

Join our Research Foundation Advisory Group

We're RCOT, the Royal College of Occupational Therapists. We've championed the profession and the people behind it for over 90 years, and today we are thriving with over 36,000 members. Then and now, we're here to help achieve life-changing breakthroughs for our members, for the people they support and for society as a whole. We want people to be at the heart of the work we do and to help us make decisions about that work. This includes having people with lived experience on our Research Foundation Advisory Group.

What is occupational therapy?

Occupational therapy helps you live your best life at home, at work – and everywhere else. It's about being able to do the 'occupations' you need, want and have to do. That could mean overcoming challenges learning at school, going to work, playing sport or simply doing the dishes.

What is an occupational therapist?

Occupational therapists work with you to recommend adjustments to the way you live by looking at the relationship between the activities you do every day, the challenges you're facing, and your environment.

What is the RCOT Research Foundation?

The RCOT Research Foundation gives money or grants to RCOT members to do research that benefits occupational therapy and the people it helps. Once a year, we have three types of research grants available:

- **Research Priority Grant:** One £100,000 grant for research that meets our [top ten research priorities for occupational therapy in the UK](#) and helps other occupational therapists become involved in research
- **Research Career Development Grants:** Up to two grants totalling £20,000 for research that helps occupational therapist on their research career and meets our [top ten research priorities for occupational therapy in the UK](#)
- **Systematic Review Grants:** Up to two grants totalling £20,000 for an occupational therapy researcher to review all the evidence on a certain topic, known as a 'systematic review'.

What does the Advisory Group do?

The Advisory Group helps to decide which researchers should receive grants. It is made up of RCOT colleagues, occupational therapists, other health professionals with research experience and two people with lived experience. Each person is normally part of the Advisory Group for three years.

What would be my role on the Advisory Group?

You would make sure that the views of people with lived experience of physical and mental health conditions, their families and carers and their communities are considered when deciding which researchers should receive grants. You'd give your views about each application and think about:

- **The research topic:** Is this a priority for people with lived experience, their families and carers and the wider public?
- **How people who access services and the public generally are involved in the research:** Does the application have a plan to include those who access services and/or the public in the research? Is the plan reasonable?

When are meetings and what will I need to do to?

You will need to attend one meeting per year, usually in early June. Meetings have recently been held via Zoom, but may also be at our office on Borough High Street, London. The meeting time depends on the format and location, but it usually takes between three and four hours. If you attend in person, refreshments and lunch are provided.

In 2024, the Advisory Group meeting will take place on Tuesday 4 June, though the time and location aren't decided yet.

You'll need to do some preparation before the meeting. This will include reading specific sections of applications. You are not expected to read all of the application. You are also not expected to have an in-depth understanding of the research methods. Here's what you'll need to read:

- Plain English summary (250 word limit for this section)
- Description of involvement of people who access services and their carers and families (350 word limit)
- Impact of research (750 word limit)
- Plans to let others know about the research findings (350 word limit)
- Costs for public involvement (no word limit).

The number of applications we receive each year varies, but it usually ranges from 5 to 15. Applications are reviewed by two independent experts and then are sent to Advisory Group members one month before the meeting. We can send them electronically using an Office 365 Sharepoint site or post them to you as paper copies. We can support you to use the Sharepoint site if that's your preference.

What if I need support to be an Advisory Group member?

We'll ask what support you need to be involved in the Research Foundation Advisory Group and try to support your needs within our resources.

We encourage people from diverse backgrounds to apply for this role. If English is not your first language and you need assistance with understanding or commenting on professional documents, please get in touch with Angie Thompson at RCOT to discuss: 0203 141 4615.

How will I be compensated for my time and expenses?

We will compensate you £150 for your time, including preparation and taking part in the meeting.

We will cover reasonable expenses to attend meetings, such as:

- travel and subsistence costs

- childcare costs
- carer costs.

For more information, please see RCOT's Reward and Recognition Policy on [this web page](#).

In summary, your role would include:

- Attending one meeting a year for three years, virtually or at RCOT's office on Borough High Street, London
- Reviewing specific sections of research applications before each meeting
- Sharing your thoughts on applications and valuing all contributions
- Working with other Advisory Group members to agree applications for grant funding
- Adhering to our [privacy policy](#) in line with the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act

What skills and experience do I need for this role?

Experience and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An interest in occupational therapy • Some understanding of involving people in research • Current or previous experience of accessing occupational therapy services, either for you or for someone you have cared for
Skills and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good communication skills • Access to the internet in a quiet and confidential space • Ability to participate in online meetings using appropriate technology, such as a laptop or tablet • Access to and ability to use email • Ability to maintain and respect confidentiality • Ability to understand and comment on professional documents written in English

How do I become a member of the Advisory Group?

You'll need to complete the self-nomination form and send it to RCOT Research and Development Officer angie.thompson@rcot.co.uk by **29 February 2024**.

You can fill the form in yourself, or you can give your answers verbally and we'll fill in the form for you. To complete the form verbally, please contact Angie Thompson on 0203 141 4615.

We'll then review all forms we receive and choose two new members with lived experience to join the Advisory Group. We'll let you know if you've been selected by late March.

What if I have some questions?

You can contact Angie Thompson, Research and Development Officer, at: angie.thompson@rcot.co.uk or telephone 0203 141 4615. Please note she only works till 3pm.