

Turning Points

Issue 28 | Autumn 2023

“His head’s a beautiful, perfectly round shape.”

Read about James’s
Craniosynostosis story

QUATTRO MPK
Training Events

Hosted with PROTEOR

The Kinterra 3.0
is here

New and improved!

Steeper Expertise
Showcased in France

Details from Eqwal’s first annual
Excellence in Motion Conference



CEO message

Paul Steeper

Welcome to another edition of Turning Points.

Winter is well and truly setting in with the days becoming noticeably shorter and woolly hats and scarves making regular appearances. Our team continue to work hard and the last quarter has been another busy one!

This issue features stories from lower limb amputee Jade and STARband graduate, James, and our first Education Conference with Eqwal Group as well as many other updates from across the Steeper business.

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

Best wishes,



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We would love to hear from you! Please send your feedback to:

marketingteam@steepergroup.com

Evie's New Leg From LPC has Changed Her Life!

The London Prosthetic Centre's new Prosthetist, Danny van der Merwe, is quickly creating turning points in the lives of his patients - patients like Evie.

Evie's family have commented on her new limb saying, "Evie has been wearing it non-stop since she got it and it has made a massive difference to her comfort.

We have been on holiday, gone for walks in the country, and visited museums, all with lots of walking and she has not mentioned having any discomfort or had to stop once during any of this. With her old leg Evie would definitely have had to limit her activities on the day.

So thanks so much for your help and expertise which has made a difference to Evie's life."

THE
LONDON PROSTHETIC
CENTRE





L-R: Greg Brown, George Gooding, Felix Brinkmann, Jade Crabtree, Dawn Henderson, Tom Clappison

Steeper and PROTEOR Host Training Events Across the UK

Clinicians around the UK were invited to in-depth training sessions for the Freedom QUATTRO MPK.

In collaboration with manufacturer PROTEOR, attendees learnt more about the latest in MPK technology, including QUATTRO's Hyper Active Real Time (H.A.R.T) Control and user customisation.

QUATTRO patients Ryan, Jade, George and Nathanael also joined the sessions sharing their thoughts and experiences using the knee, giving clinicians a first-hand look into the positive impact this innovative device can have.

With over 50 attendees, they had the opportunity to get hands on configuring the knee and discovering the innovative User and Clinician mobile apps. Attendees were put to the test with quick fire questions throughout the day and spot prizes.



All four events were a great success – we made great connections with other Clinicians both internal and external. Thanks to PROTEOR for this opportunity to collaborate and demonstrate this great MPK to others.

Dawn Henderson, Prosthetics Product Manager

50 Steeper Employees Showcase Expertise at Eqwal's First Excellence in Motion Conference

In early October, 50 Steeper delegates from across clinical services, management and production attended the first Eqwal Education Conference, Excellence in Motion. The three day event, held at Puy Du Fou in France, was enjoyed by over 300 Eqwal orthopaedic providers from across the globe.

We shared our expertise in product selection for best patient outcomes, with both the Product Evaluation Group (PEG, Orthotics) and Clinical Support Group (CSG, Prosthetics) presenting.

Steeper Orthotist and PEG Leader, Laura Wilson, said *"To be invited to present the Function and Methods of the Product Evaluation Group at Eqwal's Excellence in Motion Conference was extremely exciting, if not a little intimidating. It was a fantastic opportunity to demonstrate the work that we do to an external audience, interest in which was high! The connections we made with new suppliers are going to enhance our work going forward, ultimately enabling our clinicians to gain further insight and guidance into the world of stock orthoses."*

It was a very welcoming conference with professional networking and social interaction encouraged throughout the three days, really bringing us together as a team for the first time."

"The plenary speakers were insightful, inspirational and incredibly varied. The workshops also provided an opportunity to find out more from our partner brands about their services and products that are new to the market."

Laura Wilson, Steeper Orthotist

We also shared with Eqwal partner organisations about 3D printing insoles for a National Health marketplace and running a Craniosynostosis service. Our upper limb experts showcased the capabilities of the Myoelectric System and Espire



Elbow, with user Jim Ashworth-Beaumont also attending to give his view on the Espire Pro. Alongside Jim, Brian McLaughlin demonstrated the elbow's ease of set-up through the Espire Hub App software in a more in-depth workshop.

A further workshop provided attendees with the opportunity to discover Steeper Custom Silicone Solutions and the prescription process. The BASIS clinical study on nighttime spinal bracing was also presented to clinicians in the plenary programme.

The sharing of new and innovative ideas was complimented by multitudes of tried and tested industry techniques from every corner of the globe - an invaluable perspective gained through the unique gathering of Eqwal's many trusted partners and brands.

We heard interesting clinical insights and an inspiring speech from Eqwal Foundation Ambassador Theo Currin.

Sarah Watson, Prosthetist from Bournemouth and CSG member summed up their feelings about the event, *"Eqwal Group really homed in on collaborative working and sharing our practices more freely. There were some really great projects which can be replicated and used in other services to maximise workflow efficiency and patient outcomes."*

The schedule was fully packed with presentations and workshops throughout; thank you to our presenters and facilitators!

Networking outside of the conference program allowed us to meet with colleagues from across the Eqwal Group, including patient care providers from France, the USA, Switzerland, and Belgium.



In the exhibition area, we showcased our flagship upper limb devices; the Espire Elbow and Myo Kinisi hand. Meeting clinicians and allowing them to get 'hands-on' with Steeper devices; many of whom were not aware of the product range until Steeper joined Eqwal.

Eqwal's mission is to provide people with disabilities greater freedom and autonomy in their daily lives. In March 2023, they acquired 100% of the shares in Steeper, which was an exciting opportunity for all involved and a business relationship that would positively contribute to this goal. Since then, we have forged new relationships with other Eqwal partners and have expanded business operations to provide even more top-quality products to our clinicians and patients throughout the UK and USA. Excellence in Motion was yet another great way to expand these alliances even further for the future.

A fantastic and fulfilling few days were enjoyed by all attendees. We left feeling inspired to be part of a wider group of patient-focused organisations.



Made to Measure Orthoses; Fresh Out of the Factory!

Made to Measure Technician, Alan Smithson, created these little booties for a little patient - once the soles have been added, the patient can enjoy their new shoes!

Helmet Technician, Michael Appleton, has also been working on a tiny helmet and in contrast, a large helmet!

The intricacies of creating these bespoke orthoses cannot be under estimated - a fantastic effort!



SteeperUSA Exhibit at AOPA

SteeperUSA showcased our world class Espire Elbow, Myo Kinisi and the Elegance gloves at this years AOPA National Assembly.

AOPA is the oldest and largest meeting for the orthotic, prosthetic, and pedorthic profession in the United States and was attended by many in the industry including Orthotics and Prosthetic Practitioners, Pedorthists, Physicians, Technicians, Students, Educational Instructors, Marketing Personnel, Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Researchers, Engineers, Manufacturers, Distributors and more!



QUATTRO MPK Gives Jade Her Independence Back!

When Jade Crabtree was just 19 years old, she was troubled by a lump in her lower leg that would soon be diagnosed as bone cancer and eventually lead to the transfemoral amputation of her left leg. She recently joined a clinical trial of the Freedom QUATTRO Microprocessor Knee, so we sat down with Jade to find out how her experience has been.

Jade said, "The QUATTRO has given me my independence back. It's crazy to think that I can just do all these things without having to worry. The QUATTRO goes as fast as I need to go, whereas previous knee's I've used just couldn't keep up.

The app is super easy to use when you want to change the resistance or the activity mode and it's easy to understand as well, there's no big medical jargon that you wouldn't understand.

So the QUATTRO has genuinely changed my life. When I think about it, it makes me a little bit emotional because before it, I thought oh my gosh I'm going to have to deal with [these limitations] forever. But now, for example, we go kayaking and canoeing, it just adjusts to your lifestyle."



Watch the full interview on our website



Steeper WIN Supply Chain Excellence Award



SUPPLY CHAIN
EXCELLENCE
AWARDS 2023

Congratulations to the Steeper Supply Chain team who fought off ten other contenders to win the Supply Chain Excellence Award for Operational Process.

The team entered a detailed submission; showcasing the journey they have been on to improve processes, systems and working practices across all the Steeper Supply Chain teams. Steeper were shortlisted as a finalist and the team had to present to, and be interviewed by, the awards judging panel.

The presentation highlighted the challenges the team have been working to overcome in the years since the global pandemic, including the procurement and availability of raw materials on a world-wide scale and ever-increasing costs due to economic volatility. Advancements were made across the whole Supply Chain, including a new stock management procedure, creation of a 'master data' team, improvements to procurement processes, increasing efficiencies in logistics and reducing complaints via workload management within Customer Services and Costings to name but a few.

The judges were suitably impressed by the successes achieved by the team. When asked why Steeper were selected as the winners, one judge commented *"Steeper won because they transformed their whole supply chain; not just focusing on one area of process or team but viewed supply chain as a whole business function."*

The team are now looking forward to building on these successes and continuing to drive further improvements across the Supply Chain.



The New and Improved Kinterra 3.0

The well-established Freedom Kinterra foot has received an upgrade! The Kinterra 3.0 Foot/Ankle System combines carbon fibre and hydraulic technologies to enhance the walking gait for low to moderate impact K3 ambulators, ensuring improved stability on slopes and varied landscapes.

The Kinterra 3.0 model has a 20% increase in user weight rating compared to the previous 2.0 model. Now able to accommodate to patient weights up to 150kg, without compromising any product unit weight increase.

Features and Benefits

-  Lower Build Height
-  Improved performance at all temperatures
-  IP67 Rated
-  Increase in Patient Weight Limit



Case Study

James



"[His head has] completely healed and now it's a beautiful, perfectly round shape. If he didn't have his scar, you wouldn't have known that he had a full surgery."

Louise, James' Mum



A misdiagnosis, cranial surgery, and nearly 15 months of helmet therapy are a lot for anyone to go through. However, this is exactly how James' journey would pan out after his elongated head shape was pointed out by his health visitor at his 8-week check-up.

Acting on advice from the health visitor, Louise went to their family GP and successfully sought a referral. A short delay later due to the pandemic, they were seen by the first paediatrician and received diagnoses of "a large head". James' head was indeed measuring larger than normal, and Louise wasn't satisfied with the request to see him again in 6 months, so she sought a second opinion.

She said, "I'm a little bit of a geek. I quite like research and when I was investigating the symptoms, it kept coming up with Craniosynostosis, a condition I'd never heard of before. We had to seek a second opinion as we were unhappy with the diagnosis of simply 'a large head'. During the appointment with the second paediatrician we had to be quite firm and ask them to explain why it was not Craniosynostosis. This is when the paediatrician agreed to a referral to Leeds."

Feeling like they were just about at their wit's end and preparing to fight for their son's health again, the family visited the Leeds specialist craniofacial team.

Within four weeks, Louise's suspicions were confirmed and James was diagnosed with craniosynostosis. They were then officially referred on to the Craniofacial Team at LGI where they met Steeper Cranial Orthotist, Kate Chauhan.

Louise said, "We met Kate in the corridor and she was the first person that spoke to me. I was apprehensive as you can imagine. I didn't know what we were going into, whether we'd have to fight our case again, or whether we were going to be believed this time. But Kate put me at ease before I even got into the room."

Craniosynostosis is a rare medical condition in which the sutures in a baby's skull fuse too early, altering the natural growth of the head, leading to potential developmental issues and increased intracranial pressure. The condition

affects roughly 1 in every 2,500 babies and is sadly often misdiagnosed. They finally had a diagnosis and knew they had to act fast. The craniofacial team and Kate presented the family with three treatment options:

1. An immediate craniectomy followed by STARband helmet therapy until the age of 18 months,
2. Two rounds of surgery to have springs fitted into the skull and subsequently removed later on,
3. Or a full cranial vault reconstruction at 18 months old.

As with any medical procedure, each option came with its own risks and considerations. Not only did they want the best possible outcome for James, but they also had to consider the effects the experience would have on his older brother, William. Louise said, "William's not much older than James, and although James is still in his helmet now at 18 months old, we're hoping that in the future, neither of them will remember it in a negative way. Whereas if we'd gone with cranial vault reconstruction, he'd be due to have the surgery now and I think it would've been hard for a four-year-old to see his little brother go through that, compared to a two-and-a-half-year-old. But that's part of why we chose to go with Steeper and the helmet therapy." A decision that would reshape not only James' head but his entire life trajectory.

So, on January 27th, James had a 4cm x 10cm piece surgically removed from his skull, and soon after that, his STARband helmet therapy began. The difference in his frontal bossing was noticeable instantly, and just a few months on, his head was completely healed! Louise said, "He's got a little scar that goes right across his head just slightly above his ears, but that's completely healed and now it's a beautiful, perfectly round shape. If he didn't have his scar, you wouldn't have known that he had a full surgery."

James has now completed his STARband helmet therapy treatment, and the results have already proved life-changing!

To read James' full story, visit www.steeperclinic.com