

2025 RCOT Membership fees – AGM paper

Recommendation to BAOT members

The BAOT Council recommends that members **vote to approve the presented resolution:**

The members resolve by way of ordinary resolution to authorise Council to implement the following changes to subscription fees for membership categories in 2025–26 (1 October 2025 to 30 September 2026):

- Full professional – increase by £1.11 a month (4.5% increase)
- Newly registered – decrease by £6.50 a month (35% discount for first two years of registration)
- Associate – increase by £0.66 a month (4.5% increase)
- Self-employed and Overseas – increase by £0.83 a month (4.5% increase)
- Career break – increase by £0.76 a month (4.5% increase)
- Associate Apprentice – increase by £0.23 a month (4.5% increase)
- Student – increase by £0.15 a month (3% increase)
- Retired – increase by £0.19 a month (3% increase)

Legal/regulatory implications

Under the BAOT Articles of Association, members must sanction fee changes at a General Meeting.

Strategic alignment

Membership fees are by far the most significant source of income for RCOT and underpin RCOT's financial sustainability and our ability to continue to provide a broad range of high-quality members services. Our fee income is not only invested in the provision of services, publications, event and learning, but also our strategic work to develop and position the profession effectively, now and into the future.

Member / stakeholder implications and considerations

As mentioned above, the majority of RCOT income – 87% – comes from membership fees. Members will be aware of the challenge of inflation and rising prices over the past few years and the impact they have had on their workplaces as well as on their personal budgets. RCOT has also been impacted by these rising costs. While Council has ensured that member fees were shielded from inflationary pressures for a number of years and recognise that these cost of living challenges remain, it is no longer possible to keep fees at pre-inflation levels. Council have carefully considered our options, balancing member needs with the need for financial sustainability of the organisation.

Executive summary

To ensure we can continue delivering high-quality support and services and continue our strategic work to support and develop the profession Council is proposing an increase to BAOT membership fees from October 2025. This follows years of rising inflation and only one small fee increase, of 1.5% since 2017. Members will be invited to vote on the proposed changes at the AGM in June 2025.

For most members, the proposed rise is 4.5%, representing an increase of £1.11 more a month for Professional members. This rise is proposed for each category, with the exception of Students, Retired Members and Newly Qualified members.

The proposed rise for Students and Retired Members is 3%, representing an increase of 15p a month and 19p a month respectively.

Recognising the challenge that Newly Qualified members face in their transition from study to employment, along with entry level salaries, we propose to decrease the fee for this category by 35%, representing a saving of £6.50 a month.

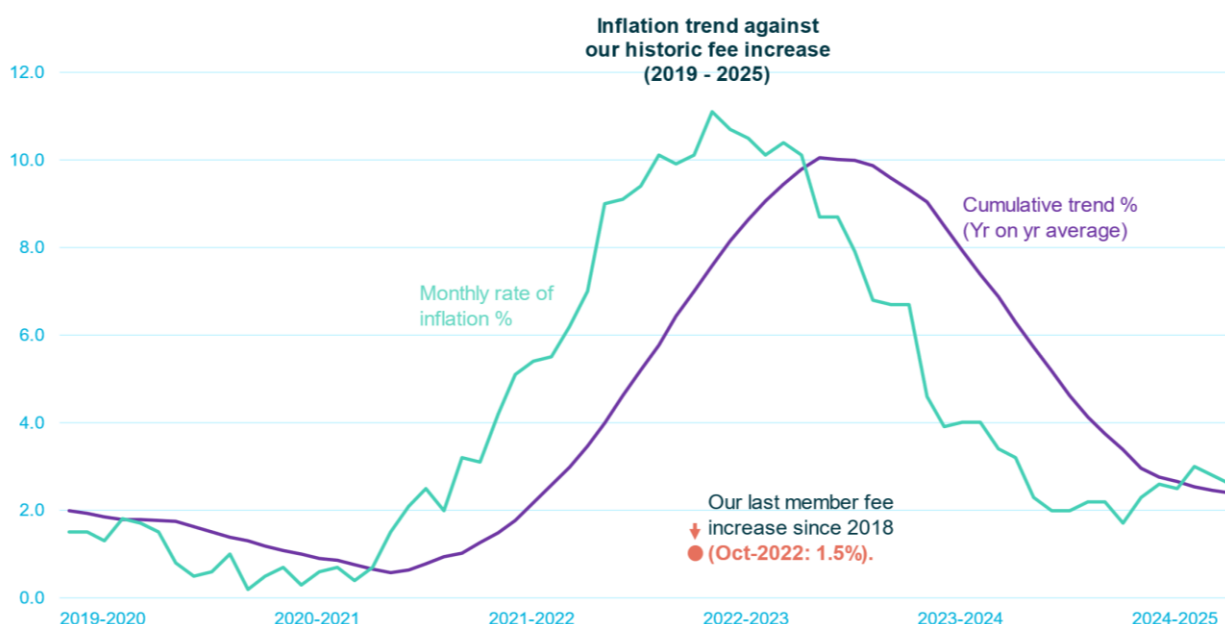
To support our members who may be experiencing financial difficulty, RCOT has launched several new benefits, including a 30% parental leave discount and increased funds to support members facing financial difficulty.

We remain committed to offering excellent value, advocating for the profession and supporting occupational therapists across all career stages. Members can vote at the AGM on 17 June in Edinburgh or by proxy. Voting by proxy means appointing someone who is attending the AGM to vote on your behalf. You can appoint either the Chair or another person attending the AGM. You can do this either online or by post.

Details of how to vote by proxy will be emailed to you directly by Civica.

1. Challenging financial conditions

In the last seven years we've only raised members fees once, by a modest 1.5% in October 2022, which was below the inflation rate at that time. Since then, our fees have remained the same despite inflation averaging 8.1% between October 2022 and September 2023, and 3.6% and 3.4% in the following years.



Source: Inflation data - Office for National Statistics

We've deliberately chosen to shield members from these inflationary pressures, because we're aware of the pressures facing OTs. However, this approach isn't sustainable in the long-term if we want to continue to develop and deliver your membership services.

2. Balancing fairness and financial sustainability

We understand that any changes to fees can be concerning, especially during an ongoing cost-of-living crisis. Like all organisations, we face market pressures and have worked hard to balance financial sustainability with affordability, offering fairness through discounts and concessions to our membership.

We're proposing changes to fees because:

- we want to continue providing excellent value and support through your membership, advocating on your behalf and raising the profile of occupational therapy, all while continuing to improve your benefits and services.
- we aim for our membership fees to reflect the evolving occupational therapy workforce and to offer fairer options to members going on parental leave
- we strive to make it easier and more accessible for early career OTs to stay connected and inspired with their profession
- we can't continue to shield members from inflationary rises without it impacting our services

We know that engaging with occupational therapists early, and providing them with a

meaningful and valuable experience, means they are much more likely to stay with us throughout their careers.

However, our research and ongoing discussions with members have identified some key trends that we would want to address with our approach to membership subscriptions.

2.1 Early careers and new signups

Retaining newly registered occupational therapists in their first year is our greatest determinant to retaining them into full professional growth. What we are finding is that our newly registered members are the most likely category to lapse/resign and this is often due to cost. Since the beginning of the 2024 annual cycle, we have lost 17% of this group. Another concerning trend is that students who receive free membership are 70% more likely to lapse their membership when they transition to newly registered.

Currently we offer a 25% discount for newly qualified OTs in their first year of professional membership.

2.2 Hardship support

Each year we have received between 100 – 120 applications for our hardship fund and we know this is important to support those most in need.

2.4 Retirement

The feedback we receive from our retired community is that we don't current offer enough and that we need to explore opportunities for how we can better support this group.

2.5 Members on parental leave

During 2024 we lost 144 members who could no longer afford the fees due to being on parental leave. Currently we don't offer a concession for members who are taking parental leave.

3. Proposed changes to fees

After discussing and debating a range of options, Council recommends the changes below to fees to BAOT members, effective from 1 October 2025.

Category	2022 - 2025 fees (year/month)	2025 – 2026 fees (year/month)	Percentage change	Yearly difference	Monthly difference
Professional	£297.19/£24.77	£310.56/£25.88	+4.5%	£13.37	£1.11
Self-employed	£223.02/£18.59	£233.06/£19.42	+4.5%	£10.04	83p a month
Newly registered	£223.02/£18.59	£144.96/£12.08	-35% for two years	-£78.06	-£6.50
Associate	£174.17/£14.51	£182.01/£15.17	+4.5%	£7.84	66p
Overseas	£223.02/£18.59	£233.06/ £19.42	+4.5%	£10.04	83p
Associate apprentice	£61.56/£5.13	£64.33/£5.36	+4.5%	£2.77	23p
Student	£61.56/£5.13	£63.41/£5.28	+3%	£1.85	15p
Career break	£202.92/£16.91	£212.05/£17.67	+4.5%	£9.13	76p
Retired	£73.69/£6.14	£75.90/£6.33	+3%	£2.21	19p

In summary, these changes would see an increase of £1.11 a month for Professional members and as little as 15p a month for Students. Reflecting on the challenges we know that Newly registered members face they would pay £6.50 less each month in fees.

As well as the fees outlined above, Council also propose:

- a 30% discount for members taking parental leave for one year
- to increase the hardship fund up to £20,000 and widen access to support members struggling financially to stay connected with their profession.

4. Giving you more for your membership

Despite the pressure on costs, we're always working to improve your experience and benefits, helping you grow in your career and drive positive change for the profession and the people you support. Over the past year we've introduced a number of new benefits:

- a personalised CPD portfolio to showcase your growth and support audit preparation
- RCOT Communities, a community engagement platform, where you network and learn based on your region, practice area, career level or professional interests
- an upgraded digital version of *OTnews* so you can read the latest developments and insights on any device, on the go
- a more user-friendly website with a brand-new Resource Centre making it easier to access your exclusive member-only resources.

5. How do other professional organisations compare?

In this same three-year period during which we haven't increased fees, others have, including the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). Some organisations raise their fees year on year.