Specialist Section – Housing

Member handbook



October 2022

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# Introduction from Chair

Dear Member

Welcome to the 2022/23 Members Handbook. I believe that appropriate housing is the key to optimising people’s occupational performance, improving their quality of life and happiness. Adaptive works are one solution but planning and inclusion in community are vital to future proof in order to meet everyone’s needs, from our youngest people living with disabilities, to our rising older population and this is required across all 4 nations. Access to and Inclusion in the community is essential for the health and wellbeing of our population.

Positive outcomes are essential measures for efficacy of practice. Please help the specialist section this year to better evidence the positive outcomes that you are achieving in practice and share them to promote the benefits of occupational therapy nationally. Occupational therapists working within the housing arena may be low in number compared to those in the health arena but the interventions have equal impact on people’s lives. We need to be able to record and share successes and we must not be afraid to publicise and promote this.

The National Executive committee (NEC) is outlined on page 7. Their commitment and enthusiasm to the specialist housing section is commendable and I thank them all for their continued support.

We know that training budgets in most organisations are a thing of the past and understand funding and time to attend events can be difficult in these circumstances. Our study days are free to members, and we offer a significantly reduced cost to members for conference. We will continue to keep costs as low as reasonably possible. We will also keep the content and publications relevant to your professional practice. Keeping up our CPD is our own responsibility and involvement with a specialist section is a really good way to demonstrate a continuing interest and enthusiasm for our profession.

We need your help to keep the section running successfully. You can contribute by any of the following ways:

* Offering to undertake a presentation or workshop locally or at our conference
* Responding to requests and queries from fellow members
* Offering to assist in organising a study day
* Offering to read and comment on a consultation document or to collate comments
* Taking a role on specific projects
* Writing an article or a book review for the email network and / or OT News.

Please help in whatever way you can. It all helps with your continued professional development and advancement of this specialist section.

If you would like to attend an NEC meeting to observe or contribute, please contact our secretary Celia Talamo to arrange this.

**David Owen**

Chair of the National Executive Committee

Specialist Section – Housing

# National Executive Committee

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Role  | Name  | Description of role and contact |
| **Chair**  | **David Owen** | Lead the Specialist Section National Executive Committee (NEC), ensuring that it fulfils its core business and responsibilities in line with our governance. Work collaboratively with the committee, helping them achieve the aims of the Specialist Section. Chair committee meetings and be our key point of contact. **housing.chair@rcot.branches.co.uk** |
| **Vice Chair**  | **Kate Sheehan** | Support the Chair and the National Executive Committee (NEC), ensuring that it fulfils its core business and responsibilities in line with our governance. Take responsibility for NEC in the absence of the chair. Work collaboratively with the committee, helping them achieve the aims of the Specialist Section. **housing.vice-chair@rcot.branches.co.uk** |
| **Secretary** | **Celia Talamo** | Support the management of the NEC with their communication; collate and circulate agenda items, record, and collate minutes distributing them to the NEC and RCOT. **housing.secretary@rcotbranches.co.uk** |
| **Treasurer**  | **Mary Putnam**  | Ensure that the Specialist Sections financial affairs are managed in compliance with the current RCOT Standing Financial Instructions and Financial Guidelines. Act as the main point of contact regarding financial matters for the Specialist Section.**housing.treasurer@rcotbranches.co.uk** |
| **Newsletter Editor**  | **Matthew Box** | Produce the Specialist Section e-newsletter with the support from members and the NEC and encourage the writing of news and articles for inclusion in the e-newsletter.   **housing.newseditor@rcotbranches.co.uk** |
| **Research and Education lead**  | **Helen Brown** | Lead and support Research and Development within the Specialist Section and lead on Research and Development enquiries. Assist the Specialist Section in the running of events and CPD activities. **housing.research@rcotbranches.co.uk** |
| **Website and Social Media lead**  | **Ruth Parker** | Maintain the webpages and engage with social media accounts on behalf of the Specialist Section. Be the first point of contact for members within social media platforms **housing.communications@rcotbranches.co.uk** |
| **Accessibility & Inclusive Design link** | **Jacquel Runnalls** | Lead and support members on occupational health. **housing.coopted5@rcotbranches.co.uk** |

## Region Representatives

Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are nations within the UK and each one region. England is broken down into 4 regions.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Region   | Name  | Description of role and contact |
| **England: North** | **Michelle Finney**  | To act as a link between the National Executive Committee (NEC) and the members based in England to support and coordinate the role and work of the region.  **housing.coopted4@rcotbranches.co.uk** |
| **England: Midlands** | **Vacant** | To act as a link between the National Executive Committee (NEC) and the members based in England to support and coordinate the role and work of the region.  **housing.coopted3@rcotbranches.co.uk** |
| **England: South West** | **Vacant** | To act as a link between the National Executive Committee (NEC) and the members based in England to support and coordinate the role and work of the region.  **housing.coopted1@rcotbranches.co.uk** |
| **South East (including London)** | **Vacant** | To act as a link between the National Executive Committee (NEC) and the members based in England to support and coordinate the role and work of the region.  **housing.coopted2@rcotbranches.co.uk** |
| **Northern Ireland** | **Shane Elliott** | To act as a link between the National Executive Committee (NEC) and the members based in Northern Ireland to support and coordinate the role and work of the region.  **housing.committee12@rcotbranches.co.uk** |
| **Scotland** | **Jill Pritchard** | To act as a link between the National Executive Committee (NEC) and the members based in Scotland to support and coordinate the role and work of the region.  **housing.committee11@rcotbranches.co.uk** |
| **Wales** | **Amy Pugh** | To act as a link between the National Executive Committee (NEC) and the members based in Wales to support and coordinate the role and work of the region.  **housing.countries@rcotbranches.co.uk** |

Aims

Our Specialist Section was set up to promote and share skills and experiences of occupational therapists with a particular interest in housing. Our members work with clients of all ages with a wide range of disabilities, including physical disabilities, learning disabilities and mental health problems. They are employed in a variety of areas including Social Services, Housing Departments, Housing Associations, Housing Improvement Agencies, Independent Practice, Disability Housing Services and Health Trusts and Local Authorities.

## Our aims are:

* to be a resource of information and good practice.
* to promote and support education, courses and seminars in its subject field.
* to promote liaison with service users, professional bodies and providers of housing to achieve good functional design, both new build and adaptations of existing property.
* to campaign at local and national level for improved policies and better standards in housing.
* to encourage research and development in the housing field.
* to serve as a resource to RCOT on housing and community matters.

# Member benefits

As part of our Specialist Section, you can access a range of benefits. They include:

## Monthly newsletter

We send a monthly newsletter to members at the end of each month. This will contain information on upcoming events along with information relevant to members working in housing. We encourage members to get involved and send information on pieces of work they are doing, any emerging areas or to share skills and expertise and also if they have a query that the wider membership can help with.

The newsletter will also contain information on policy relevant to housing. Any responses where feedback or comments are required will also be included. It is very important that members feed into these as your comments can be used in the response.

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please contact our newsletter editor.

## Social media

Please follow us if you are on social media. You will be able to keep up to date between newsletters with information relevant to you.

Follow us:

* [Twitter](https://twitter.com/RCOT_Housing)
* [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/RCOT-Specialist-Section-Housing-110561598311971)

## Specialist Section webpages

We have [Specialist Section – Housing webpages](https://www.rcot.co.uk/about-us/specialist-sections/housing-rcot-ss/member-resources) on the RCOT website. This contains information on for members including member resources, useful links and contact details for NEC members. You should be logged into your RCOT account to access these resources.

## Free CPD events

We host monthly webinars which are of interest to our members working within the area of housing. These events are free to all our members and are available on demand after the session for members wishing to watch again or catch up if they have missed the session.

All events are available for booking through the [RCOT events webpage](https://www.rcot.co.uk/events).

## Reduced costs for our conference

Members can benefit from a reduced cost for attending our Specialist Section Conference. We are delighted to be able to hold our next conference on 17 and 18 November 2022 in Conway Hall, London. More information on this will be included in your monthly newsletter.

## Connect with members local to you

Our regions enable you to connect with members local to you. While most events are now online for all members, our region leads can arrange meetings within their geographical area for you to meet and connect with members who live near you.

# Research and development

We assist members with their research and development. Research requests can be included within the newsletter for members to participate in if they wish to. All requests to share a research project should have ethical approval in place before submitting. Anyone who has any queries or would like to share a research project, please contact our research and education lead.

## Elma Shearer Award

For Excellence in Community Occupational Therapy (Housing)

This is presented at our conference to a member who has been recognised and nominated by his/her peers for promoting occupational therapy to the highest possible standard. The award winner keeps the shield for a year (returned at the following ARM).

Nominations for the award are invited from RCOT Specialist Section - Housing members annually during July and August. The successful nominee is chosen by a committee of RCOT Specialist Section - Housing members who are not on the NEC.

The nominee must fill 3 of the following criteria:

* Continuing Personal Development: continuing to keep a keen interest in housing issues, continuous learning, reading, attending courses, research and publication of articles of interest. Members of the professional body and any relevant committees.
* Educational development: working with occupational therapy students and staff members both qualified and unqualified to enhance the OT service provided either locally and/or regionally.
* Promoting the profession: Keeping the housing agenda at the forefront of discussion at a local and strategic level.
* Personable and approachable: Always keenly aware of fellow workers and supportive of their aspirations and ensuring their voices are heard to improve the service provided.
* Proven record of excellence in service provision to service users and their carers: have worked in the community/housing setting for a minimum of 5 years.

# Background

An Occupational Therapy Special Interest Group in Housing (OTSIGH) was formed in 1987 by Occupational Therapy managers in London Boroughs.

COTSSIH was founded in 1994 and was first registered in February 1995 as a specialist section. COTSSIH began with 5 regional groups, which has now grown to 8 regional groups.

Our first conference was a one-day meeting in Bristol in 1993. In 1998 COTSSIH produced its first book “*Housing Options for Disabled People*” edited by Ruth Bull and published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

COTSSIH published a comprehensive review of research involving occupational therapists in housing in 2004. “*Building in Evidence: Reviewing Housing and Occupational Therapy*” by Darren Awang, strengthened the evidence base for practice and policy in this area. ‘Building in Evidence’ was commissioned by COTSSIH and funded from both COTSSIH and COT resources.

In 2006, following a review of all specialist sections, COTSSIH was re-branded and was re-named College of Occupational Therapists Specialist Section – Housing, (COTSS – Housing).

In 2006 COT Specialist Section - Housing produced a new textbook, *Building on Firm Foundations -* WHURR Publishers. The book focuses on various aspects of occupational therapy in housing and community care.

Following discussions between Frances Heywood and Darren Awang and with support from members at two AGMs; in 2011 COT Specialist Section - Housing formally agreed to support the genHOME Project. The project had a national and international remit to map, organize and link together existing research and evidence, thereby enabling a cohesive approach in the planning and coordination of much-needed future research and evidence generation.

COT Specialist Section - Housing has been active in responding to consultations and parliamentary select committees. These have included the Select Committee on Human Rights and working party on Housing Standards consultation.

In 2017 the specialist section became the Royal College of Occupational Therapists Specialist Section – Housing when the College of Occupational Therapy became the Royal College.