

# A local initiative to promote Occupational Therapy in Mental Health

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## Introduction

Generic working is recognised as an ongoing challenge in Occupational Therapy (OT) practice in mental health service areas (Harrison 2003). The complications with generic working include a loss of professional identity, work role imbalance, and a reduced knowledge and awareness about the OT profession amongst other professionals (Reeves and Summerfield Mann 2004). Three lone working OT's identified with generic working and aimed to establish and develop the OT role within their services.



## Before project

- Lack of understanding of the OT profession
- Work role imbalance/generic working
- Lack of professional identity
- Lack of service provision and appropriate promotional material
- No identified OT referral pathway for community services

## Project outcome

- Collaborative working
- Trust wide leaflet
- OT referral pathway established leading to more appropriate referrals
- Increased professional identity
- Improved work role balance
- OT involvement in wider assessments
- OT established and expanded in community and inpatient rehabilitation
- OT role retained in MDT services
- Recognition from the Trust (CQC)
- Increased job satisfaction
- Improvement in generic roles

## Future development

- Wider recognition and availability of promotional material
- Increased opportunities to network with OT's nationally
- Support development of OT practice in other areas
- Establish new OT services in Calderdale
- Evaluate tools created in the project
- Evaluate promotion of the OT role in service areas

## How?

The process involved establishing the current knowledge, level of awareness and perception of the OT profession in three service areas. This was followed by identifying and evaluating existing promotional tools. This was achieved through colleagues and service users completing a specifically designed questionnaire and sourcing promotional material. Consequently, an information leaflet for use in all Calderdale mental health services, and a community OT pathway and referral process were developed and implemented within the Trust after consultation from service users and multidisciplinary colleagues.

## References

- Harrison, D. (2003) The Case for Generic working in Mental health Occupational Therapy. British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 66 (3), pp.110-112.
- Health and Care Professions Council. (2012) Your guide to our standards for continuing professional development. London. Health and Care Professions Council.
- Reeves, R., Summerfield Mann, L. (2004) Overcoming Problems with Generic Working for Occupational Therapists based in Community Mental Health Settings. British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 67 (6), pp.265-268.



With all of us in mind