Specialist Section – Major Health Conditions

Member handbook

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# Introduction from Chair

Dear Member,

A warm welcome to the RCOT Specialist Section – Major Health Conditions. We are so pleased you have chosen to join us.

This handbook is designed to give you some information on the Specialist Section and also to outline the benefits of being part of the Specialist Section and make sure you gain all the benefits of your membership. We provide opportunities for members to share, exchange and disseminate information in the newsletter and provide CPD opportunities for them. Make sure you are receiving your newsletter to avail of these benefits.

We have clinical forums which are available to all Specialist Section members to join. These are part of your membership and you can join one or all of them at no extra cost.

The National Executive Committee for the Specialist Section is a group of hard working volunteers, who lead and coordinate activities and events for our members. However, as Margaret Mead, cultural anthropologist said. “Never depend upon institutions or government to solve problems. All social movements are founded by, guided by, motivated and see through by the passion of individuals!”.

So as members – we also rely on you. There are lots of ways that you can get involved with us including writing a piece for our monthly newsletter, delivering a webinar, attending our networking events, volunteering with the specialist section, contributing to research or responding to national consultations.

We are glad you have joined us and look forward to hearing from you in the months to come.

## Jeni Woods

## Chair of the National Executive Committee

## RCOT Specialist Section – Major Health Conditions

# National Executive Committee

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Role | Name | Description of role |
| Chair | Jeni Woods | 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 | Sarah Lowe | 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 | Clara Chamberlain | 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. |
| Newsletter editor | Bronwen Smithers | 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. |
| Research and Innovation lead | Vacant | 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 | vacant | 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 |
| CPD and Events 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 lead | vacant | To act as a link between the Clinical Forums and the NEC providing an overview of activities and member engagement within the Clinical Forums and supporting these activities. |

## Clinical Forums

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Clinical Forum | Name | Description of role |
| Cancer Care | Helen Bowker, Rosemary Marshall and Sarah Jones | Support the activities of the clinical forum including member engagement and events and act as a link between the clinical forum and the NEC. |
| Palliative Care | Rosie Leaver and Kerry Worfsold | Support the activities of the clinical forum including member engagement and events and act as a link between the clinical forum and the NEC. |
| Cardiac and Respiratory | Lindsey Wright and Aleks Opila | Support the activities of the clinical forum including member engagement and events and act as a link between the clinical forum and the NEC. |

**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 | Nicola Evans | 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 | Vacant | 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 | Louisa Parry | 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 for the Specialist Section, clinical forums or regions, please email [rcotssmajorhealthcondtions@gmail.com](mailto:hopcmembership@gmail.com).

Aims

The aims of the Specialist Section are:

* To promote best practice in all areas of major health conditions and the work of the clinical forums.
* To support high and improving standards of practice through research.
* To work as partners with service users and carers.
* To support and encourage learning and development through study events, publications, and newsletters.
* To develop knowledge and skills of the workforce.
* To work effectively with partner organisations and professional bodies, in partnership with RCOT.
* To advise on and support the development of national agendas.
* To emphasise the importance of educating occupational therapy students about the value of occupational therapy in major health conditions and the work of the clinical forums.

# Member benefits

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

**Newsletter**

You’ll receive a newsletter at the end of every other month. This will contain information on upcoming events along with information and resources relevant to members working in major health conditions. 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:rcotssmajorhealthcondtions@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 on:

Twitter: @RCOTMajorHealth

Facebook: [RCOT Specialist Section for Major Health Conditions | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/RCOTMajorHealth/)

**Specialist Section webpages**

We have [dedicated pages on the RCOT website](https://www.rcot.co.uk/about-us/specialist-sections/major-health-conditions-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 monthly webinars and events relevant to our members.  All events are available for booking through the [RCOT 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 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 and our webpage.

**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 forums facilitate debate, networking, innovation and news in a specific domain of practice. They host events and study days that influence practice and support the Specialist Section. These study days also support Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activity and the development of occupational therapy in this area.

The Specialist Section has the following clinical forums:

* Cancer Care
* Palliative Care
* Cardiac and Respiratory

Members can join a clinical forum in the ‘My Specialist Section’ area of the member portal. You can join as many clinical forums as you want, these are part of your specialist section membership.

All clinical forum events are available for booking on the RCOT website. Events are also advertised in our newsletter and in OTnews.

## Clinical Forum: Cancer Care

Across the UK cancer incidences are increasing, however survival rates have improved thanks to advances in medical treatments, and the government prioritising earlier cancer detection and quicker diagnosis. The importance of rehabilitation prior to commencing cancer treatment is a growing concept, with occupational therapists playing an important role in supporting patients through their cancer treatments in maintaining their occupational engagement in meaningful and purposeful occupations.

Patients can be seen at various points through their cancer journey providing a range of interventions, such as fatigue management, breathlessness management, anxiety management, body image support and palliative rehabilitation. Regular updates and networking opportunities are provided from this clinical forum in our newsletter.

## Clinical Forum: Palliative Care

Palliative care is considered as an approach, whereby the person’s physical, psychosocial and spiritual needs are considered. Occupational therapists have a unique role within palliative care as their dual training in physical and mental health, enables them to support people through their illness and any resulting disability.

In recent years there has been an increased awareness of the importance of palliative rehabilitation as an aspect of palliative care. Palliative rehabilitation is a whole team philosophy for use with people at end of life, which integrates rehabilitation, enablement and self-management. It ensures that the individual is supported in living life as fully and meaningful, as possible, until the end of life.

This aligns well with occupational therapies core philosophy of enabling and enhancing a person’s engagement in meaningful and purposeful occupations to improve their health and well-being. Regular updates and networking opportunities are provided from this clinical forum in our newsletter.

## Clinical Forum: Cardiac and Respiratory

Occupational therapists working within cardiac and respiratory can enhance a person’s engagement in meaningful and purposeful occupations, using a range of compensatory, remedial, and educational approaches.

Their work may involve supporting the person to develop self-management skills to enable the person to take control of their own health, health promotion and assessing the person’s psychosocial needs. Regular updates and networking opportunities are provided from this clinical forum in our newsletter.

# 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 Development Lead](mailto:rcotssmajorhealthcondtions@gmail.com).

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