

Council proposal to increase member fees in 2026-27

Purpose	For member vote at the 25 June 2026 Annual General Meeting
Meeting	British Association of Occupational Therapists Annual General Meeting
Date of meeting	25 June 2026

Recommendation

The British Association of Occupational Therapists (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 2026–27 (1 October 2026 to 30 September 2027):

- Full professional – increase by 99p a month (4% increase)
- Newly registered – increase by 74p per month (4% increase)
- Associate – increase by 58p a month (4% increase)
- Self-employed - increase 74p a month (4% increase)
- Overseas – increase 74p a month (4% increase)
- Career break – no increase
- Associate Apprentice – increase by 21p a month (4% increase)
- Student – increase by 21p a month (4% increase)
- Retired – no increase

Executive summary

BAOT is proposing a small increase to membership fees for the forthcoming year to ensure we can continue delivering the high-quality support, professional guidance and national influence that members rely on.

Fees have risen only once in the past eight years, during which time BAOT has absorbed significant inflationary pressure (32% cumulative since 2018) while continuing to expand services, strengthen professional standards and guidelines, build the evidence base for occupational therapy, and represent the profession nationally.

The proposed increase remains modest - equivalent to a maximum of 99p per month for most Professional members - and has been shaped with careful consideration of ongoing cost of living pressures. It will help safeguard the services and advocacy that enable occupational therapists to deliver safe, effective and future focused practice.

In the run-up to the AGM, members will be able to find clear, accessible information about the proposals at www.rcot.co.uk/agm2026, along with opportunities to hear directly from Council and senior leaders and to ask questions.

We encourage all members to review this material, take part in the conversations, and participate in the AGM vote. Your voice is essential in shaping the future direction of your professional body and the wider profession.

Conflict of interests

None identified.

Financial implications

The outcome of this discussion determines the amount of income generated from membership subscriptions in the future and directly impacts our financial sustainability and capability to deliver upon our purpose and charitable objects across BOAT and RCOT.

Legal/regulatory implications

None

Strategic alignment

This proposal aligns directly with RCOT's strategic priorities and financial plan.

Our strategy focuses on sustaining and enhancing the value we offer members, strengthening our advocacy for the profession, and investing in resources that address key challenges. These include elevating the profession's profile, providing union and professional indemnity support, and expanding professional development opportunities.

Achieving these priorities requires a stable and predictable income stream, which membership fees provide. The proposed increase supports the financial plan by ensuring long-term sustainability, enabling us to plan and deliver initiatives with confidence.

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1. Background and context

- 1.1 At the 2024 AGM, Council proposed a modest increase to membership fees, which was not approved by the membership. Over the past year, RCOT has continued to maintain and develop its programme of professional services, advocacy, and member support, despite sustained inflationary pressures and only one fee increase in the past eight years.
- 1.2 This has required the organisation to absorb rising operating costs in order to shield members during a period of wider economic challenge, but the position is no longer sustainable without action. In line with the organisation's membership fee policy, and to ensure that BAOT can continue to uphold service quality and financial stability, Council is now bringing forward a revised proposal for a small adjustment to membership fees for the forthcoming membership year.
- 1.3 Given the implications of last year's vote, Council wishes to emphasise the importance of members' engagement and participation in this decision.

2. Proposed changes to membership fees for 2026/27

- 2.1 Council proposes an increase of 4% across all categories with the exception of Career Break and Retired members.

	2025-26 fee		Proposed increase	Proposed fee for 2026-27		£ difference	
	Year	Month		Year	Month	Year	Month
Professional members	£297.19	£24.77	4%	£309.08	25.76	£11.89	0.99
Self employed	£223.02	£18.59	4%	£231.94	19.33	£8.92	0.74
Newly registered	£223.02	£18.59	4%	£231.94	19.33	£8.92	0.74
Students	£61.51	£5.13	4%	£63.97	5.33	£2.46	0.21
Career break	£202.92	£16.91	Nil	£202.92	16.91	£0.00	0.00
Associates	£174.17	£14.51	4%	£181.14	15.10	£6.97	0.58
Apprentice	£61.51	£5.13	4%	£63.97	5.33	£2.46	0.21
Overseas	£223.02	£18.59	4%	£231.94	19.33	£8.92	0.74
Retired	£73.69	£6.14	Nil	£73.69	6.14	£0.00	0.00

3. Safeguarding the profession for the future

- 3.1 Maintaining the quality, scope and reliability of RCOT's member services requires a financially sustainable model that reflects the real cost of delivering them. Membership fees have increased only once in the past eight years, which means the organisation has absorbed significant inflationary pressures over an extended period - an approach that is unusual across the sector and no longer sustainable if service levels are to be protected.
- 3.2 The proposed adjustment has therefore been kept as modest as possible, recognising the ongoing cost of living pressures faced by many members. For most members, the increase represents no more than £11.89 per year for the Professional category (equivalent to 99p per month), £8.92 for self-employed and newly qualified members, and £2.46 for students.
- 3.3 At the same time, BAOT and RCOT continue to strengthen and modernise its offer to ensure members receive timely, relevant and accessible support. Planned developments include:

- Member-wide roll out of the Communities app, offering improved accessibility, easier navigation, personalised notifications and 'on the go' connection opportunities
- Enhanced visibility of national policy and public affairs activity through tailored regional updates and an expanded news presence
- Ongoing improvements to the website and AI enabled search to support quicker access to guidance and resources
- The introduction of a dedicated funding pot to enable members to host more in person and community events.

- 3.4 RCOT is also exploring new formats, such as audio summaries of OTnews, standards and key resources, and is preparing for an in-person Annual Conference in 2027. These enhancements are designed to deliver greater value to members and ensure that RCOT remains equipped to support the profession effectively in a changing environment.
- 3.5 In addition to direct member services, BAOT and RCOT hold core responsibilities that underpin the strength, credibility and future development of the profession. As the organisation responsible for setting professional standards and producing evidence-based practice guidelines, RCOT ensures that occupational therapists across the UK have access to robust, contemporary frameworks that support safe, effective and high-quality practice. These standards and resources do not arise automatically; they require sustained investment, specialist expertise and ongoing review to reflect developments in practice, research and policy.
- 3.6 RCOT also plays a central role in building the evidence base for the profession. Through research funding, knowledge mobilisation and partnership work within the wider health and social care system, the organisation supports the generation and dissemination of evidence that strengthens professional outcomes and advances the profile of occupational therapy.
- 3.7 Alongside this, RCOT's public affairs and policy activity remains essential to securing the visibility and influence of the profession at national and regional levels. This work ensures that occupational therapy is represented in key discussions on workforce planning, service design and strategic reform, helping to shape the conditions in which members can practise effectively and positioning the profession for long-term success.
- 3.8 Together, these functions are fundamental to the value of membership and to the collective strength of the profession. The proposed fee adjustment supports BAOT and RCOT's ability to continue delivering this work to the standard that members, partners and the public expect.

4. Strengthening our collective voice

- 4.1 Ensuring that members have the information they need to participate fully in the AGM is essential to the integrity of our decision making as a professional body. In the weeks leading up to the AGM, we will make available a comprehensive set of resources at www.rcot.co.uk/agm2026, including detailed explanations of the proposed changes and updates on the services and developments underway. Members will also have several opportunities to hear directly from Council and senior leaders, ask questions, and discuss the plans for the year ahead.
- 4.2 It is vital that our future direction is shaped with the insight and engagement of our membership. Council strongly encourages members to use the information and opportunities provided to familiarise themselves with the proposals, consider the wider context, and share their perspectives. Informed participation ensures that the decisions made at the AGM reflect the collective voice of the profession and support the long-term strength and effectiveness of

occupational therapy across the UK.

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