



“There are short-term challenges in returning to practice, but they are outweighed by the potential long-term benefits of returning to the profession.”

**Nicholas Morgan** trained to become an **Orthoptist** at Glasgow Caledonian University, graduating in 1994. He worked in a clinical role for 14 years before moving into clinical governance.

“I quickly realised the culture in a non-clinical hospital role is very different and when the opportunity to be a full-time parent came along, I jumped at it. I loved being a full-time parent for 4 years and then moved back into paid employment working for my local church and then managing an Oxfam shop.

All-in-all I'd been away from my profession for nearly 10 years when friends suggested I should think about returning to practice. I looked at the website of the British and Irish Orthoptic Society and they had some useful information about what I would need to do. As I had been away from practice for nearly 10 years, I needed to do 60 days of updating my skills and knowledge - 30 days supervised practice and 30 days of private study.

I was able to do my supervised practice as a clinical placement at Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust and it was really helpful that one of the Orthoptists I worked with had returned to practice some years previously, so they were very supportive.

Returning to a clinical setting, was at the same time enjoyable, scary and reassuring. In particular I was concerned about paediatric work, as my last role had been adult based.

However, I quickly recalled the skills required to interact with children and being heavily involved in raising my own children certainly helped!

Financially it was difficult; there was no funding available when I first commenced my return to practice and I relied on support from my family in order to take three months out from work to complete the study and supervised practice days required. Fortunately, there is some financial support for people starting their return journey now.

Until I was back on the HCPC register it was difficult to know how to introduce myself; I wasn't yet a practicing Orthoptist again, but patients were very understanding and happy for me to work with them, and explaining a bit about the process was always a good ice-breaker. Of course some things had also changed, for example, vision testing is recorded differently now and I do still find myself converting into the old system in my head.

There is a great mix of expertise in the department and I felt very blessed that whilst I was undertaking my supervised practice, a vacancy for a permanent post became available; having already worked with my potential line manager made the interview process a lot less scary!

I now have huge job satisfaction and important job security. There are short-term challenges in returning to practice, but they are outweighed by the potential long-term benefits of returning to the profession.”

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ready to  
return?

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