

COVID-19 impact on occupational therapy in the UK

What our survey participants said

Royal College of
Occupational
Therapists



1,500

occupational therapy professionals and students from all four UK nations took part in the survey.



27%

fully working or studying from home.



EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

14% of participants experienced impact on their academic, educator and researcher roles.

45% of them said remote education and research was delivered online or via video.

98%

of participants said the pandemic impacted their role, responsibilities and duties.



22%

affected by workplace closure.

33%

were redeployed to another team.

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

Role expanded due to reduction in staff availability for 20% of participants.

18% taking on new leadership and management responsibilities.

Increase in non-practice-focused tasks and projects for 26%.

27% had current projects put on hold whilst 27% saw new projects begin.

49% experienced constraints on approaches to working. 32% reported a lack of clarity about their role and 33% had reduced access to support, supervision or mentorship.



NEW AND INNOVATIVE WAYS OF WORKING FOR 64%.

51% learning new skills.

35% developing new care pathways and guidelines.



SERVICE DELIVERY

60% were providing an alternative method of service delivery, such as remote service delivery.

70% said services were delivered differently due to considerations about practitioner safety and cross-contamination.

47% said considerations about PPE were affecting service delivery.

32% had to learn new skills such as IT skills in order to keep working.



CASELOADS

Reduction in routine caseloads for 40% of participants and new referrals for 30%.

25% were working with different groups of people compared to normal caseloads.

23% were no longer seeing people who access services directly.

38% said people on routine caseloads were seen less frequently.

58% said people were receiving remote therapy by telephone consultations and 44% said by online or video consultations.

WELLBEING

46% of participants reported negative impacts on personal health and wellbeing.

50% found work-life balance harder to maintain.

31% had time management difficulties.



The pandemic has also led to positive changes that 63% would like to continue in the future.