

Solihull Adult Social Care Principal Occupational Therapist Annual Report 2023-2024



Pete Budge, Head of Service, Promoting Independence, Principal Occupational Therapist

This annual report highlights the work achieved by Occupational Therapy (OT) via the OT Development Project, OT practitioners (OT's, OT Assistants) and outlines work priorities for 2024-25

The role of Principal OT (POT) outlines the need to undertake strategic work in relation to the provision of Occupational Therapy:

- To provide a clear strategic direction for OT services and professional leadership, support and advice for registered and non-registered OT staff and managers of OT staff.
- To ensure OT staff have the necessary skills and support to enable them to provide high quality care and support; to make explicit the skills required, and work with managers to ensure that regular supervision, training and development occurs.
- Take a leadership role in partnership working with other agencies as we develop an integrated approach to service developments which will deliver improved outcomes for people

During 2023-24 there was some movement within OT strategic management, including a POT vacancy January 2023 to June 2023, followed by a POT in post June 2023-end March 2024, with Pete Budge, Head of Service Promoting Independence undertaking the Principal OT role from April 2024 to oversee POT strategic work and its momentum.

Achievements in 2023-2024

Strength Based Practice – driving culture change.

OT continued to contribute to driving forward strengths-based principles and approaches in practice, working closely with social work colleagues and partners to advocate, include and enable residents to use their strengths in undertaking and achieving meaningful activity, actively contributing to better outcomes.

OT has focused on improvements in recording residents' personal identity details in order to build improved strategic data around demographics and areas of community need and thus contributing to a strengths-based community data resource.

OT developed intervention impact measurements within the ASC recording system, LAS to demonstrate evidence of intervention outcomes for residents. After extensive background work regular reporting on Care Act domain outcomes, independence levels and customer satisfaction feedback is now collected and reviewed to support further development work and demonstration of OT value and resident experience.

Moving with Dignity

OT undertook a successful 12-month pilot project whereby practice was developed from scratch with a small, specialist, seconded team to develop processes, risk assessment, in depth focused practice which would focus on 2-carer care packages and assess with a view to providing optimised, proportionate and strengths-based outcomes.

The model delivered much learning and successfully overcame practical issues to deliver the concept of safe and suitable “single handed care” in Solihull, optimise care packages, bringing benefits to residents, care providers and ASC alike, whilst linking with a parallel workstream in the ICS.

Despite the project coming to an end in March, further work is planned to be resumed and will contribute to wider directorate prevention and care planning going forward and will be renamed Better Care at Home in line with ICS workstreams.

Raising the OT profile

Work continued to build and raise the profile of Occupational Therapy in ASC to bring the benefits of practitioner work to a wider understanding, within and external to ASC. To this end, an engagement plan was drafted with support from the Engagement Officer, resource drafted within the service and work undertaken with colleagues in ASC, including social work teams, commissioning - and with members of the public.

A service leaflet was drafted, printed and distributed with GP surgeries, libraries and other public venues; webpages were reviewed and updated to better represent work and remit undertakings and members of staff attended organised engagement events where members of the public had the opportunity to ask questions and learn about Occupational Therapy's role in supporting independence.

For staff, a successful away day was set up by the OT team manager, successfully building professional pride and focus, as well as developing team identity and coherence throughout the year.

Learning and Development

Progress was made in the year with an update to the available training offer for Occupational Therapists as part of a Continued Professional Development review. This included refreshing the “standard” training offer, frequency of training sessions (for example in moving and handling training requirements) and agreeing an approach for ad-hoc or specialist training needs. An example here is where specialist home adaptations training was commissioned and undertaken to bring this area of practice into focus and align with practice needs.

Arrangements with apprentices came into focus with the first two OT supported apprentices graduating and moving to qualified OT positions in their respective teams – work was undertaken to confirm future apprentice support which was especially relevant at a time of recruitment challenges into social care OT.

OT continued to support the ASC Learning and Development Conference and had good OT representation in hosting some sessions at this valued event, as well as making use of the breadth of relevant content.

Work started with the new Social Care Academy to ensure OT requirements remain in focus.

Recruitment and retention

Work continued against a difficult backdrop of recruitment issues which was evident nationally when looking to recruit to vacancies, and especially so in social care.

Successes were achieved in work with higher education institutions to raise the profile of social care OT, offering shadowing opportunities, talking at University events to showcase social care OT and in developing a recruitment offer.

This included the improved training and CPD offer, Solihull flexible working offer, strong leadership and a wide-ranging advertising of posts to give full promotion of opportunities, alongside initiatives such as registration payments and profile/recognition of OT locally.

Professional Standards and Practice Development

Work was undertaken to support OTs on the upcoming HCPC registration professional standards updates planned for later in 2024, with a focus on how these related to practice with training support offered and delivered.

OT contributed to an ongoing review of the SMBC Moving and Handling of people policy, participating in a working group led by Health and Safety but also linking with colleagues in Childrens Services and Education.

OTs participated for the second time in the LGA sponsored Employer Standards survey with a high completion rate which enabled a clear picture to emerge of how OT staff feel about their SMBC employment. A report was co-drafted with the PSW which contained much positive feedback regarding OT practice and employment status.

After receiving in depth support and training at the instigation of the team manager, OTs began to implement MCA and DoLS practice in OT assessments formally, contributing to wider social care work and assessment.

Home Improvement Agency

Work has been underway to develop a Home Improvement Agency (HIA) for Solihull which would bring together some existing and some new services to support residents to remain safe and independent at home. These include Aids and Adaptations, Handyperson Service, Minor works and Home Hazard Assessment using Trusted Assessors, Telecare, Technology Assisted Care (TEC), Housing Occupational Therapy, Energy Efficiency support - all under a trusted brand and single management for public recognition, uptake and performance. This work continues to progress and a business case for the HIA creation is now underway.

Childrens OT

With the OT Service being all-age, children's work continued apace but also saw some significant recruitment challenges to this specialist area of work.

Following several rounds of recruitment, workforce planning was undertaken that included links to OT Higher Education, outreach to local Universities and Colleges, focused SMBC recruitment work including the proposed development of a Preceptorship programme for newly qualified OTs, registration payments and a clear Continued Professional Development offer. This proved fruitful with successful recruitment of staff and profile development of the service. A Memorandum of Understanding with Childrens Services, including around levels of proposed resource, throughput expectations, recording protocols, escalation procedures and any potential development of a specific SEND OT, was drafted/initiated, to be taken forward to conclusion in 2024.

Digital, recording and outcomes

OTs successfully trialled, appraised and then adopted new "hybrid" laptops which offered functionality more aligned with areas of practice and need when working in the community. These allowed OTs to undertake quality conversations with residents, demonstrate videos of prospective interventions such as Through Floor Lifts or stairlifts or other equipment to assist in explaining or showing an intervention to best effect. Detachable keyboards and useful apps were all pursued successfully.

Work within ASC's recording system Liquid Logic was also successfully taken forward by bringing the OT recording into the main system framework reporting, giving close functionality to social work and better reporting to support managers.

Also within Liquid Logic, outcome measures were developed, trialled and then embedded into the system, resulting in the reporting of Care Act aligned outcomes following OT intervention to be reportable as standard.

Partnerships

Alongside Engagement work, close links with partners continued to be developed and fostered, both internally and externally.

This included social work teams, but also externally with Health teams including Community Nursing, Community Therapy and Community Falls teams where clear representation of remit and closer working remains on the agenda.

Occupational Therapy staff feedback – Director and Assistant Director groups

Workshops were held in November 2023 with the Director and Assistant Directors of ASC where feedback from staff was encouraged to inform open dialogue, feedback about what is going well and engage in open communication about ideas, suggestions and efficiencies. Session feedback included positive feedback around the work done to boost the OT training opportunities, time made available to recognise the value of development, close communication time with peers and opportunities to connect and share practice, as well valuing OT's dedicated managers.

Valuable feedback was also received around various operational service aspects which was, in turn, acted upon. This included a reminder for ASC to remain aware and make use of OT ergonomic expertise when commissioning care homes; to develop the existing OT clinic offer for accessible location; to adopt Better Care at Home more widely and to embed OT more into resident's access into Adult Social Care

Compliments

Occupational Therapy received numerous compliments throughout the year, both recognising the value which OT interventions brought to resident's lives as well as the kindness and professionalism of staff. A selection are included below which includes compliments from other professionals, care providers as well as residents themselves:

"I have been out to visit Mrs K to look at her access problems today. She was speaking ever so highly of X (the OT) and how they helped coordinate her move from Walsall to Solihull. She said "X was ever so good and he's so knowledgeable".

"Dear Y(the OT) - I have read the (moving and handling care) Plan through with interest. I respond now to let you know that the (agency) carers tonight were genuinely happy to find her (the resident) more relaxed and in much less pain with the hoist than pulling herself up as previously required. I originally regarded this pair (carers) as tough guys and it is a real eye opener to realise how much they had shared her pain. So, including her and me, you have already made five people happier."

"thank you, you are a god send"

"Mrs A said she is very grateful and stated that she is now able to access the shower and the community independently , she no longer has to rely on her husband who was carrying her over the step into the porch and then again down a further step from the front door."

"Answerphone message received via daughter B. She said that the stairlift has now been installed for her mother who is thrilled with the outcome. B said that everybody involved in the process has been professional and efficient and that the stairlift company used have done a wonderful job. Jane thanked OT for their involvement throughout the process."

"We can't thank you enough for the help and support you have given us. The changes you have made to our home have been transformational and enabled the whole family to be more independent and live a higher quality of life. Thank you"

"A Client who is living with dementia and has complex health conditions and his wife is his main carer stated (OT) "have been marvellous" and provided much needed equipment, including a hospital bed..... "I would have been lost without their help"....."Y (the OT) was fantastic, they came in and did everything...you've been amazing"

"Mrs X wanted to thank everyone that has been involved in her fathers case. Mrs X wanted to compliment the team in respect to adaptations completed for her parents. She stated that all adaptations have been a great help and have allowed her mother and father to remain in their own home, which she is very grateful of"

Priorities for 2024-2025

The OT development project remains underway and has identified several areas of opportunity to build on or take forward in the next financial year:

- To capitalise on preventing, reducing and delaying of care needs within the Duty OT team – developing proposals which contribute to, supplement or sit alongside social work Duty functions
- To progress the Moving with Dignity (Better Care at Home) project with continued proof of concept and to progress to a permanent practice footing to give proportionate, dignified care outcomes for residents and improved proportionate care package pathways for residents and to contribute to ICS workstream and linkages with Health colleagues
- To implement and track OT outcome measurement tools, utilising in analysis and reporting to optimise use of OT
- To raise the social care OT profile and its contribution to Adult Social Care, Childrens Services, BCF outcomes and other stakeholders
- To attend and advocate for OT services at public and in house engagement events.
- To develop and distribute written resources regarding OT services with GP surgeries, community hubs, libraries, other community access points
- To draft clear service remit information, access to service and resident pathway information for sharing with partners, referrers, professionals
- To performance manage and drive down waiting times for OT services and minimise risk for those waiting
- To further develop the OT Continued Professional Development, training, preceptorship and Practice Education and Apprenticeship support offer with POD and Solihull Social Care Academy
- To evaluate funding for i-Dapt adaptations drafting system and AskSARA if recommended/supported by SCH
- To draft and collate a range of case studies where OT recommend and successfully utilise Technology Enhanced Care
- To review terminology used in self-assessment forms and make recommended changes where identified
- To determine wider reporting requirements from LAS to assist and support managers, including (but not limited to) waiting lists management, case throughput, clinic demand, additional outcomes monitoring and other as deemed necessary/proportionate
- To draft and formalise a Memorandum of Understanding with Childrens Services for Childrens OT