



Holly Hewitt

Orthoptist

Can you give us a brief outline of your work history?

I graduated from the University of Liverpool in July 2018 and started my first job as an Orthoptist within the Northern Trust in August 2018. I worked there for almost two years before moving to the Southern Trust, where I have been working for almost three years.

What made you decide this career path?

I had known that I wanted a job within the healthcare setting but without the hands-on physical element. On researching, I discovered Orthoptics as a career but had never heard of it before. I got the opportunity to work shadow the Orthoptists here in Southern Trust while I was still in school and loved what I saw! This led to attending an open day at the University of Liverpool for Orthoptics, and from then, I knew it was the job for me.

How did you train for this role/educational route?

The Orthoptics course can currently only be studied in England and Scotland. I had applied for two universities in England, Liverpool and Sheffield. Once I got my A-Level results that I needed, I accepted my offer that I had received for the University of Liverpool. The Orthoptics course in Liverpool is three years, which consists of a mixture of university lectures, seminars and placements.

What does a typical day involve?

A typical day would consist of seeing both paediatric and adult patients within the outpatient setting, with nine patients in the morning and seven patients in the afternoon. With our paediatric patients, we are assessing visions, monitoring glasses wear, measuring squints, and managing patching regimes, whereas with our adult patients, we are mostly assessing the cause of double vision and providing management where we can. We have multiple clinics across the Southern Trust including Portadown, Newry, Lurgan, Dungannon, Armagh and Banbridge. We typically work alone while doing these clinics. However, we can have clinics where we work alongside Optometrists, Ophthalmologists and our own Orthoptic colleagues.

What do you like best about your job?

I like that we assess such a variety of patients throughout each day, from babies to school-age children to elderly - it keeps each day a little different. It is a very rewarding job as we are there to ensure all patients achieve the best visual outcome possible.