

Innovation Seed Funding call

Supporting occupational therapy innovation for prevention, early intervention and community-based support.

We are seeking to support occupational therapists with new ideas that focus on prevention, early intervention and community-based support.

We want to support projects that not only test new ways of working but also generate valuable evidence about the unique contribution of occupational therapy to improving outcomes for people, communities and health and care systems.

We are particularly interested in innovations that help us better understand how occupational therapists can support people to live well, remain independent, and stay connected to their communities.

What are we looking for?

Successful applications will demonstrate how occupational therapy contributes to one or more of the following areas:

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- preventing deterioration, crisis or hospital admission
- providing earlier intervention before needs escalate
- strengthening community capacity and resilience
- supporting people to remain connected to and participate in their communities.

Projects should clearly show how the proposed work aligns with these ambitions and the difference it is expected to make.

Innovation

We are looking for projects that test something genuinely new or apply an existing approach in a new context.

A key expectation of this funding programme is that innovations are developed with, not just for, the people and communities they aim to support. Applications should clearly describe how people with lived experience, community organisations or local partners have been involved in shaping the proposed project.

Scalability and transferability

We are keen to fund projects that have the potential to influence occupational therapy practice beyond a single setting or locality.

Applicants should consider:

- how the innovation could be sustained beyond the funding period
- whether the approach could be adopted in other settings or communities
- what learning could be shared with the wider occupational therapy profession.

We recognise that not every project will be ready for large-scale implementation, but we are looking for ideas with clear potential to inform future practice.

Building the evidence base

A core aim of this funding call is to strengthen the evidence base for occupational therapy's contribution to neighbourhood health, prevention and community-based support. We encourage applications that address an important evidence gap and help answer questions that matter to the profession, service leaders and policymakers.

Applications should explain:

- what is known about the occupational therapy contribution in this area
- what's the evidence gap and why is this important
- how the proposed project will help generate new learning or evidence.

We are interested in projects that produce practical, useful insights which can be shared and applied across the profession.

What will a strong application demonstrate?

Strong applications will:

- address a clear prevention, early intervention or neighbourhood health challenge
- demonstrate a meaningful role for occupational therapy
- show genuine innovation
- evidence involvement of people and communities in shaping the project
- identify a significant evidence gap
- describe how learning and evidence will be captured and shared
- show potential for wider adoption, learning or impact beyond the pilot site and their plans for sharing their learning.

Through this programme, we hope to identify and support innovations that not only improve outcomes locally but also build the evidence needed to advance occupational therapy's role in community-based support and prevention across the UK.