meet with Orthoptists from all of the country and see what amazing work they do.

Deborah Podmore

BIOS Trustee for North of England and President of BOS(TU)

Define your role in 3 words?

- Rewarding
- Interesting
- Challenging

What do you love the most about your role?

I loved working in clinic, no two days were the same and it was great coming into contact with so many different people. Alongside my clinical and managerial duties I discovered rewarding and absorbing roles within the trade unions, I am a fervent supporter of the NHS and the unions have been integral in ensuring services are delivered by staff who are properly supported, rewarded and protected. My role within the trade unions complemented and supplemented my clinical and managerial roles, becoming a TU rep is the best way to learn about people management and how to support people in work. Anyone interested in equality and defending human rights will find like-minded people and opportunities within the Unions.

What is the most challenging part of your role?

It can be very full-on and burn out can happen really easily, especially when you commit fully to every single patient you see. However, the job is typically Monday-Friday with very few weekends or evening clinics (and no nights/on-calls!) so I have lots of time to go home and decompress and partake in personal hobbies.

What skills do you find essential for your job?

Patience, curiosity, ability to listen, non-judgemental.

What do you look forward to in your orthoptic career?

I have now retired from clinical life but hope to give back to my profession by helping members in their working lives.Hopefully my years of work as an orthoptist and a TU rep support me in doing this.