

## Orthoptic Careers Case Study

# Meet Marianne

### What inspired you to do research?

The department at Liverpool is very research active, so in my undergraduate clinical training I was really lucky to get the chance to not only volunteer for research studies, but also to help with some of the research projects that were running in the department. It was very exciting, as you really feel like you're on the cutting edge of clinical practice. That gave me the bug, so to speak.

When I qualified, I wanted to do the best I could for my patients, so I would read academic journals to find out what was new that could improve my practice. But the more I read, the more I realised that there were still lots of unanswered questions about the things we as orthoptists do in our everyday work. I wanted to find answers to those questions, so that was what inspired me to do research.

### What were your next steps after graduating?

I spent two years in clinical practice before returning to Liverpool to do a Masters in Research. I think experience in clinical practice inspires good ideas for research and it was great to work with the lecturers at Liverpool who trained me. From them, I learned how to do high quality research and turn those ideas into real, practical projects with findings that are changing practice. I've had the opportunity to work on all sorts of exciting projects, from a randomised controlled trial using video games to treat amblyopia ('lazy eye') to testing people living with dementia to assess their ability to judge distances and therefore their risk of falling.

### Any advice you'd like to give?

Research skills are being increasingly valued in clinical practice and there are now lots more opportunities to be involved in research while doing clinics, so taking advantage of research training opportunities can enhance orthoptic practice to the benefit of the patients and families we support.

I would recommend getting involved in research to anyone who is studying orthoptics! But be careful, once you've got the bug, it's difficult to stop... Now I have a PhD, and I'm moving to Melbourne to work full time as a clinical vision researcher at the National Vision Research Institute, birthplace of the Bailey-Lovie vision testing chart that is used in eye departments across the world. My research training has opened so many doors to me in orthoptics worldwide, so I would say, give it a go! You never know where it might take you, and you'll look at your day-to-day practice in a whole new way.



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