

Case study



Occupational therapists in social care

Q&A: An experienced OT's perspective at practice level

Anna

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About Anna

Anna is an experienced practice level OT, working full-time in the district team. She has trained and achieved the post-graduate Approved Mental Health Practitioner (AMHP) accreditation and works on a rota, completing two days of AMHP assessments a month and a day where she's on call for backup in case the team need additional capacity.

What are your experiences of career progression as an OT in social care?

I've always wanted to work in mental health because of the varied people I've met in life so far. I met an AMHP social worker years ago and she role modelled what I considered to be good practice.

After my training, I chose to work in physical health as I enjoyed the moving and handling and the major adaptations work. As I've become more experienced, I've taken more complex work, safeguarding, working with people with dementia, complex family dynamics, people who hoard and there are often some mental health aspects to the people I worked with.

The AMHP team have given me excellent feedback and been fully supportive and are a talented team to work with.

What are the enablers to your career progression in social care?

I completed the AMHP course in June 2021, and

I went back for two weeks in September to gain practical experience. I did some assessments with an experienced AMHP beside me and soon the manager told me I was fine to go on my own. It was nice to have that support, in fact the AMHP team support is tremendous.

What are the barriers to your career progression in social care?

I had to progress to the band B experienced level before I could apply to complete the AMHP accreditation and had three different managers during that time. I asked about becoming an AMHP and was told no, but I wouldn't take no for an answer. My OT manager said it wasn't for OTs, but a few years later a social work manager agreed. The course was six months, and whilst there was funding available for backfill, there was no one recruited to do my work. The team were too polite to complain, they just got on with covering my work. I did miss my OT role and team.

Where do you see your career in five years' time?

I'm happy doing what I'm doing now; it took long enough to get here and it's still new. I enjoy working the two very different roles and like meeting people and having conversations about how I can enable and support them. I prefer to be hands on out in the field and feel that the only way to progress in social care is to be a line manager; I wouldn't be suited to this at this point.