BIOS BRITISH AND IRISH ORTHOPTIC SOCIETY

Contact careers@orthoptics.org.uk
www.orthoptics.org.uk

Orthoptic Careers Case Study

Meet Maddie

Why did you choose orthoptics?

Originally, I was extremely interested in studying medicine. However, the more doctors I spoke to, the less convinced I wanted to go into the profession due to the work/life balance and relentless studying and training pathways. However, I was unsure of what other careers covered the aspects I wanted to do, such as independent diagnosis and management of patients etc. Thankfully, I did a week of work experience in an eye department and knew Orthoptics was the healthcare role for me. I loved that it is an independent clinical role which works alongside and with Doctors etc and also that you see both children and adults within the role, which is unusual in healthcare.

What is a typical day like in your current role?

I start work at 8:30, have a morning clinic, 45 minutes for lunch, afternoon clinic and then home time at 16:45. The clinics may be multi-disciplinary and so you work alongside doctors or optometrists and discuss best ways to treat the patients, or purely orthoptic led clinics. I also do a specialist clinic for children with special educational needs and so may be doing that clinic alongside the visual impairment teachers. additionally, I also perform pre-assessments for surgery and so may be within the eye theatre department, working within the wider team.

Define your role in 3 words?

- Varied
- Challenging
- Interesting

Maddie Dutton

Specialist Orthoptist
University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust

What do you love the most about your role?

I love how much difference we make to people's lives, and often quite quickly. When a patient comes in, unable to drive or do very much due to double vision, they are always so appreciative when you can put the images back together for them in that very same clinic. The variety of roles and patients means every day is different and exciting and theres so many opportunities for further role advancement or training, such as conferences.

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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?

You have to have empathy, you have to want the best for every patient you see, because otherwise you will not have the motivation to do everything you can for them. You have to be able to communicate with people, both patients and colleagues, in order to work out the issues and help them effectively.. Additionally, curiosity and problem-solving are key, this will allow you to make a diagnosis or decide what further investigations are needed to reach a diagnosis.

What do you look forward to in your orthoptic career?

I look forward to further developments in treatment options for our patients and helping many more people with their vision and their sight. I personally am also looking forward to developing further, such as obtaining my Masters degree and further career progression.

Any advice you'd like to give?

Do not be afraid to get stuck in - the earlier you do the easier everything is. Please get work experience at your local department - BIOS will have the required contact information to do this. Work experience is key, it allows you to see what the role entails and helps you decide if this is something that will work for you.

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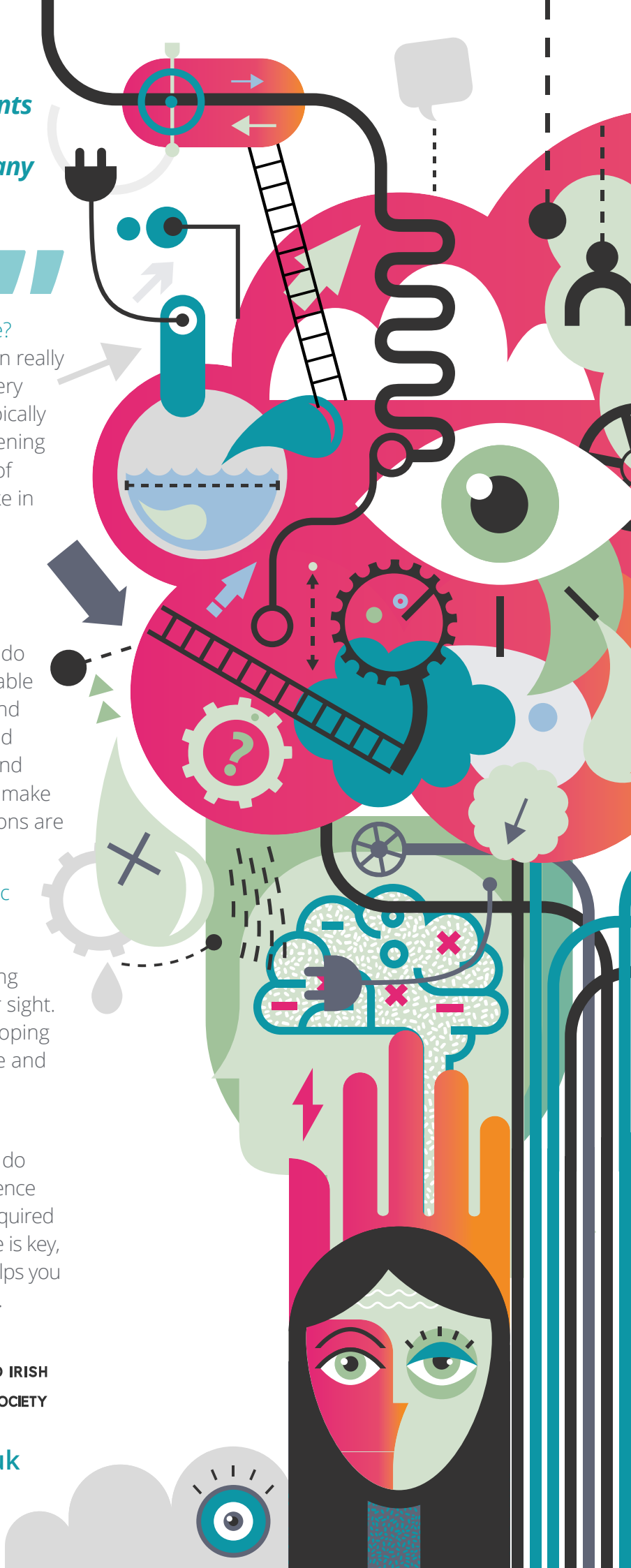
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