



Getting involved in guideline development

Information for service users, carers and lay representatives

This leaflet provides information for people who use or have used occupational therapy services, carers, and charities or organisations which represent or support service users or carers (also called '**lay representatives**').

On this page you will find some information about the College of Occupational Therapists and occupational therapy. The rest of the leaflet explains how you can get involved in the development of guidelines published by the College of Occupational Therapists.

The College of Occupational Therapists is a registered charity which acts on behalf of all members of the British Association of Occupational Therapists. The College sets the professional and educational standards for the occupational therapy profession and represents the profession at national and international levels.

What is an occupational therapist?

Occupational therapists are health and social care professionals who help people of all ages – babies, children, adults and older people – to carry out activities they need or want to do, but are prevented from doing so as a result of physical or mental illness, disability, their environment, or the effects of ageing.

What would you do if you couldn't?

- Get up
- Make coffee
- Get dressed
- Catch the bus**
- Check your emails
- Go to meeting
- Go to the gym
- Grab a sandwich**
- Prepare dinner
- Lay the table
- Walk the dog
- Phone your sister
- Bath the kids**
- Play your guitar
- Go to bed

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Occupational therapists will work with individuals to help them to find alternative ways to carry on with activities to enable them to live life their way.

Activities can include the necessities of daily living such as getting dressed, preparing a meal and going to work, or simply continuing with a favourite hobby.

An occupational therapist will consider all your needs - physical, psychological, social and environmental. This support can make a real difference to your life, giving you a renewed sense of purpose, opening up new horizons, and changing the way you feel about the future.

Read more in our leaflet: *Do you want to get the most from life?*

https://www.cot.co.uk/sites/default/files/marketing_materials/public/what-is-ot-leaflet.pdf

What is an occupational therapy practice guideline?

Occupational therapy practice guidelines:

- Define the most effective practice to be provided by an occupational therapist working with people with particular conditions or needs.
- Set out recommendations that assist an occupational therapist to make appropriate decisions about care or treatment.
- Are based on the best available published evidence.

How is a topic chosen for a practice guideline?

Topics are usually proposed by occupational therapists. A new topic is more likely to be approved by the College if it:

- can help to improve health and wellbeing;
- is supported by good published information on the topic, called '**evidence**'; and
- can support '**best practice**' and help provide consistency when occupational therapy services are provided in different ways.

How is a practice guideline developed?

A practice guideline is developed following a particular process. That process is important to ensure that recommendations are based on the evidence about what treatment and care works.

There are some key steps:

The scope.....	Working out what should be included in the guideline. Details are put together in a document called a 'scope'.
The literature search.....	Finding all the published information that is relevant to the topic. A specialist librarian carries out a search for all the literature which matches the details in the scope.
Critical appraisal	Reading all the published research and rating the quality of the evidence.
The recommendations....	Using the best of the evidence to develop recommendations about the occupational therapy that should be provided.
The guideline document..	Writing the guideline document so that occupational therapists can use the recommendations and evidence in their practice.

These stages follow clear procedures to ensure that there is no particular treatment or approach that is unfairly represented – this is called avoiding bias.

The process used by the College of Occupational Therapists has been accredited by the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

You can find out more about how an occupational therapy guideline is developed from the College's website, together with some examples of published guidelines, which are free to download. Details at: <https://www.cot.co.uk/practice-guidelines/practice-guidelines-development-process>

Who is involved in developing a practice guideline?

A number of people are involved in developing a practice guideline. Everyone brings their knowledge and experiences to the topic.

The project lead is usually an occupational therapist who has the relevant expertise and experience in the topic area.

Other people or organisations who may have an interest in the guideline topic are called '**stakeholders**'. Stakeholders have an interest in a guideline topic and may be staff working in health or social care services (such as physiotherapists, nurses, social workers and doctors), or people using occupational therapy services ('**service users**'), carers of people who use occupational therapy services, or organisations who represent patients.

Stakeholders may include:



How can I get involved?

A guideline project usually takes two years. This is the time from when the idea is agreed by the College of Occupational Therapists, to publication of the guideline document.

Your involvement can be in one or more ways; for example:

- Meeting individually with a member of the guideline development group.

- Joining other service users in a meeting or group with a member(s) of the guideline development group.
- Having a telephone conversation.
- Sharing your views in a consultation by email or the post.

If you are asked to attend a meeting all reasonable expenses will be met (e.g. travel, carer or childcare costs).

You may wish to be involved in the development process in one or more ways. Some examples of how you can contribute are outlined below:

Contribute to the scope to make sure that it covers the issues that are important to service users	Provide a service user perspective on the benefits ('outcomes') that are important for a particular treatment or intervention	Give a service user perspective on the balance of the benefits and risks from an intervention
Advise on ways of getting in touch with other service users who might be interested in the guideline topic	Provide an expert view based on your own experience about the topic	Help to write any service user summaries needed about the content of the guideline
Read drafts of recommendations and evidence overviews to make sure they are meaningful	Provide views in response to specific consultation questions	Agree for your views ('a quote') to be published in the guideline

You can get involved as much or as little as you are able; all contributions to the guideline development process are highly valued.

If you decide to get involved with developing a guideline you will be asked to disclose any interests you have that might influence your views on the guideline topic. This is called declaring '**conflicts of interest**'.

What do I need to do now?

If you would like to volunteer to participate in guideline development, then you can talk to the person who gave you this leaflet. Their contact details are below:

Guideline topic:	
Contact name:	
Email / Phone:	

If you have any questions about occupational therapy or guideline development you can contact:
Professional Enquiries at the College of Occupational Therapists.
Email: Professional.Enquiries@cot.co.uk Tel: 020 7450 2330