

Anne Harris, Occupational Therapist

Anne Harris is an experienced Occupational Therapist, registered with the Health Professions Council and a member of the British Association of Occupational Therapists. She qualified in 1976, gaining a Diploma in Occupational Therapy from Dorset House, Oxford. Clinical experience in specialist neurology and spinal injury units provided the foundations for a career specialising in long term, complex disabilities.

On qualifying Anne Harris worked in a large NHS hospital. She planned and delivered rehabilitation programmes, assessed and organised provision of equipment for activities of daily living, social care and minor adaptations to housing prior to discharge and addressed re-integration into work. She gained valuable experience of amputations and general surgery, cerebral vascular accidents and other neurological and medical conditions, orthopaedics, burns and plastics, geriatrics and rheumatology. Moving into Paediatrics she worked in a Child Development Centre, a special school and a residential unit for children and young adults with complex needs, including those with challenging behaviour, where she facilitated integration into family, school and community life.

Anne Harris joined SCOPE (The Spastics Society) as a Senior Therapist and played a key role in developing integrated therapy, care and educational programmes within a new residential school which opened in 1979. Using the principles of Conductive Education, she worked across a 24 hour day with children with Cerebral Palsy and complex neurological disabilities. She assessed and taught children, parents and carers to use equipment for self-care activities, posture management, manual handling, communication, play and mobility.

She liaised with NHS professionals to ensure continuity of care and with Social Services when equipment and major housing adaptations were identified. In the post 16, community based residential units she helped young adults to develop the skills of directing carers, making lifestyle choices and in conjunction with social workers develop costed care plans for future placements. An advisory service was provided for the 'School for Parents' and to adults with Cerebral Palsy.

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Since 1997 Anne Harris has worked part-time for Whizz-Kidz, a children's charity, as a Regional Mobility Therapist. This is a dual clinical specialist post covering mobility equipment and paediatric disabilities, for example Muscular Dystrophy, Spinal Muscular Atrophy, Spina Bifida, spinal injuries, learning disabilities, Cerebral Palsy and other neurological conditions, including traumatic brain injuries. Taking into account clinical and recreational needs she assesses children and young adults for walking aids, specialised solo and tandem cycles and wheelchairs, including seating and specialist controllers. Partnership working with NHS services is actively promoted to achieve the optimum solution for children. She acts as an advocate when housing, transport, driving or educational access needs are identified.

As lead therapist for evidence and powered wheelchairs she has raised awareness of the benefits of powered mobility for pre-school children through lectures and is developing a 'first wheels' powered chair with Bath Institute of Medical Engineering. She participated in the development of Standards for NHS Wheelchair Services and was a faculty member of the NHS Modernisation Agency, Wheelchair Service Collaborative.

Through voluntary work Anne Harris has maintained her involvement with adults and utilised her occupational therapy skills and knowledge.

As a qualified welfare rights adviser she has helped clients with a wide range of disabilities including amputations, strokes, back and spine injuries, visual impairment and orthopaedic trauma to identify their additional care, mobility and participatory needs and make successful disability benefit claims. She gained a Diploma in Counselling in 2001 and as a counsellor maintains an interest in psychological health. Presenting conditions of clients have included depression, anxiety, personality disorders, relationship difficulties, bereavement and adjustment to disability.

Anne Harris is committed to continuing professional development and is a member of the National Association of Paediatric Occupational Therapists, Posture and Mobility Group and Occupational Therapist in Independent Practise. In 2001 she gained an MSc in Occupational Therapy and is currently carrying out research towards a PhD. Throughout her career she has actively shared knowledge through supervision and teaching of professional students and helped develop an MSc course 'Enabling Function and Mobility'.

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In 2005, Anne Harris joined Bush & Company as a Rehabilitation Consultant and since this date has been regularly preparing reports on the needs of children and adults with a wide variety of disabilities, including cerebral palsy, head injury, challenging behaviour and learning disabilities, spinal cord injury and orthopaedic injuries to upper and lower limbs and back. Anne Harris has been instructed by both Claimant and Defendant Solicitors and as a single joint expert.



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Registered Office
March House, Long March, Daventry, Northants NN11 4NR
Tel 01327 876210 | Fax 01327 872559 | DX 155100 DAVENTRY 4

www.bushco.co.uk