

Jennifer McCrossan

Band 6 Peripatetic Occupational Therapist



What does your job entail?

As a Paediatric Occupational Therapist (OT) I work with babies, children and young people aged 0-18 years. I am based at the Children's Centre, OHPCC and I also work in Arvalee Special School in Omagh. I assess and treat children and young people with a range of neurodevelopmental, physical, learning and/or sensory conditions.

Assessment and treatment can take place in the child's home, their school and in the clinical setting at OHPCC. My role is to ensure that the child can be as independent as possible in their everyday life and often that involves provision of specialist equipment such as seating, wheelchairs, hoists, slings and bathing equipment. I am also involved in making recommendations for housing adaptations to meet a client's long term needs in their home environment.

I also work with children with a diagnosis of Autism and provide treatment and sensory advice for parents to help the child cope better with the sensory demands of their environment. Every day in Paediatrics is different. Not only do I work with children and their families but all the other professionals who work with them including Teachers, Speech and Language Therapists, Physios, Community Children's Nurses, Paediatricians, Health Visitors, Social Workers and more.

How did you get into this line of work?

I took an interest in OT when I was about 14 years old. My uncle who has a spinal injury and uses a powered wheelchair to mobilise had an OT involved in his equipment provision and rehabilitation and I liked the idea of being able to help people with these kinds of needs.

Outline your career to date?

I started off as a Band 5 Community OT in Derry in a temporary post for 6 months. I then got a permanent post in adult wheelchair services in Derry and worked there for 18 months.

I started as a Band 5 in Paediatrics in Derry in 2010 and applied for a Band 6 post in 2016. I have been working in Omagh in Paediatrics since then.

Tell us about your qualifications and training?

To gain a place at Ulster University to study OT I required 3 grade B's at A Level. One of which had to be a science and I chose Biology which gave me a baseline towards the Anatomy and Physiology modules in the course.

The training was 4 years at the time, it is now a 3 year course. As part of my professional development I continue to learn and reflect on my practice daily with both day to day working and also with the training opportunities that the Trust provides.

What qualities do you feel are required for your job – personal and professional?

Firstly you need to genuinely care about the clients and their families that you work with, you need to want to help them and their families. You need to be compassionate and empathetic and a good listener and you need to remember that you are dealing with very sensitive situations.

You need to be friendly and caring and have an ability to put the client and their family at ease which comes with experience. On a professional level you need to be super organised, eager to learn and work as part of a team, don't be afraid to ask for help.

What is the best advice you have ever received?

Be kind, smile and assess what you see.

A little bit about me

- I have a Pug called Rizzo.
- I travelled to Brazil for a year after a graduated.
- I own a business called Melt Boxes, where I make cheese boards in a box at the weekends!

What advice would you give your 16-year-old self?

Budget, save and don't worry about things that haven't happened yet-they may never happen!

