

# SPOTLIGHT ON...

## Claire Sharpe Lecturer in Care of the Individual with a Spinal Injury

**What did you do before you became a lecturer and Origin trainer?**

“ I worked as a paramedic in Shropshire, where I’m from, then diversified into Health and Safety and then first aid training through St John’s Ambulance. In 2015 I joined Michael and Annie to form the new Origin PA training team. ”

**How has your experience influenced the course?**

“ My skills are on the medical and training side, which with Michael’s training and experienced PA skills means we cover all angles and make a good team! The introduction of the Care Certificate led us to a revamp of the course, making it more practical, hands on and job specific. We focus on best practice in all aspects of being a PA. Being a live in spinal injury PA is a unique job which requires an individualised training course like the one we have developed at Origin. ”



We are currently looking to take the course to the next level; focusing even more on the practical skills required as well as the theory of spinal injury. Based at L&MC means we have access to all the training equipment we need; wheelchairs, beds, hoists and even body part mannequins so the training will be as hands on as possible. ”

**What do you wish everyone knew about spinal injury?**

“ There is still a person behind the disability, one who knows their own mind. There is no one-size fits all – everyone is an individual with specific needs, aspirations, challenges. ”

**What is the most challenging part of your role?**

“ I’m amazed by the language skills of the PAs but sometimes I struggle expressing and explaining the medical terminology. ”

**What are the best and worst things about your role?**

“ Best: It’s always exciting meeting new the PAs and seeing their confidence grow as their skills develop – sometimes there’s a real ‘penny drop’ moment! There’s no better feeling. ”

Worst: Unfortunately, once the induction training course is over I never see the PAs again so I never know how they got on in their new job. ”

**What do you do when you are not working?**

“ I adore relaxing spa days; as a family we enjoy walking; I take my children swimming and to football; and I’m extremely excited about going to see Bruno Mars in concert! ”



NEWS

ORIGIN

# SURVEY RESULTS 2017

Thank you to all those who completed our recent survey. It is important to us that we constantly look at how our services match expectations and needs and address ways to improve what we do to maintain the highest standards of service for all our clients. We have listened to your comments and are already following suggestions and making positive changes. Here we share the survey findings with you and the ways in which Origin is trying to improve.

84%

feel that Origin meets their needs

89%

would recommend Origin

84%

feel that Origin take their views and wishes into consideration

95%

feel that they can give open & honest feedback to their Care Manager

84%

are satisfied or very satisfied with the amount of contact they have with their Care Manager

79%

believe that Origin dealt with queries, complaints or concerns in their ideal timeline if not shorter

## VALIDATIONS

90% of Origin PA's are good. PA's are reliable & well trained in spinal care. Managers are lovely & supportive. Take my views / needs into account

I appreciate there is a balancing act between the needs of the clients and the PA's but find that on some occasions the clients preferences are compromised by Care Managers making regular placements that limit the opportunity to have the preferred PA visit me

My Care Manager is brilliant, she is always approachable, even when I feel there is a delicate matter I trust she will handle it discreetly & efficiently

No problems for 10 years. They are responsive & understanding. Constructive if any problems, on my side & reassuring, not dictating

Staff are friendly and easy to contact. They do their best to match PA to client

Origin is always willing to take our comments on board & if necessary take action

If we do have any problems with the PA's the Care Manager is able to deal with them efficiently

## TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE

**Client suggestion** "More training on wheelchair skills, especially with manual chairs; particularly with respect of kerbs, cracks, stones, mud, grass etc.!"

**Origin:** Origin's Moving & Handling Trainer, Michael Carr has now added to his wheelchair skills part of the training course to include practice pushing chairs across cobbles, grass (mud depending on the weather) and kerbs.

**Client suggestion** "A longer driving test in a big vehicle/van."

**Origin:** Origin has looked at various options for the PA's to be able to use a larger vehicle, unfortunately there are no driving instructors who have large vehicles and are willing to take people for assessments without it being part of driving lessons. There are also no dual control vans that are available for hire in the local area. However, this is an ongoing issue and Origin are committed to trying to find a solution.

**Client suggestion** "More emphasis needs to be made on the fact that this is a live-in job and therefore using mobile phones must be done in their spare time, similarly using computers must be done quietly!"

**Origin:** This is discussed in the training course several times but will now be mentioned more firmly going forward and PA's will be reminded in future with E-Shots.

**Client suggestion** "Send me invoices via email like I receive carer profiles & contracts."

**Origin:** Going forward we will be aiming to email invoices thanks to the new computer system which is being implemented in the near future.

**Client suggestion** "On e-shots I'd like to see different ways of doing things. How different clients adapt & what gadgets they use."

**Origin:** We are currently looking into ways to update the E-shots & provide more up to date information as requested.

Thank you for your suggestions, they help us to keep improving our services to our clients.

# THE LONG WHITE CLOUD

## THE ISLAND OF

Planning a holiday is a large part of the fun but when it's a three week trip to New Zealand it is essential as you want to see EVERYTHING!

Before Gareth Rees travelled 11,500 miles to Auckland, he spent a year planning his trip and saving for a 'miss nothing' adventure that included meeting up with 'tour guide' and ex Origin PA and native of NZ, Tim.

'Whilst Tim was working with me in UK we spent time planning the trip with the benefit of Tim's homeland knowledge and his genuinely brilliant offer to meet up, share driving and act as my tour guide.

My Origin PA, Spyros and I flew out NZ Airlines via Los Angeles. This saved us having to change planes and bother about transferring luggage.

The North Island was great but many of the breath taking beaches were pretty inaccessible for me and a wheelchair. Though Rotoroa with its volcanic scenery and thermal springs was amazing, so too was the north island's Moari heritage centres. We caught a rugby game in Wellington too where I stayed a couple of nights before catching the ferry across Cook Strait to Marlborough Sound and the South Island'.

'To spend 3 weeks in each island would be ideal but more expensive and when I planned the trip I just wanted to see as much of everything as possible in case I never got another chance to go back to NZ. Note to self: start saving now for a return trip!'

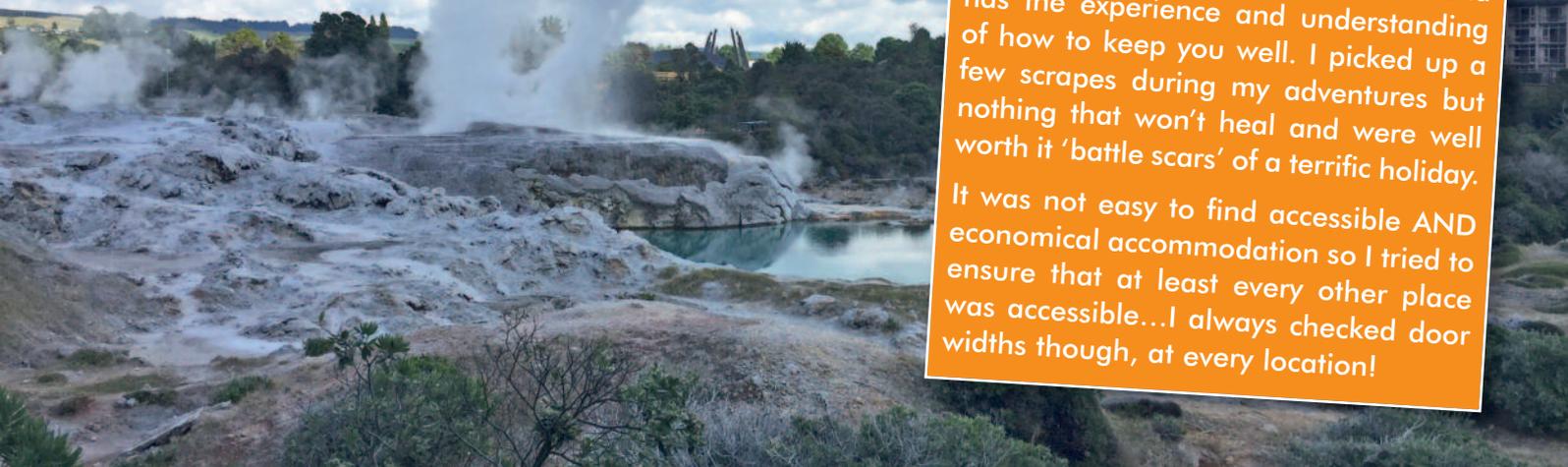
### For others who may be considering this epic holiday.

- A helicopter ride over the Franz Joseph glacier was scheduled but the weather wasn't good enough (be warned). Managed to almost get to the glacier on foot...just beaten by 6 steps to the viewing platform that disappointingly meant I couldn't get a good view of the glacier.
- A 1½hour glider flight was blessed with good weather and awesome! Released at 4000ft and climbing to 9000ft we serenely glided over lakes, rivers, valleys and mountains. Costly but worth it.
- I met up with Aileen, a friend I met through a BackUp course and we went to the hot pools at Lake Tekapo and we floated (with a few floats and aids) looking at the wonderful views looking out over Lake Tekapo and the Two Thumb mountain range.
- Sky diving at Wanaka. As they say 'strap yourself to a beautiful stranger' and freefall from a plane at 6000ft! The 10 second free fall was a massive adrenalin rush... insurance and concerns for my safety meant a longer fall was not practical. I'm used to placing my wellbeing in the hands of others so was strangely unperturbed by the 'my life in your hands' scenario!

### Top Tips...

Make sure you have the best PA, one who, like my PA, Spyros, knows your body well, its challenges and limits and has the experience and understanding of how to keep you well. I picked up a few scrapes during my adventures but nothing that won't heal and were well worth it 'battle scars' of a terrific holiday.

It was not easy to find accessible AND economical accommodation so I tried to ensure that at least every other place was accessible...I always checked door widths though, at every location!



# GRIPPITZ QUAD CUFFS

When a C4/5 spinal injury affected his grip, Origin client Dave Shraga was acutely aware that when handling his wheelchair all his energy was wasted as his hands slipped on the rims. He tore holes in his skin trying to brake down hills and always got mud and dirt all over his hands.

Disappointed with the options in cycling and wheelchair gloves on the market; which were left tattered and destined for the bin after only 2 months, provided no grip in the rain, were difficult to put on and expensive, Dave has, 16 years after his injury, put together the Grippitz Quad Cuff that addresses all these issues.



**TRACTION** grippy, hardwearing rubber gives you traction when pushing on rubber coated push rims or on your tyres. It also helps with transfers - saving your precious energy, allowing you to get more done.



**PROTECTION** the tough leather pad on the back of the cuff protects your hands from the wheels if you brake using the back-handed method.



**SUPPORT** the two strong Velcro tabs keep your Grippitz Cuffs secure and give wrist support.



Pushing, braking, turning – up and down hills – over grass and mud and even in the rain, Grippitz are designed to help save your energy and keep you rolling even in the rain.

Dave says, 'Whether I'm going out to get some exercise in my local park, or heading into town, to the pub, getting on a bus or even transferring in the car, I feel confident that I can do all these things easier and safer with my Grippitz on!'

Check out [www.grippitz.co.uk](http://www.grippitz.co.uk)

## So much experience!

Origin clients appreciate the specialist skills of our PAs, saying it makes a real difference in the care service we offer. How fabulous then to have our latest refresher training course with **SO MUCH** knowledge and experience, all together.

Ondrej started in 2007

Natalija started in 2009

Balazs and Javier started in 2011

Beata started in 2012

Well done PAs and our thanks for your great contribution to our success.

