

# **College of Occupational Therapists Strategy for Occupational Therapy in Mental Health Services Project**

## **Project Information**

The College has recognised that there is a need for leadership and vision for occupational therapy services within mental health, particularly given the changes in legislation and recent policy drivers. To this end, the Council of the College of Occupational Therapists (COT) has agreed within the COT Business Plan to give financial support to this project.

The main objective for the project is that “by the year 2015, all occupational therapy services within mental health services will be based on an understanding of the occupational nature of people, within a framework of evidence-based service provision and client centred practice.”

The aims of the project are:

1. To create a strategic vision, guiding principles and an action plan for the future of occupational therapy services in the field of mental health.
2. To enhance the quality of life of service users by developing a strategy for occupational therapy in mental health services that is centred on service users’ needs and that reasserts the profession’s philosophy that occupation is essential to health and well-being.
3. To give leadership to occupational therapists and promote their contribution to, and engagement with, evidence-based mental health services.
4. To provide a framework to enable commissioners to secure the delivery of high quality and effective occupational therapy services.

The scope of the strategy will include occupational therapy services in mental health services from cradle to grave and will be set within the current UK legal and policy context. It will encompass services provided in primary, secondary and tertiary care, including specialist areas such as mental health promotion, eating disorders, drug and alcohol abuse, and forensic / secure services. The inclusion of the needs of those with co-occurring diagnoses, such as mental health problems with a learning difficulty or sensory or physical impairment plus carers, is also important.

The strategy will be applicable to all the countries within the UK.

The desired outcomes include the production of a UK-wide strategic vision with guiding principles and an action plan for occupational therapists working within mental health that will:

- Include a clear statement which expresses the importance of understanding the occupational nature of people;
- Include a set of guiding principles that will inform occupational therapy practice and shape future service delivery, with examples of future occupational therapy services within mental healthcare that will inform commissioners of services.
- Include an action plan to deliver the strategic vision and principles for service delivery in occupational therapy
- Be centred in service users’ needs and aspirations;

- Be linked to the current UK legal and Policy context (ensuring alignment with implementation of the Social Exclusion report);
- Provide examples of the future shape and focus of occupational therapy services within mental healthcare that will inform commissioners of services

The final document will be relevant to occupational therapists working in the field of mental health, commissioners and other interested stakeholders, including service users and carers.

The project will be taken forward in five stages:

- I Literature review to produce statement on occupation, draft vision and guiding principles
- II Consultation with practitioners (See Annex I for membership of reference group)
- III Testing statement, vision and guiding principles with stakeholders
- IV Revision and final document
- V Launch at the COT annual conference in July 2006.

Following a tendering process and interview, The Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health were successful in being selected as the project team to take forward the next stages of the project. Their team consists of two principal investigators: Dr Kamaldeep Dhillon (Senior Researcher, Workforce, SCMH) and Debbie Green (Occupational Therapist and Programme Lead SCMH). Additionally, three other senior staff at SCMH will contribute towards the project and they are: Dr Bob Grove (Director of Employment Programme), Linda Seymour (Policy and Research Development Manager, Mentality) and Patience Seebohm (Senior Researcher, Employment Programme).

### **Project update**

Stage I has been completed and we are currently in the second phase of the project. On the website you will be able to find the questionnaire for completion plus a draft of the statement, vision and guiding principles for developing the mental health occupational therapy services of the future that best meet service user needs. The statement, vision and principles is work in progress and incomplete at this stage. It may well spark debate and we would be happy to hear your comments. These should be forwarded to [debbie.green@scmh.org.uk](mailto:debbie.green@scmh.org.uk)

As part of this project, members will be able to find the following question on the **COT discussion forum**:

*There is an emerging debate in OT practice about the balance between a hope and recovery approach and the need to be involved in crisis and control. Is the present balance right? How should it be changed?*

Log onto the forum and engage in the emerging debate!