

Chrizanne van der Merwe

Expert Witness
Occupational Therapist

Surrey



Professional Background

Chrizanne van der Merwe is an Occupational Therapist with ten years of clinical experience specialising in hand therapy and upper limb rehabilitation. Her practice has focused on the assessment, treatment and rehabilitation of individuals with acute and chronic hand, wrist and upper limb conditions across acute hospital and musculoskeletal outpatient settings. She has extensive experience managing fractures, dislocations, amputations, burns, tendon injuries and nerve injuries, alongside chronic and acquired conditions including osteoarthritis and repetitive strain injuries. Her expertise encompasses both surgical and non-surgical rehabilitation pathways. Chrizanne has significant experience in the post-operative management of upper limb conditions, including rehabilitation following elective upper limb surgery such as finger and thumb joint replacements. She also has experience delivering rehabilitation following injection therapy and managing complex upper limb dysfunction requiring specialist assessment, splinting, exercise prescription and functional rehabilitation.

Chrizanne has worked with patients presenting with complex pain conditions following upper limb injury, including Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS), as well as individuals requiring long-term rehabilitation following trauma. Her practice frequently involves detailed functional assessment, treatment planning and ongoing review to optimise upper limb function, independence and participation in daily activities. In addition to her upper limb expertise, she has experience working with older adults with dementia and Alzheimer's disease and supporting patients experiencing anxiety and depression alongside physical injury and rehabilitation needs. Throughout her career she has worked within multidisciplinary environments, collaborating closely with orthopaedic consultants, hand therapists and wider healthcare teams to develop and implement effective rehabilitation programmes. Her role has included recommending care packages to social care services where required as part of discharge planning and supporting patients through complex rehabilitation pathways.

Chrizanne maintains her professional expertise through ongoing continuing professional development and regular engagement with specialist hand therapy education. She has completed accredited hand therapy training and regularly participates in professional discussions and learning activities with orthopaedic consultants and specialist colleagues to ensure her practice remains aligned with current evidence and best practice. Chrizanne is fully trained in the Civil Procedure Rules, including relevant revisions as they arise.

Specialisms

- Hand therapy
- Upper limb rehabilitation
- Tendon injuries
- Nerve injuries
- Fractures and dislocations
- Upper limb amputations
- Burns rehabilitation
- Osteoarthritis
- Repetitive strain injuries
- Post-operative rehabilitation
- Splinting and orthotic intervention
- Functional assessment
- Pain management
- Musculoskeletal rehabilitation
- Dementia and Alzheimer's disease
- Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS)

Age group

- Adults



Career history

- Expert Witness 2026 - Present
Harrison Associates
- Private Bank Hand Therapist March 2026 - Present
St Antony's Hospital
- Occupational Therapist IDT October 2025 - Present
Royal Surrey Hospital
 - Managing a caseload of patients referred for IDT assessment, treatment and management within the multi-disciplinary team / community.
 - Assisting in the management of the specialist team providing, developing and planning an Occupational Therapy service to patients for this client group.
- NHS Hand Therapist March 2023 – October 2025
Queen Mary's Hospital
 - Assessing, diagnosing and treating outpatients with acquired, traumatic and chronic hand, wrist and elbow conditions in the MSK department including referrals from QEH fracture clinic.
- NHS Bank Hand Therapist July 2024 - October 2024
St Mary's Hospital
- NHS Rotational Occupational Therapist August 2022 – March 2023
Northwick Park Hospital
- Locum Hand Therapist January 2022 – August 2022
Various, South Africa
- Medico-legal Service Provider January 2020 – December 2021
Work Health OT, South Africa
- Hand and Vocational Therapist January 2018 – November 2019
Karin Weskamp OT, South Africa
 - Managing a caseload of adults and children with acute, chronic or congenital hand conditions in a complex, high-pressured and demanding practice, working directly with surgeons and other members of a multidisciplinary team and often travelling between branches of the practice. Carrying out hand therapy interventions, including manual therapy techniques, therapeutic handling and the use of specialist equipment including patient education and advice, exercise prescription, wound, scar and oedema management, fitting of custom-made static, dynamic and neoprene splints and pressure garments as well as fitting off -the shelf splints.
- Owner: Private Paediatric Practice April 2016 – December 2017
Chrizanne Buys OT, South Africa
- Grade 1 Occupational Therapist January 2016 – December 2017
Witbank Hospital, South Africa
- Community Service Occupational Therapist January 2015 – December 2015
Bethal Hospital, South Africa

Qualifications

- Bachelor's in Occupational Therapy,
University of Stellenbosch, December 2014

Professional Memberships

- HCPC, OT084893
- RCOT, 00106753

