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Testimonial for Professor Fiona Rowe

I am the lead Orthoptist for Vision services in stroke and neuro-rehabilitation at St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust. My role is to organise and deliver orthoptic services for patients following stroke and other neurological conditions, as well as to provide general paediatric and adult clinics. I am also the lead orthoptist in the trust for research and audit.

Professor Rowe and her research team have been invaluable in the establishment of our Stroke Vision service. When we initially started to look at developing the service Professor Rowe was the first person that we thought to contact, due to her level of expertise in this area and the research that she has conducted. We utilised many of the studies and reviews that Professor Rowe has published in order to evidence the need for orthoptic input into the Stroke service, as part of our successful business case. The resources that Professor Rowe's team have developed are utilised in our clinics on a daily basis, providing the framework for the service which we are now delivering and the ongoing provision of information for patients and other healthcare professionals.

Professor Rowe has supported the training and development of the team of Orthoptists that are now working within the stroke service, by providing training days at the University which are invaluable for continued professional development. There is no other research team in the country that I'm aware of that is providing this level of support, research and expertise for a particular area of orthoptics to this level. We find that all of Professor Rowe's research is relevant and useful to clinical practice which as a clinician is paramount.

Personally, Professor Rowe has been a research mentor for me whilst completing a Masters degree in clinical research two years ago. She has provided invaluable support and encouragement as well as the opportunity to develop my skills further through partaking in aspects of her current research and that of her Phd students. I am currently involved in data collection at Whiston hospital for the PAVE study, and we are hoping to be involved in further studies going forward. Professor Rowe is also going to support me again to complete a research study as part of a Clinical Doctoral Research Fellowship Award next year, should I be successful at obtaining funding. This is something that I would never have aspired to without Professor Rowe's ongoing support and encouragement of research by clinical staff.

I look forward to working further to improve the trust's research capacity and to learning more from Professor Rowe and her team in the future, to improve the clinical care that we can provide.

Rachel Bates
Advanced Orthoptist
Lead for Stroke and Neuro Services