

Public contributors

We want to work in partnership with people with lived experience, their families, and carers to inform our work. We do that by collaborating with public contributors; people who either have experience of occupational therapy or an interest in it.

By working with public contributors, we are better able to include under-represented and marginalised groups and overcome barriers to people's involvement and understanding of our work. With our public contributors we ensure, as far as possible, that our communications are clear, and we use plain English. We value their contribution and support them, and our colleagues, to develop confidence and skills in co-production.

Rather than us tell you what's worthwhile about being one of our public contributors, Karen, Michael, and Sarah have shared their experiences:

"I am a parent of a child diagnosed with autism. My role as public contributor has given me an opportunity to highlight many of the issues we have faced, including getting a diagnosis, accessing appropriate therapies, and barriers to education. My feedback has been used in both public-facing and occupational therapist focused documents."

Karen Day, RCOT Publications Group

"I've been working with RCOT for over three years, giving input as someone who's used occupational therapy services. It's felt like a real opportunity to use my experience to help develop resources and services and influence the profession. It's involved working with friendly and supportive people, and my input has always been valued and respected."

Michael Turner, RCOT Research Priority Setting Partnership Steering Group

"RCOT means business with its public contributors. There is a real commitment and appetite for authentic and meaningful public contributions that makes a true positive difference to those who engage in occupational therapy. That's why being involved means so much to me."

Dr Sarah Markham, RCOT Patient and Public Involvement Consultation Group

Key questions about being a public contributor

1. What would I do as a public contributor?

We invite public contributors to join specific groups who focus on a certain area of work. Depending on the group, your role would vary. In general, you will be consulted on work that is being proposed, developed, published/implemented, or reviewed. This would most likely mean commenting or collaborating on a report or a process.

At the start, each group would agree how they would work together, the time commitment required and reward and recognition. This would be in line with our [guidelines and policies](#).

2. How would we work together?

All groups are made up of occupational therapists, allied health professionals, and where appropriate, members of the public. Most of the work is done by email, with phone calls and video meetings where necessary. There might also be an in-person meeting, usually once a year. Individual preparation work may be required for meetings. All feedback is valued and used to inform our work.

3. How does RCOT benefit from working with public contributors?

Public contributors bring lived experience and personal consideration outside of the occupational therapy profession. This is vital when assessing whether the work we produce will be accessible and relevant to people who use the services occupational therapists provide.

4. What reward and recognition would there be?

Public contributors will be compensated for their time and reasonable expenses incurred in carrying out their role. This includes expenses for travel and accommodation. For more details about this please read our [Rewards and Recognition Policy](#).

Our current work with public contributors

RCOT Publications Group [link behind text <https://www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/rcot-practice-guidelines>]

The RCOT Publications Group provides a quality assurance role in reviewing proposals and draft resources produced by the us, our Branches and other groups that wish to publish practice documents in collaboration with us. Public contributors help to ensure our resources are accessible for non-occupational therapists. The Group meets twice a year and carries out work between meetings via email. Members are part of the group for three years.

Research Advisory Group [link behind text <https://www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/research-and-development>]

As part of the Advisory Group public contributors help to decide which members should receive research grants. Our two public contributors review the applications before joining RCOT colleagues, occupational therapists, other health professionals at a yearly meeting to discuss the applications. People are normally part of the Advisory Group for three years.

Guideline Development Group [link behind text <https://www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/rcot-practice-guidelines>]

Public Contributors question how the guidelines will make a difference to people who access services. The Guideline Development Group is made up of people with a background and interest in the topic area. Public contributors may get involved in assessing the literature and writing the recommendations for occupational therapy practice. People are normally part of this group for up to two years and take part in four meetings during that time.

Public contributor opportunities

When there are opportunities we will promote them on this page and throughout our social media channels:

- Instagram - @the.rcot
- Facebook - @thercot
- Twitter - @theRCOT
- LinkedIn - <https://www.linkedin.com/company/thercot/>

Help us promote this role?

Can you help us to promote this role to people from marginalised and underrepresented groups? Please help by sharing this page with your networks, friends and colleagues.