

# ‘I couldn’t live without mascara, my Kindle and chocolate’



**Sarah Cox** is a dental hygienist and therapist in Crowborough, East Sussex.



**O**n a working day I get up at 5.45 am. On a non-working day it's 7 am, if my three-year-old allows me. I am originally from Hildenborough in Kent but I now live with my husband and our son in Crowborough, a five-minute walk from Ashdown Dental Practice where I work. Before setting off, I eat cereal in the kitchen while watching the news.

I am a qualified dental hygienist and therapist but since having a child, I only work two and a half days a week, as a dental hygienist.

When I was at a school I wanted to be a district nurse or a microbiologist, but then I applied for a trainee dental nurse job after my mother saw an advert. I went into dental nursing intending to become a dental therapist.

I dental nursed for a few years, gaining my dental nursing qualification and dental radiography certificate. I then trained as a dental therapist at the Eastman. I would like to thank Ian Brignall, the dentist who helped me be where I am today.

I work in a team of eight including the new practice owner, an associate, two qualified

dental nurses, one trainee dental nurse, two receptionists and me.

The practice is mixed NHS and private; I see my regular, routine patients and the occasional new patient who hasn't attended for years. The best part of my job is meeting interesting new people every day. The most challenging element of my job is motivating the non-compliant perio patients.

The COVID-19 pandemic was terrible for me financially; it was only May this year that my pay returned to pre-COVID levels. This was due to the fallow periods between patients and numerous appointment cancellations.

On working days, I usually get home at 6 pm. My time outside work is spent reading, doing yoga, eating chocolate and calming toddler tantrums! I also enjoy walking and cooking.

I'm very strict with my son's diet as he has numerous food allergies, so I cook from scratch with a Thermomix. We're all flossers and I brush my son's teeth.

Dentistry wise, I am currently looking into myofunctional therapy [the 'neuromuscular re-education or re-patterning of the orofacial muscles'; orofacial myology includes facial and tongue exercises and

***‘The most challenging element of my job is motivating the non-compliant perio patients.’***

behaviour modification techniques to promote tongue position, increase tongue and jaw range of motion, correct oral breathing, and improve breathing, chewing and swallowing!'] and wondering about its use here in the UK.

The three things I couldn't live without are mascara, my Kindle and of course chocolate! I'm usually in bed by 10 pm.

**Interview by Kate Quinlan**

## Reference

1. Myofunctional Therapy UK. Orofacial Myofunctional Therapy UK. Available at: <https://www.myofunctionaltherapy.co.uk/> (accessed October 2022).

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41407-022-1636-x>