

Claire Hancock, Occupational Therapist

Claire Hancock qualified in 1992 after studying at St Loyes School of Occupational Therapy in Exeter. She has worked within the private sector, the NHS and in the Florida school system. Whilst awaiting the results of her OT examinations Claire spent the summer in Philadelphia working in the Thomas Jefferson Hospital spinal injuries unit.

Following qualification Claire gained experience in a physical health setting as part of a rotational post at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital. This included rheumatology, stroke rehabilitation, orthopaedic, medical, neurological and surgical wards. This helped Claire to build experience across a wide range of clinical areas working with adults and older people with a wide range of physical conditions. Claire became a senior therapist working with amputees before specialising in plastic surgery and hand therapy. In these posts, Claire developed a rounded knowledge and skill base, which continues to stand her in good stead within her current working practice.

Claire went on to work in the United States as a school based paediatric OT. Her case load included children with a wide range of physical and learning disabilities including pervasive developmental delay and brain injury.

Claire acted as a resource for the teaching staff advising how best to engage their students and help them overcome their difficulties in the classroom. She prepared detailed yearly assessments of the children's physical and cognitive function drawing up treatment programmes which she delivered to individuals and groups. Claire learned to use sensory integration techniques to treat children with disorders of the central nervous system. Claire developed and delivered splinting workshops and undertook the provision of more complex splints on behalf of her colleagues.

On her return to the UK Claire spent some time working as a locum therapist. She was able to gain valuable experience in rheumatology, plastic surgery, hand therapy general medicine and neurology. Locuming helped Claire consolidate her neurology and hand therapy skills whilst observing a variety of different assessment and treatment techniques.

Claire then worked as a senior hand therapist in the private sector at the Wellington Hospital Hand Unit in London. Claire prepared reports for the purpose of litigation and gave lectures on accredited courses for The British Association of Hand Therapists.

Using Baltimore Therapeutic Equipment, a computerised work simulator, Claire gained experience and an interest in work hardening following injury.

In 1999 Claire became head of Rheumatology OT at the Royal United Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases in Bath. Whilst there Claire managed in and out patient rheumatology OT services and developed OT provision to a new paediatric and adolescent rheumatology service. In order to be more hands on Claire went on to become Rheumatology Clinical Specialist OT at the Bristol Royal Infirmary. She became involved in research and was the driving force behind the development of medical care pathways. Claire was an educator teaching on Bristol Universities Doctors Education programme and advising on the OT component of a rheumatology masters degree at University of the West of England. Claire completed work place assessments advising her people with rheumatological conditions and their employers on how best to adapt working practises and environment.

In 2004 Claire began, and continues to work in, a joint Health and Social Care setting for the Community Rehabilitation Team in Bristol. The team gives intensive rehabilitation to adults who have experienced physical dysfunction in a range of community settings.

Claire has been able to build on her skills in the rehabilitation of people with amputations, acquired brain injury and spinal cord lesions. She is engaged in cognitive rehabilitation, workplace resettlement, home adaptations and gives advice regarding the setting up of care to best suit her service users needs.

Claire Hancock strongly believes in the importance of continued professional development and to this end ensures that she regularly attends conferences and clinical training courses. She is a Health and Professions Council registered OT and a member of the British Association of OTs.