

Royal College of  
Occupational Therapists

annual  
**REVIEW**  
**2017**

Royal College of  
Occupational  
Therapists





## message from the **CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

So much innovative and exciting work has been taking place over the last 12 months, but without a doubt, one of the most seminal achievements of 2017 was the award of Royal status, after Her Majesty The Queen granted permission for the 'Royal' title to be used by the College of Occupational Therapists, which can trace its origins back to 1936.

While the occupational therapy profession continues to grow and adapt to the continuing pace of change in the world, especially against a background of austerity and difficult challenges in the wide-ranging health and wellbeing arena, an award such as this affords the College and its members better standing and a higher professional profile.

This has made a huge difference to many of our members in terms of their own professional standing within multidisciplinary teams. More than that, it has put the Royal College on a different footing with a range of stakeholders.

Since the award of Royal status, we have received an increase in the number of requests for occupational therapy representation from agencies such as the Care Quality Commission, the NHS Confederation and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, to name but a few.

We believe that being awarded the Royal status is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and highest level of professional standards that our members demonstrate every day in their jobs and which staff at the Royal College strive to deliver every day.

Our Royal status will ensure that we, as the professional body, are more involved in shaping important health and social care policy. It also raises the profile of the vital work that occupational therapists do, almost uniquely across physical and mental health, within the NHS and in social care. I very much look forward to embarking on the next chapter in our history as the Royal College of Occupational Therapists.

As we move into 2018, we do so as a financially robust organisation, with a strong membership of over 32,000. Our balance sheet for 2017 showed a healthy surplus, which we are able to reinvest into the development of services for our members that strengthen the profession and ensure the sustainability of the professional body itself.

Indeed, during the year all members received their own personal copy of the revised and redesigned Professional Standards for Occupational Therapy Practice in the post. Used with the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct,

the standards describe a level of practice and a set of professional values and behaviours for all occupational therapy practitioners.

Together, these documents provide the basis for how we work now and how we can review and shape our service delivery for the future.

As all members are aware, the work of the organisation is framed by our Strategic Intentions. Over the year, work started on the formulation of the next set of Strategic Intentions, to cover the period from 2018 to 2023.


This work, led by myself, has involved numerous meetings and communications with members, focusing on the future direction of the profession and the related support required from the professional body. We aim to launch the new Strategic Intentions in May, so watch this space!

The annual review that follows details all the organisation's key achievements and workstreams over the year 2017; from the latest on the Occupational Therapy: Improving Lives, Saving Money campaign, to the launch of the Career Development Framework and our prestigious Best Conference of 2016 award.

But of course, we recognise that all these achievements would not have been possible without the support and input from you, our members. So we thank you for being engaged with the organisation, for volunteering for various areas of activity and for giving so freely of your time and knowledge.

As I have said before, a professional body is only as good as the professional community it serves, and so our achievements are a direct reflection of your individual, and collective, efforts on behalf of the profession we all hold so dear.

Looking to the future we have to continue to build and maintain the ever rising profile of occupational therapy. You, our members, can do your bit by using your title in full, by explaining to others that occupation has a vital role to play in terms of the maintenance of citizen's health and wellbeing, by being brave, and by showing that you are ready, willing and able to ensure that your practice, be it in a clinical, academic or research based setting, is fit for the 21st Century.



**Julia Scott, Chief Executive**

# impacts of **SOCIAL MEDIA**



Over the year, RCOT's social media channels grew by

14% 24% 11% 38%



Facebook



Twitter



LinkedIn



You Tube

## **POSTS WITH GREATEST REACH**



**Tweet** with the highest number of impressions was announcing that we were soon to become the **Royal College of Occupational Therapists**

= **29,199** impressions



**Facebook** post with highest reach was also announcing that we had been granted permission to become the **Royal College of Occupational Therapists**

= **158,000** people

## WEBSITE STATS

**14,663** people are registered on the new website

**382,565** visits to the new website

Most popular pages (after homepage and login pages)

*What is occupational therapy* with **88,849** page views

BJOT with **59,997** page views

**64%** of visits were on desktop and **36%** of visits were on mobile



## MOST POPULAR HASHTAGS

**#COT2017** = **17,737** uses

(this trended during conference)

**#OTWeek17** and

**#OTWeek2017** = **18,432** uses

## NEW ACTIVITY IN 2017



### Live tweet

day with Tower Hamlets Council in February



### Thunderclap

campaign for Improving Lives Saving Money in July, which reached over **500,000** people



### Facebook Live

broadcast in July, by Dr Stephanie Tempest, on the Career Development Framework



### Twibbon

campaign for OT Week in November, with almost **1,500** supporters



2017 also saw the launch of our **RCOT podcast** series, which is available on **Soundcloud** and **iTunes**



# 2017

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

### January 2017

**Royal visit:** HRH The Princess Royal, Patron of the Royal College, visited Cygnet Hospital Beckton in London on 19 January 2017. The Princess Royal viewed displays and demonstrations of the occupational therapy pathways, and heard about the important role that occupational therapy plays in supporting health, wellbeing and life satisfaction through participation in occupation in mental health care.

Her Royal Highness met patients, carers and the occupational therapists involved at this gender specific hospital for women with complex health needs.



### February 2017

**Media engagements:** The organisation's ability to spot relevant breaking stories in which RCOT could contribute views and comments has rapidly increased due to access to the Vuelio system and the Press Association newswire. Simultaneously, it has reduced the time it takes to issue media statements and press releases to the most relevant journalists on each topic.

This has resulted in RCOT comments being reflected in a greater number of articles and more journalists proactively approaching the organisation for comments. Since adopting the system in February 2017, RCOT has issued over 40 press statements and releases.

### March 2017



**Annual conference named Best Conference of 2016:** The College of Occupational Therapist's 40th annual conference and exhibition scooped a top award at the 2017 Association Excellence Awards on 31 March 2017, at The Hurlingham Club, London.

COT took home the award for 'Best Association Conference for between 450 and 1,500 Delegates' at the Global Conference Network's awards ceremony.

The judges were impressed with how the conference programme was dissected into areas of specialism, which meant that the conference programme was seen to be instantly relevant for different areas of practice.

**Read more at:** [www.rcot.co.uk/news/college-occupational-therapists-conference-named-best-conference-2016](http://www.rcot.co.uk/news/college-occupational-therapists-conference-named-best-conference-2016)

### April 2017

**Royal status:** On 19 April, COT was officially renamed the Royal College of Occupational Therapists, after Her Majesty The Queen granted permission for the 'Royal' title to be used by COT, which can trace its origins back to 1936.

Our Royal Patron herself said, on her visit to the Hayward Hospital, Stoke, in May 2016, that she hopes she has helped to 'raise the profile of the vital work of this too-often overlooked profession'. As a Royal College, we are now unlikely to be passed over in key discussions that shape the delivery of health and care services.





## May 2017

**Project Phineas and new website:** Project Phineas is RCOT's digital development project, which aims to redevelop how we build digital services that meet the needs of our members.

Following a thorough 'discovery' stage, which gathered feedback from a range of audiences across the UK, the new RCOT website ([www.rcot.co.uk](http://www.rcot.co.uk)) was launched on 26 May 2017.

The new site has been built around the needs of site users, and with three key areas of improvement in mind: a mobile friendly design; a clearer navigation/site user journey; and an improved internal site search function.

It has seen an average rise in visitors by around 34 per cent from 2016 to 2017. A follow up survey on the site was also published following the launch, and the results will help to inform how to further develop the site going forwards.

## June 2017

**Launch of the Research and Development Review:** The Research and Development Review was launched at a very successful event at the RCOT London office on 12 June 2017, and was attended by a range of stakeholders, supporters and collaborators from within and beyond the occupational therapy profession, including Suzanne Rastrick, chief AHP officer for England, and Paraig O'Brien on behalf of Hazel Winning, AHP lead officer for Northern Ireland.

The event generated a wealth of feedback, insights and suggestions to help shape the work going forward.

The launch was followed up by an equally successful and data-rich #OTalk tweet-chat, hosted by Dr Jo Watson, RCOT assistant director – education and research, on 5 September 2017, which centred on considering how to encourage qualified occupational therapists to engage in and with research to boost the professions' research capacity.

**Read more at:** [www.rcot.co.uk/news/contribute-your-voice-rcot-research-and-development-review](http://www.rcot.co.uk/news/contribute-your-voice-rcot-research-and-development-review)

## June 2017

**Annual conference 2017:** Last year's conference, the first as the Royal College, saw a record-breaking number of delegates come together – over 1,500 – to celebrate and debate the occupational therapy profession in Birmingham on 19 and 20 June 2017.

The event saw a condensed, but full programme running over two days, with plenary speakers including Paul McGee, Dr Winnie Dunn, University of Kansas, Dr Jennifer Creek, occupational therapy researcher and author, and Tina Coldham, mental health campaigner and service user. Professor Diane Cox delivered the Casson Lecture.

There was a Specialist Sections Zone in the exhibition hall, where 173 new specialist section members were recruited over the two days. On Twitter, #COT2017 trended three times.

A redeveloped conference website (<http://rcotannualconference.org.uk>) was also launched in 2017; it is more engaging, offers clearer links for members to register, and is mobile friendly.

**Read more at:** [www.rcot.co.uk/news/annual-conference-2017-round](http://www.rcot.co.uk/news/annual-conference-2017-round)



## July 2017

**Launch of the second ILSM report:** The second report of the Occupational Therapy: Improving Lives, Saving Money campaign, *Living, not existing: Putting prevention at the heart of care for older people*, was launched at a high profile breakfast meeting with key influencers in the Shard in London on 12 July 2017.

Members joined campaign workshops UK-wide, contributed to the online survey and many service examples were received that clearly demonstrate how occupational therapy saves money for the public purse and how it changes lives.

The communications and media support, both internally and externally, ensured that the organisation had excellent coverage in all four nations, which was very positive.

**Read more at:** [www.rcot.co.uk/news/launch-living-not-existing-report](http://www.rcot.co.uk/news/launch-living-not-existing-report)



## July 2017

**Workforce summit:** A broad and lively discussion was had at this year's Workforce Summit in London on 31 July. The aim of the summit was to gather strategic leaders together to find solutions to the recruitment crisis in London for occupational therapists and allied health professionals.

The work commissioned to develop a workforce database and dashboard that provides a profile on the occupational therapy workforce is part complete. It is expected that detailed reports will be able to be produced from this that will be available for key stakeholders and will position RCOT as a credible source of information on the occupational therapy workforce in the UK.

## July to September 2017

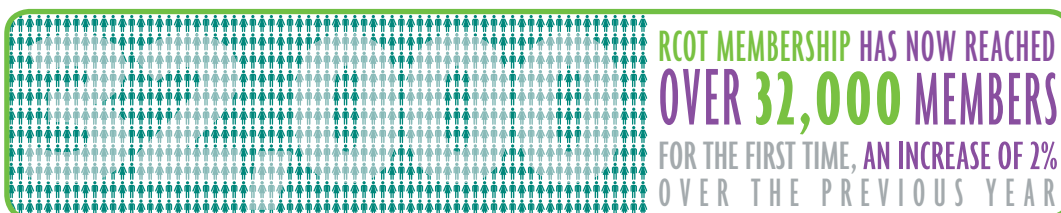
**Apprenticeship agenda:** RCOT continues to work closely with the trailblazer group leading the development of the level six degree apprenticeship in occupational therapy.

A period of preliminary consultation ran from July to September 2017, to gather feedback from beyond the trailblazer group to further enhance the draft standard ahead of submitting it to the Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA) for formal approval.

Work is now commencing on the development of the associated assessment plan, which will also need IfA approval before employers will be able to use the apprenticeship pathway to train future occupational therapists.

RCOT has also been involved with other AHP professional bodies in seeking to influence the development of the level seven apprenticeship standard for advanced clinical practice, which has been submitted to the IfA for approval. A two-week window of formal public consultation was opened from 1 September 2017, and RCOT responded to the consultation and widely encouraged occupational therapists, occupational therapy managers and other interested parties to also submit responses.

**Read more at:** [www.rcot.co.uk/news/degree-level-occupational-therapy-apprenticeship-update-oct-2017](http://www.rcot.co.uk/news/degree-level-occupational-therapy-apprenticeship-update-oct-2017)

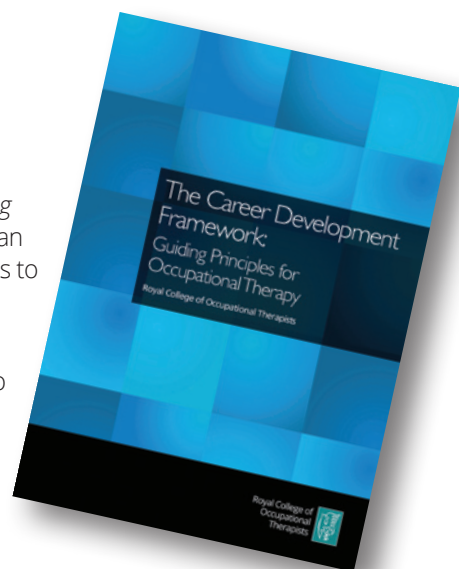


## September 2017

**Career Development Framework published:** *The Career development framework: guiding principles for occupational therapy* was launched on 18 September 2017. The framework is an overarching set of guiding principles for occupational therapy, offering a structured process to guide careers, learning and development within the profession.

It contains four interacting Pillars of Practice (Professional Practice; Facilitation of Learning; Leadership; and Evidence, Research and Development), each with nine levels. It can help to identify the things already learnt and areas for continuing professional development.

The framework can be used in a variety of ways; on an individual level and on a service level. It will evolve through a process of continuous evaluation and updates to remain contemporary for the profession. Its future relevance and success will require ongoing co-development with its users.



**Read more at:** [www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/learning-zone/career-development-framework](http://www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/learning-zone/career-development-framework)

## September 2017

**RCOT awards:** Over 80 invited guests came together for this year's RCOT Celebration of Excellence in Occupational Therapy Awards 2017 ceremony, at Fishmongers' Hall in London on 20 September 2017.

Guests included occupational therapists, the 2017 award winners, RCOT fellows, heads and presidents of other AHP bodies, stakeholders and partners, chairs of the RCOT specialist sections and regional branches, and RCOT staff. The event also coincided with UKOTRF's 10th anniversary.



## November 2017

**Occupational Therapy Week:** The theme for 2017's Occupational Therapy Week was 'I Am An Occupational Therapist', encouraging members to be 'loud and proud' and shout out about the value they add to the lives of hundreds of thousands of people every week.

Members across the country organised hundreds of events and activities and shared them in OTnews and via social media, and the Occupational Therapy Week packs were more popular than ever, with over 2,800 packs requested by members.

As part of the week's celebrations, RCOT created a film that embodied the #livenotexist mantle by telling the story of Alistair, a young teenage boy in Glasgow, whose life has been transformed with the help of an occupational therapist. To date the video has received just under 4,000 views on the RCOT YouTube channel.

At RCOT HQ, for the first time workshops and activities were held on-site. Members of the general public were invited to attend and experience occupational therapy in practice, to give a better insight into the breadth and impact of occupational therapy in wider society.

Finally, the RCOT digital team reviewed and refined how they communicate and engage with members on social media, with engagement levels reaching record numbers, with the result that the #OTWeek2017 hashtag was used on Twitter over 17,800 times.

## December 2017

**Royal visit:** On 1 December 2017, our patron visited the Bracton Centre in Dartford, a medium secure hospital providing care for people who are mentally ill and have been in contact with the criminal justice system.

HRH The Princess Royal met occupational therapists from Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust, and service users, and heard about the outstanding therapies programme, including the Forensic Recovery College.





## Continuing work

**Health and Work Champions:** The roll-out of the Health and Work Champions continues, with RCOT involved and represented on a number of high-level working groups and expert advisory groups at the Department for Work and Pensions.

Public Health England commissioned a pilot to develop new training for NHS staff to raise awareness of work/employment by asking the work question and how to signpost patients to resources and support.

RCOT recruited, trained and supported occupational therapists to roll out the training in the role of Health and Work Champions. The initial pilot was evaluated by Salford University and following the success of the pilot funding was secured from the Department of Work and Pensions for a further two cohorts. In total, there are 61 recruits.

## Other achievements

**Practice placement project (UK wide):** Conducting a project to identify ways to support and sustain the quality and availability of practice placements across the UK. Using a community of practice approach to develop an action plan, which enables practice educators, higher education institutions (HEIs) and students to be involved in constructing a resource and service that is tailored to their requirements.

**Accreditation review:** Addressed changes following recommendations from the accreditation review to improve and streamline the process, strengthening already stable relationships with existing HEIs and offering a guiding hand to new occupational therapy programmes as they emerge across the UK.

**Working with new providers of pre-registration programmes:** Successfully supported a new undergraduate pre-registration programme at St George's, University of London through accreditation. This is the first new programme developed at a new provider for three years and the learning and development standards were successfully met.

Two further new providers are working with RCOT in order to gain accreditation of their pre-registration provision. One other new provider has expressed an interest in working with RCOT to achieve accreditation.

**WFOT revised minimum standards for the education of occupational therapists:** The World Federation of Occupational Therapists' (WFOT) revised minimum standards was published at the end of 2016, with a request that they be incorporated and implemented from January 2017 by delegated authorities.


RCOT's learning and development standards continue to set thresholds above those of WFOT under the majority of the standards. RCOT's accredited HEIs and other stakeholders were kept informed regarding the implementation of the new standards and all programmes were successfully re-accredited during the 2016/17 academic year using the new updated standards.

**Student recruitment:** RCOT developed a new approach to recruiting student members, via a 'Virtual Visit' pack, which includes a YouTube video explaining the benefits of membership, a PowerPoint presentation of accompanying slides and a pack of promotional goods for students to enjoy. This will not replace the former face-to-face presentation style, however it provides flexibility for educators and students alike. It can also be placed on portals for students to be accessed at times to suit the individual.


**Library:** The RCOT library now offers a third e-book platform (123 Library), which can be accessed via the library webpages, meaning that members have access to a comprehensive range of e-book titles to view online and download.

A new webpage has been developed for independent and third sector employed members outlining library and information resources to help and support their practice and research.

**Visit:** [www.rcot.co.uk/about-us/specialist-sections/independent-practice-rcot-ss/member-resources](http://www.rcot.co.uk/about-us/specialist-sections/independent-practice-rcot-ss/member-resources)



**NEWS**  
RCOT HAS ISSUED  
OVER **40**  
PRESS STATEMENTS  
AND RELEASES



**16** ROADSHOWS  
ACROSS **12** REGIONS  
IN 2016/17 WITH OVER  
**700** MEMBERS ATTENDING



## message from the **CHAIR**

As directors and trustees of the organisation, Council has been immensely impressed with the huge volume and calibre of the work undertaken by the officers and staff of the Royal College throughout 2017.

There have been so many significant achievements addressing our three Strategic Intentions, which have increased our profile and placed us in a position of strength for the future. As I couldn't possibly make reference to all these achievements, I have chosen to highlight a few key ones here.

The most notable achievement in the history of our organisation was the award of Royal status by Her Majesty the Queen. This change in status to the Royal College of Occupational Therapists is wonderful recognition of the esteem in which our profession is held and the value of the work we all do as occupational therapists to improve people's lives.

The impact of this change in status has already been noted in the increased number of requests to engage in high level government and stakeholder meetings in all four nations. This provides so many more opportunities for us to be influencing policy and practice at much higher levels and serve our members well.

In terms of being the voice of the profession, the Occupational Therapy: Improving Lives, Saving Money campaign continued to go from strength to strength, with the launch of phase two, *Living not Existing*, in July 2017.



Once again, the specific reports for each nation were well received by the media and raised public awareness of the role of occupational therapists in preventing and delaying the need for care and support for our older population.

A powerful, personal story captured on film, highlighting the *Living not Existing* theme, was premiered at the launch and has been viewed around 17,000 times on the RCOT website. This short film

highlighted our message that focusing on and creating services that help older people to live as independently as possible in their own communities, for as long as possible, is essential.

It also served to reinforce that health and social care is not just about doctors and nurses and we, along with our other AHP colleagues, need to ensure we get our deserved recognition.

Occupational therapists have a breadth of skills that can be used more effectively to re-design services to meet local needs and promote a more preventive and enabling approach. Short-term intensive reablement and rehabilitation, led by occupational therapists, can result in a better quality of life and outcomes for older people, while reducing costs for providers.

In education, the work around the apprenticeship agenda has continued. This year, the focus was on the development of the draft standard for the level six degree apprenticeship in occupational therapy.

This exciting development will provide the opportunity for employers to use the apprenticeship route to train future occupational therapists. In addition to this, the level seven apprenticeship standard for advanced clinical practice was also submitted to the Institute for Apprenticeships, which is important for our future professional profile.

Our new career development framework launched in September 2017, and is an excellent piece of work. This involved 200 people on the virtual advisory group who reviewed and shared work within their own networks, demonstrating what can be achieved through the power of technology in facilitating high member engagement.

The accompanying implementation guide helps to illustrate how the framework can be used by occupational therapists at all levels and stages of their career, from students to highly experienced practitioners, educators and researchers.



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Development of further tools and resources is ongoing to support members' engagement. I commend this framework to you and hope you find it as useful as I have.

There has been an enthusiastic response to our research review, which was launched in June 2017 at the Royal College, and was attended by external delegates from all four nations. There was a great buzz in the room as delegates debated five key questions, which provided a wealth of feedback and ideas to shape the work going forward.

The additional events in Northern Ireland, Manchester, Scotland and Wales gave more members the opportunity to further influence the review.

Once again, we had another successful year of funding awards granted by the UKOTRF and the annual awards for education, research and continuing professional development, and I was delighted to be involved in recognising our successful recipients at the prestigious RCOT awards ceremony in September.

The work invested in the digital strategy and the design of the new website has paid off. I hope you are all enjoying the new, freshly branded RCOT website and you are finding it much more user-friendly. Statistics indicate there is a rise in the number of visitors to the website of around 34 per cent and feedback received has been very positive.

The annual conference was held in Birmingham, for the first time, in June 2017, with around 1,200 delegates. The ICC was an excellent venue and feedback on the conference experience was largely positive, although the condensed programme of two days was considered too busy, with the result that conference will return to the two and a half day format in 2018 in Belfast. We hope to see you there.

During 2017 there were two very successful Royal visits with our patron HRH The Princess Royal. These events are always highly beneficial in providing excellent recognition of the wonderful work being carried out by occupational therapists for the benefit of their service users.

Always be mindful of how beneficial an event like this can be in promoting the role of occupational therapy in your workplace. There is a call for bids for HRH events each year.

I am delighted to note the continued financial health of the organisation, which is ensuring that BAOT/RCOT is an economically sustainable business. The health of the finances has enabled us to maintain membership fees at current levels.

Member subscriptions have now exceeded 32,000 for the first time in the history of the organisation; this was a two per cent increase in the year. We must all endeavour to promote RCOT membership and encourage all our colleagues to sign up to continue to ensure the ongoing development of the profession.

Finally, I would like to thank all the staff at RCOT for their continued hard work and dedication throughout the past year. There has been an amazing amount of work completed on our behalf. I truly believe we have never been in such a strong position as a profession and we are going from strength to strength. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Baroness Hollins for all her continued support to our profession as our President during the past year.

Of course, we could not achieve our current strong position without the work of each and every one of you, our members, promoting what you do on a daily basis to a wide range of stakeholders. We must all continue to play our part in being the confident voice of our profession, promoting and raising our professional profile. Together we can make our profession even stronger.

I look forward to continuing to work with you all in 2018.

**Dr Patricia McClure, Chairman of Council**

*Information accurate up to and including 31 December 2017*

[www.rcot.co.uk](http://www.rcot.co.uk)

Royal College of Occupational Therapists  
*The professional body for occupational therapy staff*

(The Royal College of Occupational Therapists is the trading name and subsidiary of the British Association of Occupational Therapists)

The Royal College of Occupational Therapists is a registered charity in England and Wales (No.275119) and in Scotland (No.SCO39573).

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