

Welcome to your Northern Ireland region newsletter!

Read on for an update on Committee membership and opportunities available to get involved with us and across RCOT. There's also the opportunity to meet the new Policy and Public Affairs Lead (Northern Ireland) at our event next month.

## Our news

### Committee update and opportunities to get involved

Joshua Kendall, our Social Media lead, has stepped down from his role on the committee. We are so thankful to Joshua for all that he has done for the Committee while he was here and wish him all the very best.

Our secretary, Genevieve Gavin, has also stepped down. We would like to thank her for her help and support and send her good wishes for the future.



We have opportunities available on our committee at this exciting time when RCOT are reimagining our communities, including the regions. If you would like to get involved, please [contact us](#) and we'll be delighted to have a chat with you about opportunities on our committee and plans for the rest of this year.

[Contact us](#)

### Reimagining Communities at RCOT

We're delighted to be involved in the reimagining communities project at RCOT. This project is looking to create communities where members can feel like they belong. We'll be continuing to contribute to this project over the next few months by taking part in the test and learn phase.

You can find out more about this project [on the website](#).

### Welcome to Cliona McCarney, RCOT Policy and Public Affairs Lead (Northern Ireland)

Cliona McCarney has recently taken on the role of Policy and Public Affairs Lead at the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT). In this position, she is responsible for shaping and advancing the policy agenda for occupational therapy in Northern Ireland. Her work involves collaborating with stakeholders, including RCOT members, policy experts, and government officials across health, housing, social care, and education sectors. Cliona's efforts are focused on increasing access to occupational therapy and influencing policies to reflect the core principles of the profession.

We'd like to welcome Cliona to her new role at RCOT in Northern Ireland. We look forward to working with her and supporting her to influence and promote our profession with key stakeholders. We've asked Cliona to do a quick introduction so you can get to know her.

Cliona has a background in politics and spent time working in political affairs and lobbying in London and the United States. She worked as a political advisor at the Northern Ireland Assembly at Stormont and was heavily involved in the 2019 General Election and the New Decade, New Approach deal to restore Stormont in 2020. Cliona also worked at the NI Confederation for Health and Social Care (NICON) as a Member Services Officer and was involved in the large annual NICON conference. Her most recent role was with the Royal College of General Practitioners in Northern Ireland, serving as their Policy and Public Affairs Manager. In this role, she worked to raise the profile of general practice and represent 1400 GPs across Northern Ireland. If you would like to contact Cliona, you can do via [email](#).

### **Cliona McCarney visiting NI Trusts**

We are supporting Cliona McCarney, new Policy and Public Affairs Lead at RCOT, to meet members across NI by hosting lunches for members. These events will be organised by the Trusts.

For those unable to attend these events, we are hosting a virtual event on 22 May for you to meet Cliona and find out what's happening in NI. See our events section for more information.

### **Northern Ireland Workforce Advisory Group**

RCOT are looking for members in Northern Ireland who would be interested in joining a Workforce Advisory Group to support the delivery of our first [Workforce Strategy](#). Our strategy touches every element of OT and sets out how occupational therapy needs to change to have maximum impact.

By 2035, we need to have an occupational therapy workforce that is:

- equipped to focus on prevention and early intervention
- based primarily within communities
- confident and skilled in championing inclusion and occupational justice
- empowering people to pursue the occupations that they value.

If you would be interested in find out more about joining the Advisory Group, [complete this short form](#).

### **Could you be the next Council member representing Northern Ireland?**

RCOT are looking for a member in Northern Ireland to join Council. You can find out more about the role of a Council member [on the website](#), including the remit of the role and how to nominate yourself.

## **Our events**

### **Meet and greet with Cliona McCarney, PPA Lead in NI with an opportunity to hear more about influencing work in NI Wednesday 22 May 2024, 7-8pm Virtual MS Teams**

We are delighted to host this event to update members in Northern Ireland to introduce Cliona McCarney, recently appointed Policy and Public Affairs Lead at RCOT.

We'll talk about what is happening politically, and how occupational therapy is being promoted to our key stakeholders, including Government and Departments.

Cliona will give us an update on:

- what's happening at Stormont and what are RCOT doing
- the Workforce Strategy in Northern Ireland
- opportunities to get involved with RCOT Advisory Groups and what this would involve.

[\*\*Register now\*\*](#)

## News from across RCOT

### Strengthening our governance to safeguard our future

We have big ambitions for the profession, and to be able to deliver on them, we need our governance to be fit for purpose and future-proof. Council is reviewing our governance, looking at the rules and systems that guide how we're run, to ensure we follow good practice, are legally compliant and best placed to make informed business decisions.

[Read about it on our new governance hub](#) or meet Council members at a drop-in and they'll talk you through it and answer your questions.

### Together, let's make a bigger impact

We launched our first ever [Workforce Strategy](#) in March. It creates a path towards our vision for an expanded occupational therapy workforce – positioned to have maximum impact in improving people's health and quality of life by 2035. Through our strategy, we'll equip you with the skills and resources to be a leader, embrace innovation and champion health equity for all.

Read the [strategy](#) today and get involved.

### Annual Conference 2024 tickets are open

Our two-day online event – #RCOT2024 – will take place on **Wednesday 12–Thursday 13 June 2024**. You'll hear strong opinions, get into the debates that matter and discover high-level unique knowledge, perspectives and vision. It's a showcase for occupational therapy, bringing together members and non-members from across the profession.

Snap up your ticket to our Annual Conference at our best price – before our express discount ends on 16 May 2024. [Find out more and book your ticket](#).

## Stay in touch

You can stay up to date with us on social media – follow us on [Facebook](#). You can also contact us at [rcot.nireland@rcot.co.uk](mailto:rcot.nireland@rcot.co.uk).