Specialist Section – Mental Health

Member handbook

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# Introduction from Chair

Hello and a very warm welcome to the RCOT Specialist Section – Mental Health. We hope that this handbook is informative and helps you to get the most out of your membership.  We actively support occupational therapists working in mental health services to deliver best practice to help people with mental illness in their recovery.

Membership gives you access to an active national network of occupational therapists.

We provide opportunities for members to exchange, share, and disseminate information via our newsletter, and to participate and take advantage of our numerous free Continuing Professional Development (CPD), webinars, study days, journal clubs and informal networking. We also host an annual conference.

We have members throughout the UK supported by regional representatives and three clinical forums (forensic and prisons, eating disorders and perinatal) which are open for all specialist section members to join.

We work hard, collaborating with and supporting practice regarding mental health practice as well as linking with policy makers and individuals to develop and demonstrate the unique skills we have as occupational therapists.

We are very proactive and engaged committee and we encourage you to be active to gain the most out of your membership.   Please get involved and share knowledge and skills. [Contact us](mailto:enquiries.cotssmh@gmail.com) if you have any feedback or queries.

Thank you for joining our Specialist Section.

Kind regards

**Sarah Fletcher-Shaw**Chair of the National Executive Committee

Specialist Section – Mental Health

# National Executive Committee

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Role | Name | Description of role and contact |
| Chair | Sarah Fletcher-Shaw | 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. |
| Vice Chair | Vacant | 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. |
| Secretary | Raisa Burke | Support the management of the NEC with their communication; to collate and circulate agenda items, record and collate minutes distributing them to the NEC and RCOT. |
| Treasurer | Emma Dawson | Ensure that the Specialist Section 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. |
| Newsletter Editor | Charlotte French | Produce the Specialist Section newsletter with the support from members and the NEC and encourage the writing of news and articles for inclusion in the newsletter. |
| Research and Development lead | Ellen Wainberg | 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. |
| Communications lead | Rachel McGeehin | 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 |
| Event/CPD lead | vacant | Take responsibility to lead, facilitate, support, and have an overview on all the Specialist Section Events and CPD offering. Assist the Specialist Section in the running of events and CPD activities |

## Clinical Forum Representatives

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Clinical Forum | Name | Description of role |
| Clinical Forum  Eating Disorders | Abigail Cardwell and Clare Steedman | Take responsibility to lead, facilitate, support, and have an overview on all the Specialist Section Events and CPD offering. Assist the Specialist Section in the running of events and CPD activities. |
| Clinical Forum  Forensic and Prisons | vacant | Take responsibility to lead, facilitate, support, and have an overview on all the Specialist Section Events and CPD offering. Assist the Specialist Section in the running of events and CPD activities. |
| Clinical Forum  Perinatal | Debra Jeffrey and Davina Jhummun | Take responsibility to lead, facilitate, support, and have an overview on all the Specialist Section Events and CPD offering. Assist the Specialist Section in the running of events and CPD activities. |

**Region Representatives**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Region | Name | Description of role and contact |
| England | 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. |
| Northern Ireland | Jacqueline Frost | 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. |
| Scotland | Niamh Liusadh Mitchell | 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. |
| Wales | Sarah Cavill | 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. |

To contact a committee member or a region or clinical form lead, please email [enquiries.cotssmh@gmail.com](mailto:enquiries.cotssmh@gmail.com).

Aims

The aims of the Specialist Section are to:

* raise awareness and promote the development of knowledge and skills.
* promote and enable Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and networking.
* promote research and support the use of evidence to inform practice.
* support members within their area of practice.
* function as a resource to provide expertise at national a level.
* act as advisors and influencers for and on behalf of the profession and RCOT.

# Member benefits

As part of our Specialist Section, you can access a range of benefits including:

**Monthly newsletter**

You’ll receive a newsletter at the end of each month. This will contain information on upcoming events along with information and resources relevant to members working with older people. We encourage you to get involved and send us information on work you are doing, any emerging areas or share your skills and expertise. You can also let us know if you have a query that the wider membership can help with.

The newsletter will also contain information on policy and practice relevant to your work.

We would love to hear any feedback or comments that you can request via the newsletter. We value your contribution to these pieces of work and your comments may be used in the response.

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please get in touch with our [newsletter editor](mailto:enquiries.cotssmh@gmail.com).

**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 at:

Twitter @RCOT\_MH

Facebook: [RCOT Mental Health | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/RCOTMH/?utm_campaign=984502_Specialist%20Section%20-%20Mental%20Health%20newsletter%20July%202022&utm_medium=email&utm_source=dotdigital)

**Specialist Section webpages**

We have [dedicated pages on the RCOT website](https://www.rcot.co.uk/about-us/specialist-sections/mental-health-rcot-ss). As a member of a Specialist Section, you can access information 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 free events and monthly webinars relevant to our members. All events are available for booking through [our events webpage](https://www.rcot.co.uk/events).

**Reduced costs for our conference**

As a member, you benefit from a reduced cost for attending our Specialist Section conference. More information on this will be included in your monthly newsletter.

**Connect with members local to you**

Our regions allow you to connect with members local to you. Contact your country lead for more information.

**Clinical forums**

Specialist Section clinical forums are a way of bringing occupational therapists with a common specialist interest together to share expertise, learn, meet and network. You can join as many clinical forums as you want to. They are free as part of your membership.

**Awards and learning grants**

Grants are available at different times of the year for research, professional development and events. Look out for these via the monthly newsletter.

**Opportunities to be part of your professional community**

There are lots of ways to get involved with policy, practice, strategy, briefings, develop practice guidelines and leadership skills. We share these opportunities widely within our newsletters and on social media and in dedicated communications.

# Clinical forums

## Clinical forum – Eating Disorders

The clinical forum for Eating Disorders aims to support delivery of best practice for occupational therapy across the UK for people working with adults with an eating disorder. We have representation on the Quality Network for Eating Disorders (QED) advisory group and the national Eating Disorders Advisory Group, and feed into the work of the Specialist Section.

The aims of the forum are:

* Providing a national network of occupational therapists working or have an interest in eating disorders.
* Supporting the development of the evidence-base for occupational therapy for eating disorders.
* Provide resources and information via the website, social media and newsletter.
* Provide learning events and opportunities to learn and share practice.
* Raising awareness of the occupational therapist’s role with eating disorders.
* Provide expertise related to eating disorders to the Royal College of Occupational Therapists.

## Clinical forum – Forensic and Prisons

The clinical forum Forensic and Prisons aims to support delivery of best practice for occupational therapy across the UK for people working with adults within forensic and prison services. Forensic and prison based occupational therapy is concerned with the occupational wellbeing of those who have a history of, or who present as a risk of offending.

The aims of the forum are:

* Support and facilitate communication between members via a range of platforms.
* Provide and promote networking activities relevant to forensic and prison occupational therapists.
* Support development of clinical knowledge and skills among forensic and prison occupational therapists through educational opportunities, such as study days and conferences.
* Develop the occupational evidence base in forensic and prison occupational therapy by supporting research and enhancing research capacity.
* Provide expertise related to forensic and prison services to the Royal College of Occupational Therapists.

## Clinical forum – Perinatal Mental Health

The clinical forum Perinatal Mental Health aims to support delivery of best practice for occupational therapy across the UK for people working within perinatal mental health services.

The aims of the forum are:

* To support a national network of occupational therapists working or who have an interest in perinatal mental health.
* Provide learning events and networking opportunities to develop clinical knowledge and skills and share good practice.
* To support the development of the evidence-base for occupational therapy in perinatal mental health care.
* Provide resources and information via the website, social media, and newsletters.
* Raise awareness of the occupational therapist’s role within perinatal mental health services.
* Provide expertise related to perinatal mental health services to the Royal College of Occupational Therapists.

# 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 us.](mailto:enquiries.cotssmh@gmail.com)

## Annual Innovation and Service Evaluation grant awards

We offer three awards to members for research, innovation, or service evaluation projects of occupational therapy in mental health. Each award is up to £1000. Go to [our webpages](https://www.rcot.co.uk/about-us/specialist-sections/mental-health-rcot-ss/member-resources) for more information.

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# Background

RCOT Specialist Section – Mental Health has its roots in the Association of Occupational Therapists in Mental Health (AOTMH), which was formed out of four independent special interest groups in the 1990s. The four groups who merged to form AOTMH were:

* Occupational Therapists Working in Secure Environments (OTWISE)
* Substance Misuse Occupational Therapists Network (SUBNET)
* Community Mental Health
* Homelessness

AOTMH gained Specialist Section status in 1995 and became part of RCOT in 2006. It then changed its name to ‘College of Occupational Therapists Specialist Section – Mental Health’, and more recently the Royal College of Occupational Therapists Specialist Section – Mental Health.

Copies of the following are held at the RCOT Library:

* Mental Health Special Interest Section Quarterly (1995‐2004)
* AOTMH Bi‐Monthly Briefing (1998 – 2004)
* Mental Health Occupational Therapy (1996 – 2002)
* RCOT SS ‐ MH newsletter (2002 – present)