

Narratives about occupational therapy

The power of OT – transforming health and social care

You'll find here different versions of text (narrative) about occupational therapy that you can use to help people understand more about what it is, its value and where it needs to be positioned in the future.

You might want to tailor it for your service or for the individual you are speaking with, but using this as a basis will help to build a consistent understanding.

The narrative is available in several formats:

1. [text for posts on social media](#)
2. [script to introduce occupations in 30 seconds](#)
3. [prompts for conversations](#)
4. [content for bulletins, newsletters and webpages](#)
5. [facts, stories and quotes](#)

1. Social media posts

There are five different options of copy for posts that you can use alongside the social media graphics.

The graphics in this document are for illustrative purposes only; they can be downloaded direct from our website. The graphics are available in two sizes – the square works for posts and the portrait size works best for story posts.

You can also create your own posts and use them with the graphics or photographs. Make sure to use the alt text supplied with each image to make sure your posts are more accessible to blind and visually impaired people.



Occupational therapy plays a vital role in health, social care and society. It enables people to manage their health and care needs and do the occupations that they want, need and like to do. #OTWeek24
www.rcot.co.uk/aboutOT

[Image description: Text reads 'The power of occupational therapy. Transforming health and social care'. Illustrations show one person riding a bike and another person sitting in a chair resting their leg that's in a cast.]



Occupational therapists consider all aspects of an individual and their environments and work with them to create a plan to reach their goals. #OTWeek24 www.rcot.co.uk/aboutOT

[Image description: Text reads 'Occupational therapy: A solution to many of the UK's health and care needs'. Illustrations show one person having a bath and another person brushing their hair.]



By prioritising prevention and early intervention, occupational therapists help people manage their health and reduce the frequency and need for crisis interventions and care services. #OTWeek24 www.rcot.co.uk/aboutOT

[Image description: Text reads 'Occupational therapy is key to a better future for many people'. Illustrations show one person reading in a chair with a cat behind them and two young people playing with toys. One is dressed up as a dinosaur.]



Within integrated health and care systems, occupational therapists can deliver better outcomes and create a more sustainable system for all. #OTWeek24 www.rcot.co.uk/aboutOT

[Image description: Text reads 'Occupational therapy: Helping people live well for longer, saving money and reducing pressure on health and social care services'. Illustrations show one person sleeping in bed with a cat on them and another person putting their shoes on.]



By working proactively with people where they are, we will empower them to manage their changing needs and reduce pressure on the NHS and the wider health and care system. #OTWeek24 www.rcot.co.uk/aboutOT

[Image description: Text reads 'The power of occupational therapy: Transforming health and social care'. Illustrations show one person riding a bike and another person sitting in a chair resting their leg that's in a cast.]

2. 30 second script

How many times in OT Week can you use this text to introduce people to occupations in the context of occupational therapy? Try and weave it into every conversation you have and don't stop after OT Week!

If you can't remember it all, the first sentence will work on its own.

Occupational therapy enables people to manage their health and care needs and to do the occupations that they want, need and like to do.

Occupational therapy is a solution to many of the UK's health and care needs and should be positioned in communities to focus on prevention and early intervention. By helping people manage their health, it saves money and reduces pressure on health and social care services.

Occupational therapy is key to many people's better futures and must be included in the strategic planning and allocation of resources to manage health, education, housing and care needs in the UK.

3. Conversation prompts

Challenge yourself to have a conversation with at least one new person about occupational therapy every day. These conversation prompts are here to help you.

What is occupational therapy?

Occupational therapy plays a vital role in health, social care and society. It enables people to manage their health and care needs and do the occupations that they want, need and like to do.

What are occupations?

An occupation isn't just your job or activities of daily living – it's any meaningful activity that supports physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Occupational therapists consider all aspects of an individual and their environments and work with them to create a plan to reach their goals.

Why do we need occupational therapy?

Occupational therapy is a solution to many of the UK's health and care needs. By prioritising prevention and early intervention, occupational therapists help people manage their health and reduce the frequency and need for crisis interventions and care services.

What's the value of occupational therapy?

By helping people live well for longer, occupational therapy saves money and reduces pressure on health and social care services. Within integrated health and care systems, occupational therapists can deliver better outcomes and create a more sustainable system for all.

Where is occupational therapy needed?

The occupational therapy workforce needs to be positioned in communities. By working proactively with people where they are, we will empower them to manage their changing needs and reduce pressure on the NHS and the wider health and care system.

What needs to happen?

Occupational therapy is key to a better future for many people and must be included in the strategic planning and allocation of resources to manage health, education, housing and care needs in the UK.

4. Content for bulletins, newsletters and webpages

Is there a newsletter or bulletin that you can ask to feature occupational therapy?

Here are three versions of the narrative about the value of occupational therapy and where it needs to be positioned in the future. There is a long, medium and short version. Pick the one that works best for the channel you'll be sharing it in.

Long version (346 words)

The power of OT – transforming health and social care

Occupational therapy plays a vital role in health, social care and society. It enables people to have fulfilling lives at home, at work, at school – and everywhere else – through meaningful occupations. It enables people to manage their health and care needs and to do the occupations that they want, need and like to do. Occupational therapists consider all aspects of an individual and their environments and work with them to create a plan to reach their goals.

An occupation isn't just your job or activities of daily living. An occupation can be looking after yourself, such as washing, eating or sleeping; productive, such as work, study, caring or domestic activities; and leisure, such as playing sports, hobbies or socialising. An occupation is any meaningful activity that supports physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

Occupational therapy is a solution to many of the UK's health and care needs. By prioritising prevention and early intervention, occupational therapists help people manage their health and reduce the frequency and need for crisis interventions and care services. This will help people to manage their symptoms and needs, and reduce the requirement for hospital and specialist services.

By helping people live well for longer, occupational therapy saves money and reduces pressure on health and social care services. Within integrated health and care systems, occupational therapists can deliver better outcomes, reduce strain on health and social care resources, and create a more sustainable system for all.

The occupational therapy workforce needs to be positioned in communities to focus on prevention and early intervention. With an ageing population and an increasing complexity of needs, the requirement for occupational therapy will only rise. By working proactively with people where they are, we will empower people to manage their changing needs and reduce pressure on the NHS and the wider health and care system.

Occupational therapy is key to a better future for many people and must be included in the strategic planning and allocation of resources to manage health, education, housing and care needs in the UK.

Medium version (241 words)

The power of OT – transforming health and social care

Occupational therapy plays a vital role in health, social care and society. It enables people to manage their health and care needs and do the occupations that they want, need and like to do.

An occupation isn't just your job or activities of daily living – it's any meaningful activity that supports physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Occupational therapists consider all aspects of an individual and their environments and work with them to create a plan to reach their goals.

Occupational therapy is a solution to many of the UK's health and care needs. By prioritising prevention and early intervention, occupational therapists help people manage their health and reduce the frequency and need for crisis interventions and care services.

By helping people live well for longer, occupational therapy saves money and reduces pressure on health and social care services. Within integrated health and care systems, occupational therapists can deliver better outcomes and create a more sustainable system for all.

The occupational therapy workforce needs to be positioned in communities. By working proactively with people where they are, we will empower them to manage their changing needs and reduce pressure on the NHS and the wider health and care system.

Occupational therapy is key to a better future for many people and must be included in the strategic planning and allocation of resources to manage health, education, housing and care needs in the UK.

Short version (133 words)

The power of OT – transforming health and social care

Occupational therapy plays a vital role in health, social care and society. It enables people to manage their health and care needs and to do the occupations that they want, need and like to do. An occupation is any activity that supports physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

Occupational therapy is a solution to many of the UK's health and care needs and should be positioned in communities to focus on prevention and early intervention. By helping people manage their health, it saves money and reduces pressure on health and social care services.

Occupational therapy is key to many people's better futures and must be included in the strategic planning and allocation of resources to manage health, education, housing and care needs in the UK.

5. Facts, stories and quotes

Facts give proof to our narrative and stories and quotes bring it to life. We've shared a few here that you can use. These are a starting point; where possible, use your own.

Facts

- The UK currently has approximately six occupational therapists per 10,000 people. The demand on our service is already stretched. By 2035:
 - the population in the UK is projected to be 70 million
 - two-thirds of adults aged over 65 are projected to be living with multiple health conditions
 - two in five people aged 75 years or over, with an unplanned hospital admission, will die within a year – a quarter of them will spend more than a month of this precious last year in hospital.

Sources:

[RCOT Workforce Strategy](#)
[King's Fund, Time to think differently](#)
[UK Government](#)

Stories

- Occupational therapists in Wrexham and Flintshire streamlined the referral process and clinical approach reducing the time of patients' first assessment with a community OT to discharge from 17 weeks to on average of 9 weeks. Aligning the community OT service with the multidisciplinary teams within GP clusters meant the service was easier to access with reduced waiting times and improved patient outcomes.
- Occupational therapists in the Northwich Primary Care Network set up a service to help those with memory concerns. Those assessed by an occupational therapist were diagnosed on average 45 days earlier and the number of inappropriate referrals was reduced. The number of occupational therapists in the primary care network has risen from zero to three since 2022.
- Multidisciplinary teams involving occupational therapists in Somerset are using AI to identify individuals at risk of unplanned hospital admissions. Those identified can then be invited to take part in an OT assessment. Pilots have successfully reduced resident falls by 35%, attendances to Emergency Departments by 60% and ambulance callouts by 8.7%.
- The Lanarkshire primary care occupational therapy service established a blended delivery model in 2017, offering online, phone, home, community and in-person consultations. Users of the service, which supports individuals facing functional decline due to physical or mental health issues, reported 86% improved function, 94% greater satisfaction with roles, and 93% improved mental wellbeing. Additionally, 60% of users required fewer GP appointments, increasing primary care capacity through OT interventions.
- In Northern Ireland, three occupational therapists working as mental health practitioners in GP surgeries, as part of a multidisciplinary team, are improving lives and driving efficiencies in primary care. In three months, they provided over 6,000 consultations in the Causeway GP Federation area, which resulted in 97% of patients, who responded to a survey, being very satisfied or satisfied. The local adult community mental health teams also reported a 43% reduction in referral rates.

Quotes

- 'Occupational therapy really helped me at a young age. They advised simple, practical strategies like a ruler with a handle and a sloping desk to help my writing which really improved it. Also things like laying clothes in the order of putting them on, as this was a struggle...I have massive appreciation for the work OTs do!' A young adult.
- 'He seems to be able to recognize his own needs more since the therapy and has been able to attend school much more regularly.' A parent about their child.
- 'The occupational therapist helped my son immensely. We understood more the impact of sensory sensitivities, we used the report to inform school intervention, our OT went to school to talk through interventions. His teacher was wonderful, so engaged. The role of OT has been huge for us as a family.' A parent about their child.
- 'This service has really changed my views on mental health support. It's been a breath of fresh air. We've gone at my pace. It's not intense or imposing. It makes it easier to manage. When I was feeling negative, in a place of despair and a downward spiral, I needed to talk and get a sensible head back on. Occupational therapy helped me align more to my old self. The best way to go into therapy is to want to be better and be willing to do the healing. It can be quite daunting, but that's where all the support comes in, from their specialist training, coaching and signposting.' Paul, following treatment from a mental health occupational therapist.

Sources:

[Occupational therapy for children and young people - RCOT](#)

[The Princess Royal launches new mental health therapy group in Broxtowe - RCOT](#)