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## PRESS RELEASE

### **CHANGING LIVES: Superdoctor helps toddler walk properly**

A television series featuring a Blackpool surgeon led to an operation that changed the life of a toddler.

An appearance on the BBC 1 series "Superdoctors" brought renowned Consultant Orthopedic surgeon, Mr Steve Mannion, to the attention of Claire Stephens from East Anglia, whose two year old daughter, Keira Jones, suffered from a rare form of club foot affecting her left foot.

Club foot or "Congenital talipes equino-varus" is one of the most common musculoskeletal conditions that affect babies at birth, presenting in 1 in 1,000 births within the UK. It was following on from viewing the programme that Ms Stephens made a call to Blackpool Victoria hospital after one operation and 18 months' treatment in East Anglia had failed to correct her daughter's foot.

During the horrendous winter of 2009, Keira and her family needed to make several 500 mile, 12 hour round trips from Cringleford in Norwich to Blackpool after Mr. Mannion agreed to treat Keira in last November.

Keira's treatments initially involved manipulating her foot and then plaster casting her leg, using a treatment called the Ponseti method. In most children born with clubfoot the Ponseti method completely avoids the need for surgery. In other patients with complicated or unusual patterns of the condition, such as in Keira's case, it compliments surgical treatment resulting in the need for a less extensive operation. This technique, involving weekly manipulation and toe-to-groin plaster casts, encourages the foot to remain in the corrected position in conjunction with gentle manipulative physiotherapy.

Mr Mannion performed corrective surgery upon Keira in January this year, and since then, Keira's has been able to walk correctly with her heel on the ground. Apart from wearing a special foot abduction brace at night and receiving physiotherapy at Victoria Hospital until she is five, Keira has been effectively cured of her condition.

Claire Stephens, Keira's mum, said: "I cannot believe that my chance viewing of the Superdoctors programme has changed the life of Keira and our family. Seeing her walk properly, with her heel to the ground, and her being able to wear normal shoes is amazing!

“I would really like to say massive thank you to Mr Mannion and his team. Although the department is very busy, the team have always treated Keira and the family with respect and dignity, giving her the much need treatment in a friendly, compassionate manner. We would also like to say a huge thank you to Felicity from the physiotherapy team who has supported us right from the beginning.”

Mr Mannion, Consultant Orthopaedic surgeon said: “We are delighted to have been able to treat Keira’s resistant clubfoot here at Blackpool Victoria Hospital. Having been using the Ponseti method since the year 2000 we are now recognised, both nationally and internationally, as a centre of excellence for the treatment of clubfoot. I would particularly like to pay tribute to Felicity Reay and Jayne Ditchfield, senior paediatric physiotherapists, who lead the service”.

Felicity Reay, a Victoria Hospital paediatric physiotherapist who worked with Keria and her family, added: ““We are delighted with the progress she has made in a short period of time. Combining the Ponseti method and Mr Mannion’s surgery has really made a difference to Keira and she is able to walk with her heel to the ground for the first time in her life. She is able to wear normal shoes and run and play as any normal toddler.”



**Above:** Keria Jones as a baby. The club foot condition is clearly visible on her left foot.



**Above:** Keria Jones after Mr. Mannion operated. Note how her foot is straight and her heel is flat on the floor.



**Above:** Felicity Reay, Victoria Hospital paediatric physiotherapist, Keria Jones and her mum Claire Stephens.

**Note to editors:**

Mr Steve Mannion is one the leaders of the Global Clubfoot Initiative, a worldwide project to eliminate the disability of neglected clubfoot deformity. More information regarding his work can be found on [www.feetfirstworldwide.com](http://www.feetfirstworldwide.com) and [www.cbm.org](http://www.cbm.org)

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