BIOS BRITISH AND IRISH ORTHOPTIC SOCIETY

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Orthoptic Careers Case Study

Meet Hazel

Why did you choose orthoptics?

I went into orthoptics by accident. My family circumstances meant I decided to turn down a university place to do Human Psychology. I set about looking for something close to home that would be a career working in a hospital. For something that was very last-minute, I am very grateful to have found orthoptics at a time when it wasn't promoted like it is today. I loved it from the minute I started my course and worked happily in the NHS for 38 years.

What is a typical day like in your current role?

My role in the business relates to my orthoptic expertise, so I answer any email enquiries about products that require advice or a technical explanation. I might liaise with one of the companies that manufacture our products and I usually have something product-related that needs my attention, such as writing instructions, or considering improvements.

I have initiated two pieces of research recently which meant working closely with orthoptic researchers and university lecturers. The products developed from the research are digital, so I might have a meeting with our outsourced app developers.

Most weeks I check our social media material before it's sent and regularly write marketing material that the business produces.

Define your role in 3 words?

- Responsible
- Self-motivated
- Innovative

What skills do you find essential for your job?

All my professional orthoptic skills are invaluable. Developing our products came about as a direct result of my own orthoptic needs many years ago. Understanding and dealing with customers requires the same clinical interaction skills.

What do you look forward to in your orthoptic career?

I am now retired as an orthoptist, but remain massively interested and I don't expect that to change.

Any advice you'd like to give?

You will love being part of this profession. The clinical options are so diverse, yet so niche that you will have important skills that make you the expert. That is very satisfying and empowering, even in everyday clinical work, as you diagnose, treat and help your patients through to discharge.

Hazel Kay

Orthoptist (retired) and Owner of Kay Pictures Ltd