Draft Professional Development Framework

For the occupational therapy workforce
3rd edition

This is a draft version of the framework for consultation by members.

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Part A: Professional Development Framework overview

Section 1: Introduction

Aims of this section:
- Introduce the Professional Development Framework
- Define what the Professional Development Framework is and isn't
- Explain how equity, diversity and belonging (EDB) underpins it
- Describe who the Framework is for

The Professional Development Framework supports every member of the occupational therapy workforce with continuous learning, development, reflection and growth throughout their career. It provides a structure for career-long development, helping practitioners meet HCPC standards, identify and undertake meaningful continuing professional development (CPD) to maintain safe and effective practice. It also supports workforce planning and service redesign and can be used by operational managers and strategic leaders to ensure they have the right workforce to meet the needs of the populations they serve.

The Framework is a self-assessment tool that helps practitioners identify where they are now and where they want to get to across capability statements for each level of practice, supporting individuals to identify and develop occupationally focussed capabilities throughout their careers.

The framework is not a competency framework; it doesn't need sign off and it's not linked to pay bands or promotions.

Relevant to all members of the occupational therapy workforce, the Framework has been kept

intentionally broad, in recognition of the breadth and depth of occupational therapy practice. It encourages every person using the Framework to apply their own lens, consider what each capability statement means to them in their role and context and identify examples they have to evidence that they meet it. Overall, it reinforces concepts that are widely relevant to us all and that ground our practice, including our unique occupation-centred professional identity, regardless of our role, level of practice or work environment.

It supports occupational therapists, learners and the support workforce to build the capabilities required to deliver impact at practitioner, service and population levels, while enabling workforce planning to meet current and future needs. Through articulating the value and impact of occupational therapy practice across all levels of practice, the Framework also supports individuals, teams and organisations to evidence the profession's essential contribution to the health and care workforce.

Equity, diversity and belonging (EDB) sits at the heart of this Framework. It underpins the Framework and is a dedicated foundation of practice, supporting ongoing growth, reflection and action. EDB shapes how we practice, lead, learn, develop others and contribute to our profession. By viewing every aspect of professional development through an EDB lens, we can create more equitable opportunities, value diversity in all its forms, and foster environments where everyone feels respected, included and able to belong, learn and develop. This is fundamental to achieving the best outcomes for individuals, communities and the profession. It supports the occupational therapy workforce to remain truly occupation-focused, inclusive and impactful throughout our career journeys, ensuring we can meet the needs of the people we work with and communities we serve now and in the future.

This Framework has evolved from and replaces the Career Development Framework (second edition, 2021). Feedback from members, via a formal review in 2025, highlighted opportunities to strengthen and further develop the Framework. This feedback has informed the design of this updated version. Further information about the review and development process can be found in the appendices.

Who is the framework for?

The framework is for:

The occupational therapy workforce

Use as a reflective self-assessment tool to guide professional learning and development, support reflective conversations including supervision and help plan your career growth.

Managers and employers

Invest in staff development, support career-long learning, help retain talent within the workforce and inform role profiles.

It’s also of interest to:

- **People, family and carers who use services** – know what's expected of professionals who work with you, and the importance of continuous learning for quality of the service.
- **Commissioners** – know what's expected of professionals who work with you, and the importance of continuous learning for quality of the service.

- **Higher education institutes (HEIs)** - inform curricula and proactive planning of ongoing learning ahead of learners transitioning into professional roles.

Section two: The framework at a glance

Aims of this section:
- Outline the key components and structure of the Framework

How is it structured?

The framework has:

4 pillars of practice → **5** foundations of practice → **6** levels of practice

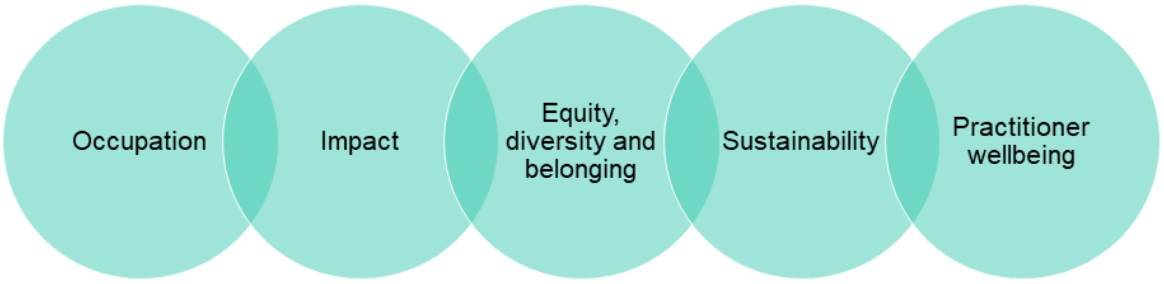
Pillars of practice

The four pillars of practice are integrated throughout this Framework because career-long professional development and growth depends on developing capabilities across all them.

Professional practice | Facilitating learning | Leadership and management | Research and innovation

Foundations of practice

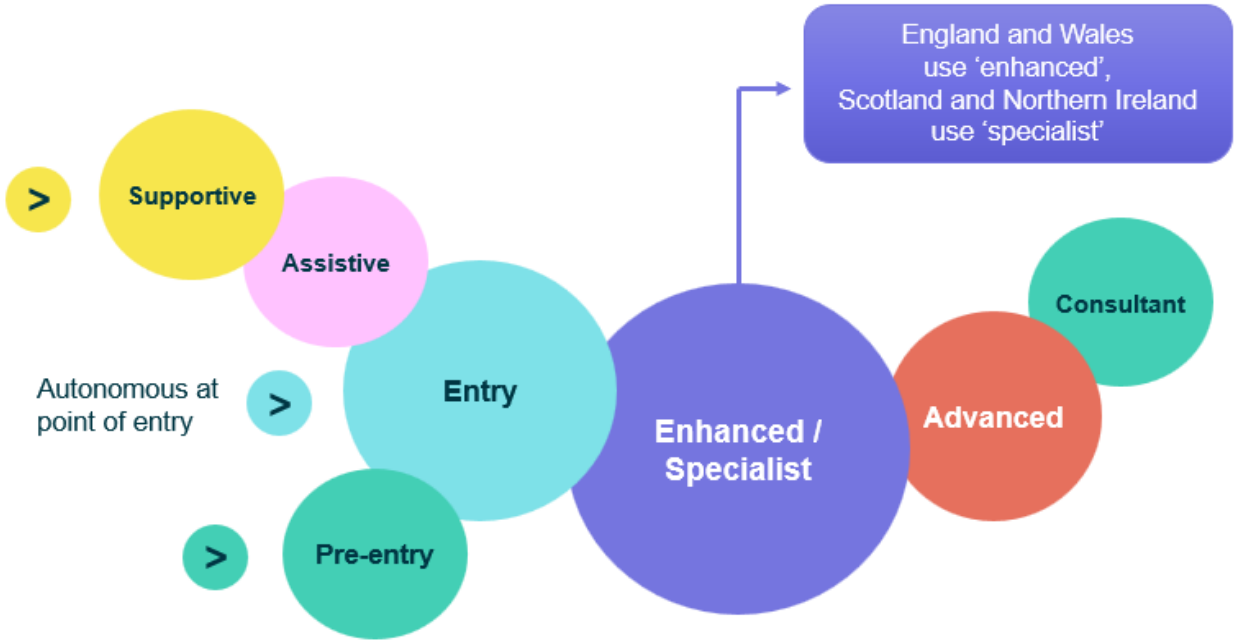
The five foundations of practice represent the core concepts that underpin professional growth throughout an occupational therapy career. They provide the grounding for capability development across all levels of practice and all four pillars of practice



Levels of practice

The six levels of practice describe the increasing breadth of influence, degree of autonomy and complexity of practice demonstrated by a practitioner, regardless of role, setting or length of experience. Although not a regulatory requirement, the levels provide a framework for development throughout a career journey.

Supportive → Assistive → Entry → Enhanced → Advanced → Consultant



(adapted from HCPC, 2026)

Section three: The Professional Development tree

Aims of this section:
- Introduce the Professional Development Tree, which gives the framework a visual identity
- Show how the Framework is aligned with person, environment and occupation

The image of a tree is the easiest way to show how the different parts of the Framework come together, and how this draws on existing occupational therapy theory. You'll notice synergy with the PEO occupational therapy model of practice and in short, different parts of the tree represent the following things:

- Roots and soil: the foundations of practice that provide conditions for growth and ground our continuous development. (ENVIRONMENT)
- Trunk: the person using the framework is central to it, with all four pillars of practice around them. (PERSON)
- Branches: the integrated, multi and cross directional pillars of practice
- Leaves: the learning activities that people choose to meet their goals and progress to later levels of practice (OCCUPATION)
- Landscape: the broad roles, settings and sectors that we work across

The Professional Development Tree

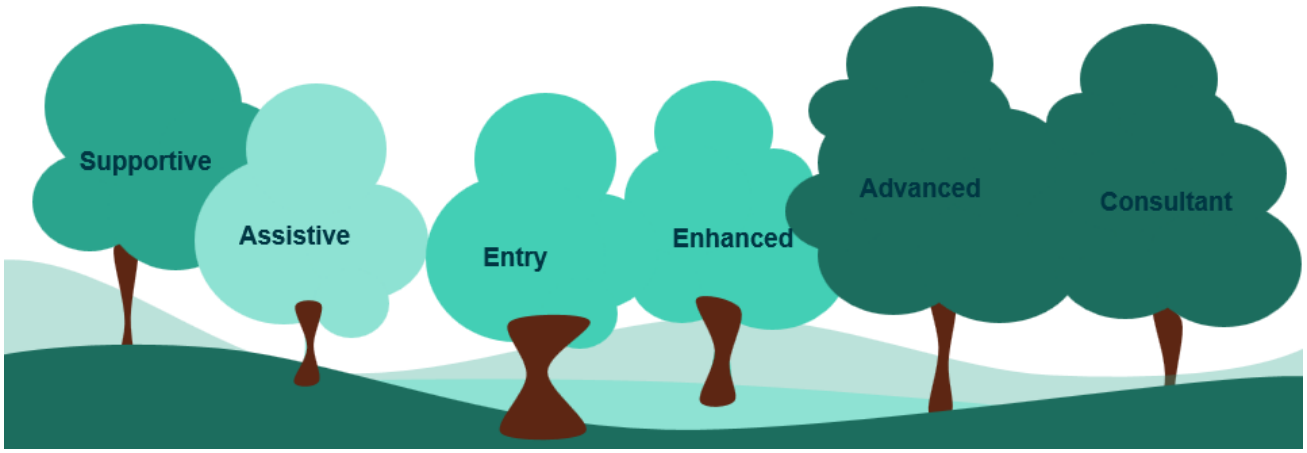


Leaves and branches (the occupations): the different directions, experiences and learning activities that people choose to meet their goals, build their capabilities and progress to later **levels of practice.**

Tree trunk (the person): the person using the framework, growing and developing across all four **pillars of practice** surround them.

Roots and soil (the environment): The **foundations of practice,** providing the conditions for growth and ground our continuous development.

There is some overlap between levels of practice and every person's career trajectory looks different across the diverse roles, settings and sectors that we work across. Over time, with experience and continuous learning, the branches and leaves on our tree become more concentrated.



Section four: Professional Development and regulation

Aims of this section:

- Highlight the link between professional development and professional standards
- Explore professional development cross cutting themes such as scope of practice, digital capability, professional authority and patient safety.

Professional development is an expectation for the whole occupational therapy workforce and a regulatory requirement for registered occupational therapists. Throughout their careers,

occupational therapists must maintain and develop their knowledge, skills and professional capabilities to practice safely, effectively and within their evolving scope of practice. The process of identifying learning needs, developing new capabilities and reflecting on their impact is not separate from HCPC requirements; it is fundamental to maintaining registration, ensuring public protection and delivering high-quality occupational therapy across a career. HCPC standards apply to registrants at all levels of practice.

HCPC standards of proficiency and RCOT professional standards for practice, conduct and ethics

Alongside RCOT's Professional Standards for Practice, Conduct and Ethics (RCOT, 2026), the HCPC's Standards of Proficiency for Occupational Therapists (HCPC, 2024) set out the knowledge, skills, behaviours and professional expectations required for safe and effective practice. While these standards define the threshold requirements for registration, occupational therapists are expected to maintain and develop their proficiency throughout their careers as their roles, responsibilities and scope of practice evolve.

The standards require occupational therapists to:

- Practice safely, effectively and within their scope of practice.
- Use professional judgement and evidence-informed decision-making.
- Recognise the limits of their knowledge and seek support when required.
- Communicate and work effectively with others.
- Promote inclusion, person-centred practice and equality.
- Manage risk appropriately.
- Contribute to leadership, service improvement and quality of care.
- Demonstrate professionalism, integrity and ethical practice.

The Professional Development Framework supports occupational therapists to build on these foundations and continue developing their capability throughout their career.

HCPC standards of continuing professional development (CPD)

Continuing professional development (CPD) is the primary way occupational therapists maintain and develop their professional capability throughout their career. Through CPD, practitioners keep their knowledge and skills up to date

HCPC registrants must engage in ongoing CPD and be able to demonstrate that their learning:

- Is continuous and recorded.
- Includes a range of learning activities.
- Is relevant to current or future practice.
- Improves the quality of practice and services.
- Benefits the people and communities they serve.

CPD is more than attendance at courses or the collection of certificates. It includes any learning activity that contributes to professional development. Occupational therapists are expected to reflect on their learning and demonstrate how it has informed their practice.

Who are ‘service users’?

HCPC CPD Standard 4 requires occupational therapists to demonstrate how their professional development benefits their service users. Service users may include individuals, families, carers, communities, colleagues, students, services, organisations or populations, depending on the practitioner's role and context. Identifying who your service users are helps you focus learning on areas that will have the greatest impact and demonstrate how CPD contributes to improved outcomes, experiences, quality and safety. For many occupational therapists they’ll have different

types of service user, for example, patients they work with, team members they lead or learners they support.

Did you know? Using and mapping yourself into the Professional Development Framework count as a CPD activity. Remember to record evidence of this in your CPD portfolio.

Growing scope of practice through learning

Expanding scope of practice involves:

- Identifying learning needs and development goals.
- Building the knowledge, skills and confidence required for new areas of practice.
- Accessing learning, supervision, coaching or mentorship.
- Demonstrating competence before practising independently.
- Reflecting on the impact of learning on practice and outcomes.

Through this approach, occupational therapists can safely and confidently expand their scope of practice, develop new areas of expertise and increase their contribution to individuals, communities, services and populations. As practice evolves, practitioners remain accountable for recognising the limits of their competence, seeking appropriate support and ensuring that professional development is translated into safe, effective and evidence-informed practice.

Professional authority, responsibility and spheres of influence

Professional authority, responsibility and spheres of influence recognise that occupational therapists contribute at different levels and in different contexts throughout their careers. Their influence may be direct, through work with individuals, families and communities, or indirect, through leadership, education, research, service development, policy and system-wide improvement.

As professional authority increases, so does accountability for decision-making, leadership, quality improvement and professional standards. Occupational therapists are expected to use professional judgement within their scope of practice, take ownership of their ongoing development and be accountable for the impact of their actions on people, services and outcomes. Understanding your sphere of influence helps practitioners recognise where they can lead change, advocate for occupational participation and contribute to improvements in practice, services and systems (Stuart and Henstock, 2025).

Patient safety, duty of candour, governance and quality assurance

Safe, effective and person-centred practice is a core expectation across all levels of the Professional Development Framework. Occupational therapists are expected to contribute to a culture of patient safety, quality improvement and professional accountability by identifying and managing risk, responding appropriately to patient safety incidents, implementing learning from investigations and improvement plans, and supporting the delivery of safe, high-quality services.

Practitioners should demonstrate the principles of duty of candour through openness, honesty and compassionate communication when things go wrong, while using governance, quality assurance and quality improvement processes to evaluate and enhance practice. In doing so, they contribute to organisational learning and continuous improvement, recognising how their individual actions influence the safety and quality of care.

This aligns with HCPC Standards of Proficiency, including maintaining high standards of personal and professional conduct (6.5), participating in quality assurance, quality improvement and governance activities (7.7), and maintaining the safety of service users, carers and others (9.3). As

capability develops, occupational therapists progress from contributing to established safety and governance processes to leading improvement, influencing systems and fostering cultures of openness, learning and continuous quality enhancement.

Digital capability

Digital capability is an essential enabler of contemporary occupational therapy practice. This includes the confident, critical and ethical use of digital technologies, data and emerging digital technologies including artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance professional practice, service delivery, learning, research, leadership and quality improvement. Across all levels of practice, occupational therapists should demonstrate digital literacy and exercise professional judgement when using digital technologies and AI, recognising their benefits, limitations and potential risks, and ensuring their use remains safe, inclusive, evidence-informed and person-centred.

This Framework should be read alongside relevant digital capability frameworks and professional standards, including the HCPC Standards of Proficiency and national Allied Health Professional digital capability frameworks for example:

- HCPC Standards of Proficiency (particularly standards 6.5, 7.7 and 9.3 on digital technologies, information management and maintaining records).
- Health Education England (2020) Development of a Digital Competency Framework for Allied Health Professionals.
- Department of Health Northern Ireland (2022) All-Ireland Digital Health Capability Framework for Health and Social Care.
- HCPC (2024) Year in Registration Survey findings regarding safe and effective use of AI.

Key take away: Maintaining HCPC registration, engaging in CPD, expanding scope of practice, exercising professional responsibility, contributing to patient safety and using digital technologies safely are not separate expectations. They are interconnected aspects of professional development.

Section five: Educational levels of attainment

Aim of this section:
- List examples of qualifications that might be expected at each level of practice

Level of practice	Qualifications that *might* be expected at this Level of practice
Supportive	• Maths and English (GCSE, standard grades or equivalent) • Relevant vocational qualification at Level 2 (or willingness to work towards one) • Evidence of learning, development and experience gained through education, employment or other activities
Assistive	• Maths and English (GCSE, standard grades or equivalent) • Relevant vocational, further or higher education qualification at Level 3-4 • Education or training relevant to occupational therapy or healthcare support practice • Evidence of ongoing learning and development

Entry	• Diploma, Degree, Honours Degree, Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma or Master's (pre-registration) in Occupational Therapy • Registration with the relevant professional regulator where required
Enhanced	• Pre-registration Occupational Therapy qualification (Diploma, Degree or Master's) • Evidence of continuing professional development • Postgraduate study or specialist learning relevant to role and scope of practice
Advanced	• Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and/or Postgraduate Master's level study • Advanced or specialist professional development relevant to area of practice • Ongoing postgraduate learning and development encompassing the four pillars of practice
Consultant	• Postgraduate Master's degree and/or Doctorate • Significant postgraduate study and advanced professional development • Evidence of strategic, professional, research, education or practice leadership development

Part B: The RCOT Professional Development Framework

How to use the framework



Before you start..

How to self-assess effectively?

When using a professional development framework, it is important to approach self-assessment with honesty, curiosity and critical reflection. The Dunning-Kruger effect describes a cognitive bias where people who are relatively new in their careers may overestimate their competence because they are unaware of the full scope and complexity of a skill, while those with greater expertise may underestimate their abilities. Recognising this bias can help us avoid making assumptions about our level of development and instead use framework descriptors, feedback, reflection and evidence to build an accurate picture of our strengths and areas for growth. By developing greater self-awareness and critical reflexivity, we are better able to identify meaningful development goals and plan CPD activities that address genuine learning needs, support career progression, and continuously improve our professional practice. You can map yourself into the Framework on your own or with support from others. A colleague, supervisor, mentor or critical friend who knows your work well can help you reflect on your strengths, challenge your assumptions and provide valuable feedback to support an accurate self-assessment. Self-assessment and evaluation counts as a CPD activity, remember to record your use of the framework, your reflections and professional development plans in your CPD portfolio.

Step one: Understand the levels, foundations and pillars of practice

Before mapping yourself, familiarise yourself with the structure of the Professional Development Framework. Read the descriptors for the levels

of practice, foundations of practice and pillars of practice to understand how the framework is organised and what each element represents. Consider how these descriptors relate to your current role, responsibilities and scope of practice. This will help you apply the capability statements consistently and identify the level that best reflects your current development.

Levels of practice descriptors:

Each level of practice reflects the increasing breadth and depth of knowledge, skills, autonomy, complexity of decision-making, leadership, and influence on practice, services and systems. (Adapted from the NHS England Multi-professional Framework for Advanced Practice, the NHS Education for Scotland (NES) NMAHP Development Framework, and the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council (NIPEC) Levels and Pillars of Practice Framework). Practitioners should use their professional judgement to determine their level of practice by considering their capabilities and scope of practice against relevant professional and career development frameworks.

Supportive	Individuals working at the supportive level contribute to occupational therapy services through practical, administrative, technical or support roles. They work within clearly defined boundaries and support the delivery of safe, effective and person-centred practice.
Assistive	Individuals working at the assistive level undertake delegated activities and interventions under appropriate supervision. They are developing occupationally focused knowledge and skills and contribute to service delivery while recognising the limits of their role and responsibility.
Entry	Individuals working at the entry level practice autonomously as registered occupational therapists. They integrate professional knowledge, skills, values and judgement to deliver safe and effective occupational therapy services, contribute to team objectives and engage in ongoing professional development.
Enhanced	Individuals working at the enhanced level demonstrate developed expertise within one or more areas of practice. They manage increasing complexity, support others' learning and development, contribute to quality improvement and service development activities, and use evidence to inform practice.
Advanced	Individuals working at the advanced level demonstrate high levels of expertise across clinical practice, leadership, education and research. They influence practice beyond their immediate role, lead improvements in services and outcomes, develop workforce capability and contribute to the evidence base for occupational therapy.
Consultant	Individuals working at the consultant level are recognised as leaders within the profession and wider health and care system. They shape strategy, policy, education, research and service transformation through nationally recognised expertise, contributing significantly to the development of occupational therapy and population outcomes.

Foundations of practice descriptors (letters in brackets denote coding used in the capabilities):

The five foundations of practice represent the core concepts that underpin professional growth throughout an occupational therapy career. They provide the grounding for capability development across all levels of practice and all four pillars of practice

Occupation (O)	Occupation is the unique focus and contribution of occupational therapy. It encompasses the everyday activities and roles that people need, want, choose and are expected to do, and through which they experience health, wellbeing, identity, belonging and participation in society. Occupational therapists apply occupational thinking across practice, leadership, education, research, workforce development and service transformation. As the profession's unique contribution, occupation provides the lens through which all professional development within this Framework is understood and applied. (Adapted from WFOT, 2025; RCOT, 2021).
Impact (I)	Impact is the ability to create, demonstrate, evaluate and communicate the value of occupational therapy through evidence-informed practice, evaluation, research and innovation. It involves understanding, measuring and articulating how occupational therapy improves outcomes, influences change and advances health, wellbeing, participation, inclusion and occupational justice for individuals, groups and populations across all areas of practice. (Council for Allied Health Professions Research, 2019; NHS Education Scotland, 2021; World Federation of Occupational Therapists, 2019, Royal College of Occupational Therapists, 2021).
Equity, diversity and belonging (EDB)	Equity, diversity and belonging recognises that people's identities, experiences, circumstances and needs shape their opportunities, participation and outcomes. Occupational therapists actively value diversity, identify and address barriers and adapt opportunities, environments and resources to achieve equitable participation. They foster inclusive cultures in which everyone is seen, welcomed, respected, valued, and heard and able to participate as their true authentic selves. Grounded in occupational perspectives, EDB advances participation, wellbeing, inclusion, a sense of belonging and occupational justice for individuals, communities, the profession and its workforce. (Adapted from RCOT EDB Strategy, 2023; WFOT Position Statement: Occupational Therapy and Human Rights, revised 2019).
Sustainability (S)	Sustainability is the ability to create and maintain occupational therapy services, systems and ways of working that deliver lasting value for people, communities and populations. It involves balancing environmental responsibility, economic viability, workforce wellbeing and service effectiveness to ensure high-quality, equitable care can be delivered now and in the future. (Centre for Sustainable Healthcare, 2022; NHS England, 2022; United Nations, 2022; HEIW & Social Care Wales, 2020;

	Department of Health Northern Ireland, 2016).
Practitioner wellbeing (PW)	Practitioner wellbeing is the ability to create, maintain and promote the conditions that enable occupational therapists and teams to thrive. It includes supporting physical, psychological, emotional and professional wellbeing; fostering psychologically safe, inclusive and compassionate workplaces; and enabling resilience, learning, belonging and sustainable careers. Practitioner wellbeing recognises that occupational therapists' ability to support the health, wellbeing and occupational participation of others depends on their own wellbeing, resilience, belonging and sustainable professional development. (HCPC, 2024; World Health Organisation, 2022; HEIW & Social Care Wales, 2020; Department of Health Northern Ireland, 2024; NHS England, 2023; NHS England, 2026).

Pillar of practice descriptors

The four Pillars of Practice are used widely across the UK, including within multiprofessional frameworks. In the context of occupational therapy, the following descriptors are used:

Professional practice	• Maintain occupation at the centre of practice • Deliver safe, effective, person-centred and ethical practice • Use professional judgement and evidence-based critical reasoning to make decisions
Facilitating Learning	• Inspire, teach, mentor, supervise and/or assess others • Facilitate practice-based and work-based learning • Access, create and evaluate contemporary learning environments, methods, tools and materials
Leadership and Management	• Identify, monitor and enhance own and others' knowledge, skills and ways of thinking • Lead, guide and/or facilitate teamwork • Influence, design, plan and implement professional and/or organisational change
Research and Innovation	• Access, evaluate and implement evidence to inform practice • Initiate, design, participate in and disseminate research • Engage with and influence broader socio-economic and political agendas

Step two: Map yourself into the framework

For each foundation of practice, there are capability statements which show progression across levels of practice as well as integration of the pillars of practice. Read through the capability statements and consider them in the context of your role, responsibilities and practice setting. Reflect on the evidence and examples from your own work, then identify the level of practice that best describes your current level of

development that you have evidence and examples to support. To map yourself to a capability statement, you should be able to demonstrate that capability and all preceding capability statements. If you cannot yet evidence the earlier statements, select the highest statement that you can consistently demonstrate.

To do this, you need to apply your own lens

As you work through the Framework, remember that capability can be demonstrated in many different ways. Your lived experience, professional journey, role, work setting, areas of practice, and personal interests will all influence how you interpret and evidence the capability statements.

There is no single way to demonstrate each capability. Consider how your individual context, experiences and aspirations influence the way you interpret, evidence and develop each capability statement within the framework. Use the questions below to support your reflections:

Understand your context

What aspects of my current role most influence how I practise as an occupational therapist?

What populations, communities or service users do I work with?

How does my work setting shape the opportunities and challenges I encounter?

What responsibilities do I hold that may not be reflected in traditional occupational therapy roles?

What unique experiences, skills or perspectives do I bring to my practice?

Draw on lived and professional experience

Which of my personal or lived experiences have shaped how I understand occupation, health, participation and inclusion?

How have my career journey and previous roles influenced my current capabilities?

What experiences have had the greatest impact on my professional development?

How do my values influence how I interpret and demonstrate this capability?

In what ways do I use insights from lived experience, whether my own or others', to inform my practice?

Occupation

Level of practice (across)	Supportive	Assistive	Entry	Enhanced	Advanced	Consultant	Relevant pillars of

Capability (below)							practice
O1 - Occupation centred practice: Applies occupational therapy knowledge, skills, reasoning and evidence to enable participation in meaningful everyday occupations. Understands and addresses the dynamic interaction between people, their environments and their occupations, using occupation as both a means and an outcome of practice. Works collaboratively with people, families, carers, communities and populations to remove barriers and create opportunities for participation and meaningful outcomes, supporting health, wellbeing and occupational justice.	Supports participation in meaningful everyday occupations as directed, recognising the importance of people's choices, routines and environments for participation, health and wellbeing.	Supports engagement in meaningful occupations within delegated responsibilities and adapts approaches to meet individuals' preferences, strengths and cultural contexts.	Applies occupational therapy reasoning to assess person–environment–occupation interactions and collaboratively plan, implement and evaluate interventions that enable meaningful participation and support health and wellbeing	Manages increasing complexity in person–environment–occupation interactions, adapting approaches to remove barriers and enable meaningful participation. Supports colleagues to strengthen occupation-centred practice.	Uses advanced occupational reasoning, a high level of autonomy and complex decision making to analyse and influence systems, services, workforce and delivery models, ensuring practice addresses occupational needs and barriers to meaningful participation across populations and communities.	Shapes strategic and professional developments that advance occupation-centred practice, occupational justice and population wellbeing at organisational, regional, national and /or international level.	Professional Practice Leadership and Management Facilitating Learning Research and Innovation
O2 - Facilitating learning through occupation: Uses occupation as both the focus and medium of learning, enabling individuals, learners, teams and communities	Participates in learning activities that develop understanding of occupation and its importance	Consistently applies occupation-focused approaches in practice and contributes to others' learning	Facilitates learning through meaningful occupation within practice settings. Supports	Leads learning opportunities that strengthen occupation-centred practice. Supports learners,	Develops learning cultures that embed occupational thinking across teams, services,	Provides strategic leadership for occupation-based learning across organisations, systems and the	Facilitating Learning Professional Practice Leadership

to develop knowledge, skills, confidence for participation. Facilitates learning that strengthens and advances understanding of person–environment–occupation interactions and the application of occupational thinking to remove barriers and enable meaningful participation.	for health, wellbeing and participation. Shares experiences and learns from others to support inclusive and occupation focused practice.	through observation, reflective discussion, and shared experiences. Recognises the role of occupation in supporting the learning and development of individuals with diverse needs and backgrounds.	learners and individuals to understand and apply occupational perspectives and how person–environment–occupation interactions affect participation while adapting approaches to meet diverse learning needs.	colleagues and teams to integrate occupational thinking into decision-making, service delivery and professional development.	systems and professional communities or networks. Influences occupationally focussed learning, development, practice and workforce capability.	profession. Shapes educational policy, standards and workforce development to advance occupational therapy's distinct contribution.	and Management Research and Innovation
O3 - Leading through occupational thinking: Demonstrates leadership that champions participation in meaningful everyday occupations as the goal of occupational therapy. Uses occupational thinking to influence decisions and enable people, teams, services and systems to address occupational deprivation, remove barriers and create equitable opportunities for participation, supporting health and wellbeing.	Champions and can explain the importance of occupation to health and wellbeing and contributes to inclusive approaches that support participation for diverse individuals.	Promotes meaningful occupational participation within delegated routine responsibilities, shares observations about barriers and adapts approaches to meet the needs, preferences and circumstances of individuals from diverse backgrounds.	Uses occupational thinking to influence decisions within own practice, advocating for equitable opportunities for participation and inclusion.	Leads local initiatives that address barriers to meaningful participation and supports colleagues to use occupational thinking to improve access, inclusion and occupational outcomes.	Influences service design and workforce capability through occupational leadership, addressing systemic and environmental barriers to equitable participation across communities and ensuring services address the diverse occupational	Provides strategic leadership for occupation-centred systems, influencing policy, workforce development and service transformation to improve occupational justice and population wellbeing.	Leadership and Management Professional Practice Facilitating Learning

					needs of communities.		
O4 Advancing occupational knowledge: Finds, appraises, uses and develops real world data and research evidence that advances the understanding of occupation, person–environment–occupation interactions and what enables meaningful participation. Contributes to the development of new knowledge that strengthens the profession's unique and distinct contribution to participation, health, wellbeing and occupational justice.	Shows curiosity about occupation, asks questions and seeks opportunities to learn about occupational therapy, occupational participation and their impact.	Shares observations, experiences and insights that contribute to learning, service evaluation, improvement and the development of occupational knowledge.	Uses data and critically appraises the evidence base to inform and strengthen occupation-centred practice, and evaluate participation outcomes. Identifies opportunities to contribute to and co-create projects, evaluations or improvement activities.	Contributes to research, evaluation, improvement and the sharing and application of learning that advances understanding of occupation, occupational participation and occupational therapy across teams, services or professional communities.	Enables and influences research, improvement, and the use of evidence and learning to improve occupational therapy practice and occupational outcomes across services, organisations or systems.	Shapes occupational therapy research agendas, knowledge development and innovation priorities, that address meaningful participation, occupational deprivation and occupational justice, influencing professional knowledge, policy and practice nationally and/ or internationally.	Research and Innovation Professional Practice Facilitating Learning Leadership and Management

Impact

Level of practice (across) Capability (below)	Supportive	Assistive	Entry	Enhanced	Advanced	Consultant	Relevant pillars of practice
I1 - Evidence-informed practice and outcomes: Integrates evidence, professional expertise, lived experience, data	Recognises how their contribution influences outcomes,	Gathers feedback and data to support continuous practice	Critically applies evidence, outcome measures and professional	Critically appraises evidence, uses data to improve practice and	Leads strategic, evidence-informed service development and evaluation,	Generates, synthesises and mobilises evidence to influence	Professional Practice Research

and evaluation to deliver safe, effective and person-centred practice. Demonstrates impact through measurable outcomes, continuous improvement and the generation and application of knowledge.	experiences and impact.	improvement and contribute to positive outcomes and impact.	reasoning to inform decision-making, evaluate interventions and improve impact for people and populations.	leads or contributes to evaluation and improvement activities that demonstrate impact.	demonstrating measurable improvements in outcomes, quality, experience and value for decision-makers.	professional practice, policy and service transformation across regional, national and / or international systems.	and Innovation Leadership and Management
I2 - Learning for improvement and excellence: Facilitates learning, reflection, evaluation and knowledge exchange to improve outcomes, experiences, quality and effectiveness for individuals, communities, services and populations. Supports a culture of continuous improvement and evidence-informed practice.	Is open to feedback and engages in reflection and learning activities to improve performance. Shares observations that may contribute to service improvement and better outcomes.	Uses feedback and reflective learning to improve practice. Contributes ideas and observations that support service improvement and enhanced outcomes.	Uses reflection, evidence and evaluation to improve practice and support learning in others. Contributes to quality improvement and shares learning that enhances outcomes and experiences.	Designs and delivers learning activities that support improvement and innovation. Uses evaluation and evidence to identify development needs and improve practice, services and learner outcomes.	Creates learning cultures that support continuous improvement, innovation and evidence-informed practice. Uses outcome and evaluation data to shape workforce development and service improvement.	Influences educational strategy, professional development and system-wide learning to improve quality, outcomes and population impact. Generates and mobilises knowledge that informs practice and transformation.	Facilitating Learning Research and Innovation Leadership and Management Professional Practice
I3 - Leading for improvement and impact: Leads and influences continuous improvement across practice, services and systems to enhance experiences, outcomes, quality and value.	Contributes to positive outcomes, recognising how their role supports the experiences, participation	Supports the delivery of high quality services by gathering feedback, recognising variation in experiences and outcomes, and	Uses evidence, professional judgement and feedback to evaluate the impact of practice on individuals, groups and	Leads defined improvement initiatives within an area of practice, using evidence, data and stakeholder perspectives to	Leads strategic improvement across teams, pathways or services, using evidence, evaluation and quality improvement	Shapes and influences system-wide improvement through strategic leadership, innovation, evaluation and the generation of	Leadership and Management Research and Innovation

	and wellbeing of individuals and communities. Identifies and shares opportunities for improvement while valuing diverse perspectives and experiences.	contributing to local improvements. Uses reflection and feedback to enhance their own contribution to equitable and effective practice.	communities. Demonstrates accountability for outcomes, contributes to quality improvement activities and takes action to address inequities that affect participation, access or experience.	enhance quality, experience and outcomes. Evaluates the effectiveness of changes and supports colleagues to use outcome-focused approaches that reduce unwarranted variation and promote equity.	methodologies to achieve measurable impact. Influences decision-making through analysis of outcomes, experience, workforce and population data, ensuring improvements address the diverse needs of communities and reduce inequalities.	evidence. Demonstrates and communicates impact at organisational, regional, national and / or international level, influencing policy, investment and service transformation to improve outcomes, occupational participation and population health while advancing equity and social value.	Professional Practice
I4 Innovating for improvement and impact: Generates and applies new knowledge, innovation and evaluation to improve experiences, outcomes, quality, safety and population wellbeing. Demonstrates the contribution of occupational therapy to meaningful and measurable change.	Identifies opportunities to improve experiences, outcomes and quality within own practice, with support.	Contributes ideas, feedback and learning that support innovation and improvement within teams and services.	Uses evaluation, evidence and improvement methods to strengthen practice and contribute to measurable change.	Enables innovation and improvement activities across services, supporting others to use evidence and evaluation to improve outcomes.	Influences improvement across services and organisations through innovation, evaluation and knowledge mobilisation.	Shapes system-wide innovation and transformation through strategic research, evaluation and improvement activity that influences policy and practice.	Research and Innovation Leadership and Management Professional Practice

Equity, diversity and belonging

Level of practice (across) Capability (below)	Supportive	Assistive	Entry	Enhanced	Advanced	Consultant	Relevant pillars of practice
EDB1 - Equitable occupational therapy practice: Delivers culturally responsive and inclusive occupational therapy practice that recognises diversity, addresses inequities and promotes occupational justice. Works in partnership with individuals and communities to identify and address environmental, societal and systemic barriers, improving equitable access to and experience of occupational therapy and opportunities for participation in meaningful everyday occupations.	Demonstrates respectful and inclusive behaviours and recognises the importance of treating people fairly and with dignity.	Adapts communication and support to meet diverse needs and recognises barriers that may affect participation in meaningful everyday occupations and seeks support to address them.	Provides culturally responsive and person-centred practice that promotes equitable participation and addresses individual barriers, enabling equitable participation in meaningful everyday life.	Uses evidence, reflection and feedback from people and communities to identify and address inequities in access, experience and meaningful occupational participation within an area of practice.	Influences service design and delivery to reduce barriers, inequalities and improve opportunities for meaningful occupational participation and health and wellbeing outcomes for underserved populations and communities.	Shapes policy, professional standards and system approaches that address structural inequity, promote occupational justice and enable equitable participation, to improve population health and wellbeing.	Professional Practice Leadership and Management Facilitating Learning Research and Innovation
EDB2 - Inclusive learning and development: Creates equitable, inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments	Demonstrates respect for diversity and contributes positively to inclusive	Adapts communication and support to meet diverse learning needs. Recognises	Facilitates inclusive learning experiences that recognise individual	Leads initiatives that improve accessibility, inclusion and belonging within learning	Develops and influences inclusive learning, development and workforce	Shapes organisational and professional approaches to equity, diversity and belonging	Facilitating Learning Leadership and

where all individuals can belong, contribute and develop. Facilitates learning that values diverse experiences, addresses barriers and promotes equitable opportunities for participation and achievement.	learning environments where others feel welcomed and valued.	barriers to participation and seeks support to address them.	strengths, identities and circumstances. Promotes equitable participation and responds appropriately to bias or exclusion.	environments. Supports colleagues to develop culturally responsive educational approaches.	systems that reduce inequities in access, participation and achievement for diverse learner and workforce groups.	within learning and workforce development. Influences policy, standards and strategic programmes that address systemic inequities.	Management Professional Practice
EDB3 - Leading inclusively: Creates cultures where diversity is valued, cultural intelligence is developed, inequities are recognised and addressed, and all people are enabled to participate, contribute and belong. Uses leadership influence to challenge discrimination, address barriers, promote equitable opportunities for participation in everyday occupations inclusion and improve equitable experiences and outcomes for individuals, communities, teams and populations.	Recognises and respects individual differences, treating people fairly and with dignity. Demonstrates inclusive behaviours, values diverse perspectives and contributes to creating environments where people feel welcomed, safe and able to participate.	Actively adapts their approach to meet the diverse needs of individuals and communities. Recognises when barriers to participation, access or inclusion exist and seeks support to address them. Contributes to a culture of belonging within teams, services and professional communities.	Promotes equitable and inclusive practice through everyday professional decision-making. Identifies and addresses potential bias, advocates for individuals experiencing disadvantage and takes action to support equitable access, participation and outcomes.	Leads initiatives that improve inclusion, accessibility and equity within teams or areas of practice. Supports colleagues to develop culturally responsive and inclusive approaches and uses feedback and data to identify and address inequities.	Influences workforce, service, organisational development, professional culture or community leadership to improve equity, diversity and belonging. Uses population, workforce and service data to identify disparities and leads action to reduce inequities in experience, access and outcomes.	Provides strategic leadership for equity, diversity and belonging across organisations, systems and the profession. Influences policy, culture, workforce strategy and service transformation to address structural inequities and improve outcomes for diverse populations.	Leadership and Management Professional Practice Facilitating Learning
EDB4 - Inclusive	Values	Supports	Contributes to	Actively	Leads inclusive	Influences	

research and innovation: Promotes equitable, inclusive and culturally responsive approaches to research and innovation. Ensures diverse voices, lived experience and underrepresented perspectives contribute to knowledge generation, implementation and innovation. Addresses barriers to involvement and advances understanding and action on inequities in meaningful occupational participation, health and wellbeing.	diverse perspectives and recognises that different experiences contribute to learning and improvement.	inclusive participation in research, improvement, innovation, evaluation or service development activities.	co-creation activities, working in partnership with people, families, carers and communities within research, innovation and knowledge generation, identifying and addressing barriers to their involvement and helping shape research, innovation and knowledge generation around the participation outcomes that matter to them.	involves patients, the public, carers and communities in the co-creation of research and innovation activities that seek to understand and address inequities affecting occupational participation, health and wellbeing.	research and innovation initiatives that address inequities in meaningful occupational participation, health and wellbeing, sharing influence over priorities, design and implementation with diverse communities.	research agendas, innovation strategy and policy to advance equity, diversity, belonging and occupational justice at organisational, regional, national and / or international level.	Research and Innovation Professional Practice Facilitating Learning Leadership and Management

Sustainability

Level of practice (across) Capability (below)	Supportive	Assistive	Entry	Enhanced	Advanced	Consultant	Relevant pillars of practice
S1 - Sustainable and future-focused practice: Delivers occupational therapy practice that promotes prevention and early	Uses resources responsibly and contributes to safe, efficient and sustainable ways of	Identifies opportunities to improve efficiency, reduce waste, and strengthen preventative and	Uses digital and emerging technologies including generative AI, evidence and professional	Implements innovative approaches that improve prevention, early intervention, efficiency,	Leads service redesign and transformation that promotes prevention and early intervention,	Influences strategic planning, policy and innovation to embed prevention and early	Professional Practice Leadership and Management

intervention, supports sustainable use of resources, embraces innovation and technology, and responds to current and future population needs. Contributes to the long-term sustainability of services, the workforce and the profession.	working that support prevention and early intervention.	early intervention approaches within service delivery.	judgement appropriately to support effective, sustainable, person-centred, preventative and early intervention practice.	access and sustainability while maintaining quality and safety.	while balancing quality, equity, workforce needs, digital innovation and environmental sustainability.	intervention and ensure the long-term sustainability of occupational therapy services and the wider health and care system.	Research and Innovation Facilitating Learning
S2 - Developing a sustainable workforce: Contributes to the sustainability of occupational therapy through workforce development, succession planning, practice education, knowledge sharing and career development. Supports the growth of current and future practitioners, educators, researchers and leaders.	Takes responsibility for their own learning and development and contributes to sharing knowledge within the team.	Participates in learning activities that support workforce development and shares knowledge, skills and experiences with colleagues.	Contributes to practice education, supervision and learner development. Supports the growth of future occupational therapy professionals and the wider workforce.	Leads workforce development activities such as supervision, practice education, induction programmes or career development initiatives. Supports workforce retention and capability building.	Influences workforce planning and educational development across services. Develops learning opportunities that support succession planning, talent development and future workforce needs.	Provides strategic leadership for workforce development across organisations, systems and the profession. Influences educational strategy, career pathways and long-term workforce sustainability.	Facilitating Learning Leadership and Management Professional Practice
S3 - Leading for the future: Leads sustainable approaches to	Uses resources responsibly and contributes to safe, efficient	Supports sustainable working practices within own role	Applies sustainable principles in professional	Leads defined initiatives that improve sustainability	Influences service and workforce planning	Shapes strategic approaches to sustainability across	Leadership and Management

workforce, services and resources, balancing current needs with long-term health, social, environmental and organisational impact. Promotes innovation to support future health and wellbeing.	and environmentally conscious ways of working. Recognises how everyday actions can influence the sustainability of services and communities.	and team. Identifies opportunities to reduce waste, improve efficiency and contribute to environmentally and socially responsible service delivery.	decision-making, considering the longer-term impact of actions on people, services, communities and resources. Participates in improvement activities that promote sustainable outcomes.	within practice or service delivery. Evaluates the impact of changes on outcomes, resources, access and environmental sustainability while supporting colleagues to adopt sustainable approaches.	through sustainable and future-focused leadership. Balances quality, equity, resource stewardship and environmental considerations when designing and implementing improvements across teams and services.	organisations, systems and the profession. Influences policy, innovation, workforce development and service transformation to promote long-term environmental, social, economic and population health sustainability.	Research and Innovation
S4 - Innovating for sustainable futures: Uses research, improvement, innovation and emerging digital advancement to develop sustainable approaches to occupational therapy, workforce development and service delivery. Generates and applies knowledge, evidence and solutions that respond to future health, care, workforce, environmental and	Demonstrates openness to new ideas, technologies and ways of working that improve effectiveness and sustainability.	Shares suggestions, feedback and learning that support improvement, efficiency and sustainable ways of working within teams and services.	Explores and applies improvement, digital developments and evidence-informed approaches that improve practice, service delivery and sustainability.	Contributes to the implementation, evaluation and spread of innovative, technology-enabled or sustainable approaches across teams, services or professional communities.	Enables and influences digital development and sustainable improvement activities that strengthen accessibility, workforce capability, efficiency and outcomes across organisations or systems..	Shapes strategic improvement, digital transformation and research priorities that influence the future sustainability of occupational therapy, health and care systems, and the wider workforce.	Research and Innovation Leadership and Management Professional Practice Facilitating Learning

societal challenges.							

Practitioner wellbeing

Level of practice (across) Capability (below)	Supportive	Assistive	Entry	Enhanced	Advanced	Consultant	Relevant pillars of practice
PW1 - Professional resilience and compassionate practice: Maintains professional resilience, self-awareness and ethical practice while fostering psychologically safe, compassionate and supportive relationships. Balances personal wellbeing with professional responsibility to provide safe, effective and sustainable care.	Demonstrates professionalism, maintains occupational balance, seeks support appropriately and contributes positively to team wellbeing and working relationships.	Uses reflection and feedback to support own wellbeing, learning and professional development.	Maintains professional competence and wellbeing through reflective practice, supervision and continuing professional development.	Demonstrates highly developed self-awareness and resilience when managing increasing levels of complexity and supports the wellbeing and development of colleagues.	Creates environments that support practitioner wellbeing, professional growth, retention and psychologically safe practice. Actively promotes diversity of people, opinions, backgrounds and abilities.	Influences workforce culture, professional standards and strategic developments that promote wellbeing, compassion and sustainable professional practice. Fosters inclusive cultures that value diversity of people, perspectives and experiences, encouraging constructive challenge and professional debate.	Professional Practice Facilitating Learning Leadership and Management
PW2 - Reflective learning and professional growth: Uses	Supports own personal wellbeing, learning and	Uses feedback, supervision and reflection to identify learning	Engages in supervision, reflective practice and	Facilitates reflective learning, supervision and	Creates cultures that promote reflective practice,	Shapes professional learning cultures across	Facilitating Learning

reflection, supervision, feedback and lifelong learning to support wellbeing, resilience, professional identity and ongoing development. Creates learning environments that enable people to thrive, adapt and grow throughout their careers.	development and seeks feedback when needed.	needs and enhance confidence, resilience and performance.	lifelong learning to maintain competence, wellbeing and professional development. Supports reflective discussions with colleagues and learners.	professional development activities that support growth, wellbeing and resilience in others.	professional curiosity, wellbeing and continuous learning. Supports professional development and career progression across practice settings, services and professional communities.	organisations and systems. Influences approaches to lifelong learning, supervision, professional identity and workforce wellbeing across the profession.	Professional Practice Leadership and Management
PW3 - Leading healthy workplaces: Promotes environments where people can thrive, supporting wellbeing, psychological safety, professional growth and compassionate leadership. Creates conditions that support sustainable performance, learning and high-quality care	Contributes positively to team culture. Treats others with kindness, respect and professionalism.	Supports the wellbeing of colleagues through positive working relationships, effective communication and inclusive behaviours. Recognises factors that may affect wellbeing and escalates concerns appropriately.	Maintains personal resilience and professional wellbeing while contributing to psychologically safe and supportive team environments. Recognises the impact of workload, culture and inclusion on wellbeing and acts appropriately to support others.	Leads activities that improve team wellbeing, engagement and learning. Supports colleagues through supervision, feedback and development conversations and contributes to cultures that promote psychological safety, equity and belonging.	Creates environments that support wellbeing, inclusion, professional development and sustainable performance while addressing factors that contribute to inequity or burnout.	Provides strategic leadership for workforce wellbeing across organisations, systems and the profession. Influences policy, culture, workforce strategy and leadership development to create healthy, inclusive and thriving workplaces.	Leadership and Management Facilitating Learning
PW4 - Innovating for thriving	Recognises the factors that	Participates in activities that	Applies evidence,	Contributes to evaluation,	Enables and influences	Shapes policy, research,	Research

professionals: Generates and applies knowledge that enhances workforce wellbeing, professional fulfilment, belonging and career sustainability. Contributes to innovation that supports healthy, inclusive and thriving professional communities.	support wellbeing, belonging, learning and professional fulfilment, and shares feedback and experiences that contribute to positive working and learning environments.	support own, colleague, team and professional community wellbeing, learning, inclusion and workplace culture.	reflection and improvement approaches to support workforce wellbeing, learning, development and career sustainability within practice.	research or improvement activities that strengthen workforce experience, wellbeing, belonging and retention across teams, services or professional communities.	initiatives that improve workforce wellbeing, belonging, career development and professional sustainability across organisations and systems.	innovation and strategic workforce development that influences workforce wellbeing, professional sustainability and the future occupational therapy workforce nationally or internationally.	and Innovation Facilitating Learning Leadership and Management Professional Practice

Step three: Build your professional development plan

Use this template to record your current level of practice for each capability, note down evidence and examples to support, develop goals to support areas for further development and plan meaningful CPD activities.

Capability statement	Current level of practice	Evidence and examples that demonstrate my current capability	What's my professional development goal?	What CPD activities can I do to meet my goal?	How will I know I have achieved my goal?	When will I review my progress?
O1						
O2						
O3						
O4						
I1						
I2						

I3						
I4						
E1						
E2						
E3						
E4						
S1						
S2						
S3						
S4						
P1						
P2						
P3						
P4						

Part C: Further information

Section 1: References

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Section 2: Resources

During the development phase of this Framework, our aim has been to ensure clear alignment with

the expectations set out in the following documents:

a. Health Education England (2021) AHP Support Worker Framework
b. NHS Education Scotland (2022) Development and Educational Framework for Level 2-4 NMAHP Healthcare Support Workers
c. RCOT (2026) Learning and Development Standards for Pre-registration Education
d. Health and Care Professions Council (2023) Standards of Proficiency – Occupational Therapists (as a benchmark for entry level expectations)
e. Institute for Apprenticeships and Technology (2023) Enhanced Clinical Practitioner Apprenticeship Standard
f. NHS England (2025) Multiprofessional Framework for Advanced Practice (which supersedes the HEE (2017) Multiprofessional Framework for Advanced Clinical Practice)
g. NHS England (2023) Multi-professional Consultant-level Practice Capability and Impact Framework
h. Health Education and Improvement Wales (2023) Professional Framework for Enhanced, Advanced and Consultant Clinical Practice in Wales
i. NHS Education Scotland (2021) Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professions (NMAHP) Development Framework
j. NHS England (2026) NHS Leadership and Management Framework
k. British and Irish Orthoptic Society (BIOS) (2025) Professional Development Framework
l. Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) (2026) Professional Development Framework

Other documents that have been considered appropriate to broadly align with, and specifically signpost for further, more detailed information include:

a. RCOT (2026) Professional Standards for Practice, Conduct and Ethics.
b. Council of Deans of Health (2023) AHP Educator Career Framework
c. NHS Education Scotland (2024) The AHP Practice Education Development Framework
d. Advance HE (2023) Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education (this could be particularly helpful in terms of ensuring relevance to those working in higher education, for example).
e. NHS England (2024) Multi-professional Practice-based Research Capability Framework
f. NHS Improvement (2019) Clinical Leadership – A Framework for Action [NOTE: it is unclear whether the planned 2020 review of this document ever took place]
g. Skills for Health (forthcoming) Primary Care and Community Services Career Framework
h. Health Education England (2020) Development of a Digital Competency Framework for UK AHPs
i. Department of Health Northern Ireland (2022) All-Ireland Digital Health Capability Framework for Health and Social Care
j. NHS England (2024) Patient Safety Incident Response Framework
k. The King's Fund (2021) My Role in Tackling Health Inequalities. A Framework for AHPs

Additional documents that might usefully be included within a complementary resources library include:

a. NHS England (2023) Allied Health Professions Enhanced Level Practice Schemas with Model Curricula – Occupational Therapy

b. RCOT (2023) Neonatal Occupational Therapy Professional Development Framework
c. Local Government Association (2022) Standards for Employers of Occupational Therapists in England
d. Outputs from the RCOT 2024/25 Advanced Practice workstream, led by Kim Stuart
e. Outputs of the CAHPR Accelerate Project 2024, led by Hazel Roddam and Jen Sutton
f. Chartered Society of Physiotherapy and RCOT (2022) AHP Principles of Practice based Learning
g. The in-development NMAHP Research Action Plan for Wales (being developed by Dr Anita Atwal), and similar relevant documents for Northern Ireland and Scotland
h. Lowe and Hindle (2025) Allied Health Professions UK Public Health Strategic Framework 2025-2030
I. CPD Together / Interprofessional CPD and Lifelong Learning UK Working Group (2022) Principles for Continuing Professional Development and Lifelong Learning in Health and Social Care

Section 3: Glossary of key terms

RCOT has selected or developed these definitions and explanations to help with the understanding of this document.

Key term	Definition
Capabilities/ Capability statements	Capabilities are the outcomes of learning based on the foundations and pillars of practice. They act as a standardised resource when identifying which levels of practice you are at for each capability and identify areas for your future learning and development.
Carer	Someone who provides (or intends to provide), paid or unpaid, a substantial amount of care on a regular basis for someone of any age who is unwell, or who, for whatever reason, cannot care for themselves independently. (Based on Great Britain. Parliament 1995). This is sometimes divided into formal carers (care workers), who are paid to give care, and informal carers (often family), who are not paid to provide care.
Competence/ Competency	'Competence is the acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities at a level of expertise sufficient to be able to perform in an appropriate work setting'. (Harvey 2020)
Continuing professional development (CPD)	Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is the ongoing process through which individuals maintain and enhance their knowledge, skills, professional identity and conduct throughout their career. It enables practitioners to remain up to date, practise safely and effectively, and respond to evolving evidence, professional expectations and the needs of the people and communities they serve. (Adapted from HCPC Standards for Continuing Professional Development, 2017 and CPD Together, 2022).
Data protection	Data protection is the fair and proper use of information about people. It's part of the fundamental right to privacy – but on a more practical level, it's really about building trust between

	people and organisations.' (Information Commissioner's Office 2019)
Diverse settings	Settings or roles where occupational therapists traditionally have not worked.
Discrimination	Treating a person, or particular group of people, less favourably than another is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation, based on an identifiable characteristic. (Adapted from European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Council of Europe 2011, p22) *The Equality Act 2010* identifies the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. (Great Britain. Parliament 2010, Chapter 1)
Environment	The circumstances, objects or conditions that make up a person's surroundings, in which they live and that they experience. This might include physical, social, economic, societal, cultural, attitudinal or virtual environments.
Equity, diversity and belonging (EDB)	Equity, diversity and belonging recognises that people's identities, experiences, circumstances and needs shape their opportunities, participation and outcomes. Occupational therapists actively value diversity, identify and address barriers and adapt opportunities, environments and resources to achieve equitable participation. They foster inclusive cultures in which everyone is seen, welcomed, respected, valued, and heard and able to participate as their true authentic selves. Grounded in occupational perspectives, EDB advances participation, wellbeing, inclusion, a sense of belonging and occupational justice for individuals, communities, the profession and its workforce. (Adapted from RCOT EDB Strategy, 2023; WFOT Position Statement: Occupational Therapy and Human Rights, revised 2019).
Ethical	A quality or status that describes the reasoning, actions and behaviours of a person, group (or organisation) as right in the moral sense of a person, group (or organisation) as right in the moral sense.
Foundations of practice	There are five foundations of practice which form the primary structure of this Framework. They are relevant to each of us and ground our practice, enabling us to develop ourselves, others and our profession.
Impact	Impact is the ability to create, demonstrate and communicate the value of occupational therapy through evidence-informed practice, evaluation, research and innovation. It involves understanding, measuring and articulating how occupational therapy improves outcomes, influences change and advances health, wellbeing, participation, inclusion and occupational justice for individuals, groups and populations across all areas of practice. (Council for Allied Health

	Professions Research, 2019; NHS Education Scotland, 2021; World Federation of Occupational Therapists, 2019, Royal College of Occupational Therapists, 2021).
Levels of practice	There are six levels of practice in this Framework, aligned to workforce levels. Although not a regulatory requirement, the levels provide a framework for career progression, role development and career long CPD. Practitioners should use their professional judgement to determine their level of practice by considering their capabilities and scope of practice against relevant professional and career development frameworks.
Occupation	Occupation is the unique focus and contribution of occupational therapy. It encompasses the everyday activities and roles that people need, want, choose and are expected to do, and through which they experience health, wellbeing, identity, belonging and participation in society. Occupational therapists apply occupational thinking across practice, leadership, education, research and improvement to enable meaningful participation, influence systems and advance occupational justice. (Adapted from WFOT, 2025; RCOT, 2021).
Job evaluations	Job evaluation is the formal assessment of a role's responsibilities, requirements and level of accountability to determine its relative value within an organisation and inform appropriate grading or remuneration. It evaluates the role, not the individual performing it.
Pillars of practice	Pillars of practice are integrated and interconnected areas of professional activity that describe the breadth of occupational therapy practice and development. They support the structure of this framework for demonstrating capability across practice, leadership, learning and research. Development across all four pillars is fundamental to career growth and there is a workforce expectation that individuals working at the level of advanced practice will work across all four pillars of practice.
Practitioner wellbeing	Practitioner wellbeing is the ability to create, maintain and promote the conditions that enable occupational therapists and teams to thrive. It includes supporting physical, psychological, emotional and professional wellbeing; fostering psychologically safe, inclusive and compassionate workplaces; and enabling resilience, learning, belonging and sustainable careers. Practitioner wellbeing recognises that a healthy, engaged and supported workforce is fundamental to delivering safe, effective, person-centred and sustainable occupational therapy services. (HCPC, 2024; World Health Organisation, 2022; HEIW & Social Care Wales, 2020; Department of Health Northern Ireland, 2024; NHS England, 2023; NHS England, 2026).
Professional authority	Professional authority refers to the power and influence that professionals hold due to their specialised knowledge, skills,

	and societal expectations. Within the context of the profession, authority can be related to level of practice and sphere of influence and is partly the basis of trust at person, people, population and nation level. Professional authority is underpinned by standards of proficiency, conduct, performance and ethics within regulated professions. Professional authority is enacted within your scope of practice and is defined by the HCPC as “the limit of your knowledge, skills and experiences and is made up of the activities you carry out within your professional role”(Stuart and Henstock, 2025).
Sphere of influence	Spheres of influence are the domains within which an individual has the ability, opportunity and responsibility to influence practice, services, policy, education, research and system improvement. Through professional authority, expertise and collaboration, individuals can extend their influence beyond direct practice to contribute to wider organisational and system-level change that improves outcomes for people, communities and populations.
Sustainability	Sustainability is the ability to create and maintain occupational therapy services, systems and ways of working that deliver lasting value for people, communities and populations. It involves balancing environmental responsibility, economic viability, workforce wellbeing and service effectiveness to ensure high-quality, equitable care can be delivered now and in the future. (Centre for Sustainable Healthcare, 2022; NHS England, 2022; United Nations, 2022; HEIW & Social Care Wales, 2020; Department of Health Northern Ireland, 2016).
Occupational therapy workforce	The occupational therapy workforce encompasses all individuals who contribute to the delivery and advancement of occupational therapy services, including occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants and support workers, apprentices, and pre-registration learners. Across all levels of practice, the workforce collectively develops, applies and sustains the knowledge, skills and capabilities required to deliver safe, effective, person-centred and occupation-focused services, now and in the future.

Note: Further appendices will be included in the final version of the framework.