

# AHP Day

Emma Loader  
Orthotist



## Where do you work within the Trust?

Orthotics Department.

The Orthotists cover five sites within East Lancashire hospital trust.

## What does your job role involve on a daily basis?

On a day to day basis we assess, prescribe, measure, fit, supply and review patients who may require a wide range of orthoses.

Measuring may include using a tape and foot stick, taking an impression of a person's feet or a plaster cast. More recently the use of a scanner!

The orthosis may be to support, reduce or correct deformities, or aid function of parts of the body by either inducing or reducing forces applied.

We see patients of all ages, from babies to the elderly and they may be seen as an in-patient or an out-patient.

We treat a wide number of pathologies affecting the musculoskeletal system including but not limited to cerebral palsy, congenital talipes equinovarus, osteoarthritis, Rheumatoid arthritis and diabetes. We also deal with a large amount of trauma and orthopaedic patients for such things as spinal bracing and Achilles tendon ruptures treated by conservative management.

The variety in the job role means that no two days are the same!

## How does your role contribute to our delivery of Safe, Personal and Effective Care within ELHT?

Orthotics has the ability to reduce the impact on other services for example the supply of an ankle foot orthosis or hernia support could mean that costly surgical options are avoided or delayed.

A number of orthosis increase patient safety during ambulation meaning people can often return home earlier and safer.

The supply of post trauma devices, often same day means that delays in discharges are reduced and patients can return home in a timely manner.

## What do you most enjoy about being an Orthotist?

No two days are the same and we are often able to create bespoke orthotic items to meet both clinical and holistic needs for patients.

## **Why did you want to become an Orthotist?**

Orthotists are dual qualified graduate from either the University of Salford or the University of Strathclyde with a BSc Hons. In Prosthetics and Orthotics.

Orthotists see a variety of patients with a wide range of conditions.

There is always something new to learn and it is a hands on practical career. Providing an Orthosis can make a positive improvement to a patient's quality of life, it's rewarding to know you can make a difference.

## **Are there any frustrations, myths or things you find people often don't understand about your profession which you'd like to take this opportunity to say a few words about?**

Most people haven't heard of Orthotics. If they have they think we provide shoes. There is much more to Orthotics than most people realise.

There are approximately 250 practicing Orthotists in the UK, with an ageing population the demand is high meaning appointment slots are short and clinic loads can be heavy. However here at ELHT we are working to improve this. Our number of Orthotists has doubled in the last three years which has allowed for longer appointment slots and more manageable clinical loads.