

ACE expansion plans – investment will treble manufacturing capacity and create jobs for unique Welsh firm

Backed by £50,000 from the Welsh Government's Growth and Prosperity Fund, the company is investing in new equipment that will treble manufacturing capacity and speed up production time to meet the growing UK wide demand for its services.

The £116,000 total investment will see staff numbers rise from 20 to 30 and also safeguard twelve jobs.

Ace Orthotics, trading as Ace Feet in Motion is based on Sanatorium Road and was established by Bob Cooper in 2001 to provide biomechanical gait analysis using state of the art dynamic pressure plates to help accurately assess movement through the foot and lower limb.

It provides specialist podiatric sports injury biomechanical services to the public and high profile sports associations including the WRU, Disability Sports Wales, Welsh Athletics, Welsh Netball and Cardiff City FC, as well as the NHS. It has also worked very closely with the regional Welsh rugby teams and several Premier League football clubs.

Ace's clinical service is supported by a manufacturing arm that designs and makes all forms of modular and bespoke functional insoles intended to correct an abnormal or irregular gait.

Its lab currently makes around 10,000 pairs of bespoke insoles every year, many manufactured utilising state of the art CAD CAM technology. However, 20% of which have to be made completely by hand as its machinery can currently only make insoles to a depth of 30mm. This investment in new machinery will allow the manufacture of insoles up to 66mm in depth.

Economy Secretary Ken Skates said:

"Ace Orthotics provides a highly specialised and bespoke service and is the only business of its kind in Wales and I am delighted Welsh Government support will help it expand, create new jobs and win new business. The expansion is vital for its long term sustainable growth."

Thomas Cooper, Clinical Director at Ace, said:

"We have seen year on year growth and are experiencing growing demand throughout the UK for our products and need to invest to meet that demand. This investment is absolutely vital to take

advantage of these opportunities and will speed up production, cut costs and enable us to both produce more quality products and win new business.”

Skills and Science Minister, Julie James added:

“Ace Orthotics is a great example of how Wales’ thriving life sciences sector continues to go from strength to strength and I am pleased we have been able to support this company’s ambitious expansion plans in what is a very competitive and cutting-edge UK marketplace.”

In addition to providing specialist podiatry and sports injury biomechanical services Ace also has a specialist footwear centre which is open to the public selling specialist sports footwear and wider fitting comfort footwear.

It has developed its own modular insole range – Feet in Motion insoles (FiMs) as well as Paediatric FiMs which have become the insole of choice for clinicians working with children across the UK. Ace is currently exploring exporting this range across Europe and were part of an extremely successful Welsh Government Life Sciences Trade Mission to the Medica trade fair in Dusseldorf last November.