

Helen Bird, Occupational Therapist

Helen Bird, BSc (Hons), SROT, gained her Degree in Occupational Therapy in 1995, from Salford University College. She is a member of BAOT and HPC. She has worked with children and adults with a wide range of Neurological, Orthopaedic, Surgical and Progressive Conditions. Helen is registered with the Health Professions Council.

Helen started her OT career working in Surgery, Orthopaedics, A&E, and with Acute Elderly Patients at Whipps Cross Hospital, East London. She developed a specialism working with Amputees, and collaborated with Forest Wheelchair Service. In this role, Helen provided assessments for home adaptations, in liaison with Social Services. Her interest in posture, seating and mobility led to a Senior role in the Forest Wheelchair Service. Managing the transition from a ward-based service, to a purpose built unit for wheelchair users, was her main achievement.

During this time, Helen worked with young wheelchair users and developed an interest in working with children. She trained as a Voluntary Bereavement Counsellor for children who had lost close family members. She also completed a Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Course and an Msc. Module in Paediatric Occupational Therapy at the University of East London.

In 2000, Helen worked at BHB Wheelchair Service at Harold Wood Hospital, in Essex. She dealt with adults and children and adults with a variety of complex disabilities: spinal injuries, head injuries, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, trauma. She worked closely with the Special Seating Team, to assess for head controls, switches, postural moulds and bespoke items for the most complex adults and children.

Working with children in this way led to a post in the BHB Paediatric Community OT Team. Here the caseload included children with mild to severe disabilities, both Neurological and Physical. Helen worked in mainstream schools, special schools and client's homes. Small aids and adaptations were assessed for and issued to clients including hand splints, writing aids, posture packs, kitchen equipment and dressing aids. In-service training included Lectures with the Paediatric Specialists at Great Ormond Street Hospital in London.

In 2002, Helen commenced work in the Early Years Social Inclusion Project, an education-based project in the London Borough of Enfield. The project focused on 0-9 year olds, and the training of School personnel to understand and work with children with specific social, behavioural and learning difficulties, as well as physical disabilities.

This post required a broad spectrum of knowledge of Paediatric conditions, as well as researching and preparing regular training sessions to Teaching Staff in Primary schools across Enfield. This project was unique and extremely successful in delivering Inclusion Training across the Borough of Enfield.

In 2004, Helen commenced a split post as a Paediatric OT in Health and Social Services in Conwy, North Wales. The challenge was to deliver a seamless OT Service to clients common to both services. This role saw a return to treatment, equipment assessment, organising major and minor housing adaptations and close MDT working. Developing a therapeutic relationship with the clients and families was paramount, due to the complexity of OT provision for an ongoing fixed, caseload. The clients had a range of disabilities from ADHD and Autistic Spectrum Disorders to Brain Injury, Cerebral Palsy and Spina Bifida.

In 2007, Helen commenced work for Bush & Co. as a Case Manager and Immediate Needs Assessor, with both children and adults, based in the North West.