

Steeper Spotlights

Steeper and Bone Cancer Research
Trust Unite to Fight Bone Cancer

Orthotics in Action: Tommy's Story



 **steeper**
by eqwal.

Issue 2 | Autumn 2024

CEO message Paul Steeper

I would like to start by wishing you a Happy New Year!

The past three months have been full of activity across our company, and we're excited to share these incredible stories with you as we dive head-first into 2025.

From the heart-warming patient journeys of Elliot and Tommy, to community-driven initiatives such as our second charity makers market, this issue is packed with inspiring highlights that showcase our commitment to making a positive impact.

You can also read about Laura's remarkable achievement winning the BHTA Rising Star Award and the dedicated team of individuals who returned to Thailand on the fourth Equal humanitarian mission.

We hope you enjoy this issue, and please do share any feedback to marketingteam@steepergroup.com.

Best wishes,



In this Issue

3 Steeper Orthotist Laura Wilson Named BHTA Rising Star 2024

3 Steeper and Bone Cancer Research Trust Unite to Fight Bone Cancer

4 LPC Helps Elliot Pursue His Sporting Dreams

5 BIG Changes are Coming to LPC

8 Orthotics in Action: Tommy's Story

Steeper Orthotist Laura Wilson Named BHTA Rising Star 2024

Congratulations to Steeper Senior Orthotist, Laura Wilson, who won the Rising Star Award at the 2024 British Healthcare Trades Association awards! This award celebrates outstanding individuals who have joined their company through apprenticeships, university graduateships, or internal trainee programmes and have gone on to make a significant impact on their organisation.

Laura's journey from Graduate Orthotist to Senior Orthotist and leader of Steeper's Product Evaluation Group (PEG) demonstrates the qualities celebrated by this award. Her impactful contributions have elevated patient care throughout the Steeper network in the UK and have also driven positive change within our organisation and the wider orthotic community. Laura's skills have set her apart, making her an exceptional role model for aspiring healthcare professionals.



Read the full article on our website:
<https://bit.ly/3VYhuzO>



Steeper and Bone Cancer Research Trust Unite to Fight Bone Cancer

Over the past two years, Steeper team members have conquered Yorkshire mountain tops, run the famous miles of the London Marathon, poured their hearts into handmade crafts and dug deep to donate generously to help children and families living in poverty across the UK, raising over £11,300 for Action for Children. With a passion for caring for all deeply woven into our mission, we are excited to take our next step in supporting a new cause that touches many lives in our own business. We are honoured to announce our new Charity of the Year partnership with the Bone Cancer Research Trust.

Members of our Innovation Forum compiled a shortlist of three charities that were then invited to present in front of our Operations Board. Director of Clinical Services and Operations Board member, Andrew Nicol commented, "The presentation delivered by Bone Cancer Research Trust left a profound impression on our team. The high-quality information they provide to patients, coupled with the opportunities for our team members to engage, made their organisation an obvious choice for us."

Employees will have the chance to take part in fundraising events, challenges, and volunteering opportunities to support this great cause.



PROUD
TO
SUPPORT



Overcoming Sepsis: LPC Helps Elliot Pursue His Sporting Dreams

At 18 years old, Elliot described himself as a normal, active kid, going to school and accomplishing a black belt in Taekwondo. Then one day, he began to experience flu-like symptoms that progressively worsened over time. His GP wasn't concerned and sent Elliot home to rest with a flu diagnosis, but after noticing a continuing decline in his health, his parents rushed him to the hospital where doctors discovered Elliot had Sepsis.

According to NHS England, Sepsis is an extremely serious condition that occurs when the immune system overreacts to an infection and starts to damage the body's own tissues and organs. If left untreated, Sepsis can become life-threatening. In an attempt to stop the spread of Sepsis throughout Elliot's body, doctors made the decision to amputate both of his legs below the knee and some of the fingers on his hands. He says, "It was a very emotionally devastating moment. Looking down and having no legs, that itself was a big shock!" But Elliot was determined to get walking again.

With the help of Richard Kayser at Irwin Mitchell Solicitors, Elliot was able to receive the best treatment in order to achieve his mobility goals. Richard commented, "The most important thing for Elliot and his family, I think, from the outset is answers. The second most important thing is that if there were failings in care, Elliot does get the appropriate compensation." As part of his investigation proceedings, Richard reached out to Abdo Haidar at the London Prosthetic Centre (LPC) to create a report outlining Elliot's need for prosthetic treatment for the rest of his life and what that would likely cost. This is where his journey with LPC began.

Elliot has big goals in his sights! He says, "I want to be able to go running, go to the gym, run a marathon. I want to complete a Tough Mudder obstacle course. I want to do triathlons. I just want to see what I can physically accomplish." And with the help of the LPC team, he's well on his way to achieving these goals.

Abdo and the team have not only provided Elliot with a bespoke prosthetic limb build to support him with his day-to-day movements but he's also supplied Elliot with legs that will allow him to participate in a range of different sporting activities such as jogging, running and cycling.

Elliot says, "Over the past few years, I've been encouraged to do more and more and I've seen how much I could push myself! The best advice I could give, something no one told me, is that every year, every day, every week, every month, push what that limit is. When you do, it's an exciting feeling because you can think am I the first amputee to ever do this activity? It's just such an encouraging and fulfilling feeling."



BIG Changes are Coming to LPC

2024 has been one of growth and innovation for The London Prosthetic Centre, and we are excited to share what's in store for 2025. From moving into a brand-new, purpose-built facility to introducing expanded rehabilitation services and a refreshed brand identity, we are gearing up for a transformative year.

We're Growing!

To better serve our patients and partners, we are thrilled to announce our move into a new state-of-the-art facility with additional space for prosthetic intervention, in-clinic rehabilitation and High Definition Custom Silicone all under one roof.

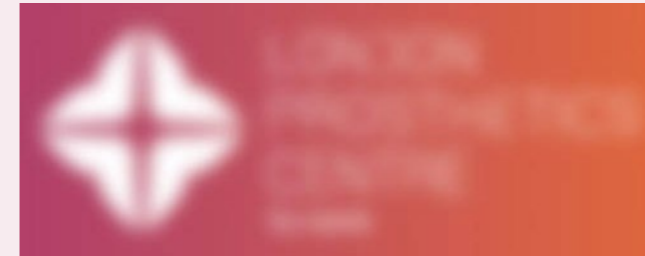


Expanding Rehab Services

We're growing our rehabilitation portfolio to meet diverse patient needs. In addition to our current offerings, 2025 will see the introduction of new residential rehabilitation options with trusted care partners. Our own rehabilitation team will be available at our dedicated rehab space to provide you with essential therapies during your prosthetic intervention.

Regular Patient Open Days

In 2025 we'll be hosting regular patient open days to showcase our new and existing services, meet our team, and build stronger connections with the community. We hope to see you there!



A Fresh Look for a New Era

To better reflect our business goals, patients, and our introduction into the EQual Group, we'll also be updating our branding. While our appearance may change, our commitment to caring for all remains at the heart of everything we do.

Steeper Attend ISPO France

Featuring our upper limb devices on the EQual booth and supporting French distributor partner Janton, Dawn Henderson attended the two day expo.

Dawn said "It was great to work alongside our French partners and meet customers at the event, interest was particularly high in Custom Silicone this year as changes in policy in France will make these cosmeses more accessible to more patients."



Crafts Raise £450 for BCRT

To kick off the partnership with BCRT, we hosted our second Charity Makers Market at Steeper HQ.

The Makers Market brought together the creativity and generosity of our colleagues, who donated a variety of handmade items to raise funds for this vital cause. Among the treasures were beautifully crafted candles, knitted soft toys, Christmas decorations, clay pots, stunning prints, and an abundance of cupcakes that quickly became crowd favourites!

The event was a great success raising over £450 that will go directly towards supporting the Bone Cancer Research Trust's mission to save lives and improve outcomes for those affected by primary bone cancer.



Wound Care Shoes On Display at Diabetes Professional Care Expo

In early October 2024, Steeper team members Richard Thomas, Barry Campbell, Laura Wilson and Chelsi Smith attended the Diabetes Professional Care Expo at Olympia, London. Promoting the use of Streifeneder Therapeutic Shoes for the treatment and management of foot ulcers caused by diabetes, the team shared their expertise with over 3,000 event attendees.

Bringing together healthcare professionals from various vocations, Diabetes Professional Care is the UK's leading event for those involved in the prevention, treatment and management of diabetes and its related conditions. With major sponsors such as AstraZeneca, Dexcom, and GlucoRx, the team had the opportunity to network with industry giants to share specialist knowledge and potentially improve patient care pathways.



Read the full article on our website:
<https://bit.ly/40108CU>

Eqwal's Foundation Embarked on Fourth Humanitarian Mission to Mae Sot, Thailand

Three Steeper team members returned to Mae Sot, Thailand for the fourth humanitarian mission with the Eqwal Foundation. Workshop Managers Paul Laverick and Keith Hatchard, and Prosthetist, Lynzy Holding's main focus was to strengthen the skills given to the team from their previous mission and solidify the foundations for excellent patient care.

Using limited resources and supplies they revisited the basics with the trainees, including plaster casting, before they moved onto the practical applications including plaster preparation, adjustments to ensure an optimal fit and socket preparation.

By the fifth day, the first patients were able to take their initial steps - a moment of pride for the trainees as well as for Lynzy, Keith and Paul.



Prosthetic Devices Created For Amputees, By Amputees

In the forever-changing world of prosthetics, there are more products on the market than ever before. In this article, we'd like to draw your attention to some unique lower limb products within the Steeper portfolio.

All were created by amputees to answer specific issues they were facing, including added protection, comfort and flexibility with their prostheses. these 'by amputee' products may benefit patients:



Xtend Connect

One frustration users encounter is the inability to swap limbs when out and about. This sparked an idea for Christoffer Lindhe, Founder of Lindhe Xtend, which led to the development of the Xtend Connect, enabling users to effortlessly switch between prosthesis or socket.

The component can be fitted anywhere with a variety of industry-standard connections - a simple wheel lock mechanism and safety button give true flexibility.

LIMB-art Prosthetic Covers

LIMB-art prosthetic leg covers are specifically designed for users of above and below-knee prostheses, combining superior quality material and construction with cutting-edge design and technology to provide a robust, budget-friendly leg cover. Which most importantly, helps amputees to convey their personality via design and colour as well as providing a more natural leg shape under clothing and boots.

These covers play a huge part in raising confidence and self-esteem - with over 20 solid colours and stock designs, they offer a wide variety to stand out from the crowd. Plus, if your patients have a design they want to bring to life, they can also be customised to suit any style!



Pro Armour Lite

The Pro Armour Lite is specifically designed for patients who like to explore off the beaten track, whilst also giving users confidence when carrying out everyday tasks! Thanks to the Neoprene material, the sock protects the prosthetic foot and components from sand, dust, dirt and splashes.



Xtend Foot

The Xtend foot features characteristics that are comparable to a human foot, thanks to excellent energy return and +/- 17 degrees of lateral flexibility. Built from tough glass fibre, carbon fibre, and Titanium, this foot is ideal for users who enjoy moderate to high activities, including hiking and golfing.



Pro Armour PLUS

The Pro Armour PLUS provides the same first-class protection as the Lite but gives users the ultimate freedom to walk footwear-free. Thanks to the low-profile rubberised sole, users can enjoy more footwear-free activities, such as walking along a beach or walking barefoot at home.

Case Study

Tommy Hill



Deciding to make the transition from a walking frame to a wheelchair is not a decision made lightly, especially when you're already preoccupied with navigating the most formative years of your life. But what may seem like a step backwards to others has been a massive leap forward for 14-year-old Tommy.

Having lived with symptoms such as limited balance with no defined cause since birth, Tommy has relied on the use of walking aids and different orthoses to maintain mobility and assist his development as a growing child. Despite these challenges, he maintains a positive outlook, thanks to his orthotist, Rianna Thornton, who helps him set and achieve new goals.

The Early Signs and Challenges

At six weeks old, Tommy's mum, Rachel, noticed Tommy wasn't as active in his feet as his older brothers had been at the same age. She said, "When I held Tommy as a baby, he didn't press into me with his feet, he wasn't bouncing around, and he struggled with weight-bearing. The doctor brushed it off at the six-week check-up, saying there was no problem. But when you know, you know, so we kept an eye on it." At 18 months old, with symptoms still presenting, Tommy started receiving private physio care and his mobility journey began.

The family searched for answers through multiple physiotherapy sessions, blood tests, MRI scans, and the trialling of different orthotic devices. Frustratingly, test after test returned normal results, minor damage to his brain was noted but an official diagnosis would never materialise.

By age three, he received his first pair of Pedro Boots and later transitioned to Steeper Made to Measure Ankle Foot Orthoses (AFOs) for school. It's always been something that, in his words, he's "just got on with."

Using AFOs to Navigate School Life

Rachel said, "Tommy was the only walking frame user at his school and they were really good at adapting things for

him, but I still worried. I'm in awe of him because he is just so positive. Young children are the best for inclusion too, if Tommy couldn't participate in something they'd join him on the carpet to play instead and not think anything of it."

Tommy recalls a specific day at school when he and his classmates were preparing for their upcoming sports day. Despite his inability to walk unaided, Tommy wanted to participate in the running race and wouldn't let anything keep him from doing so. He said, "My teacher turned to me and said I'm in charge of the lesson today! I was so excited when he said he wanted me to teach everyone how to crawl for the new crawling race." Sports day came and went with his friends joining him for the crawl and the whole school chanting Tommy's name as he crossed the finish line!

Supporting Tommy's Growth and Mobility

Since finding himself at a Steeper orthotic clinic over 10 years ago, Tommy has tried multiple styles of AFOs. With his decision to ditch the tiresome walking frame for a more energy-efficient wheelchair comes another change in orthoses. His new AFOs are shorter to accommodate a permanent sitting position.

Steeper Orthotist Rianna Thorton said, "Tommy's new AFOs are designed specifically for control and proprioceptive feedback, rather than gait support now that he uses a wheelchair. He does overpronate, so having an orthosis that supports his feet in a neutral alignment not only benefits him when transferring from his chair, reducing his chance of injury but also helps to prevent deterioration of his feet and ankles in the future."

To read Tommy's full story, visit www.steepergroup.com