Specialist Section – People with learning disabilities

Member handbook

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# Introduction from Chair

Hello and a very warm welcome. Thank you for joining the Royal College of Occupational Therapy Specialist Section – People with Learning Disabilities.

Our Specialist Section is led by a National Executive Committee made up of volunteers elected from the membership. We all work hard to represent the views of our members, promote occupational therapy for people with learning disabilities. We provide resources, information and CPD for our members.

Whatever your area of practice and professional interest, we hope you will find useful and relevant information, support, and opportunities through your Specialist Section membership. If at any time, you have any feedback, ideas, suggestions, even offers of assistance, and then please do [contact us](mailto:cotsspld@rcot.co.uk).

We do hope you enjoy your membership. I look forward to hearing from you and meeting you in the future.

**Georgia Fair**

Chair of the National Executive Committee

Specialist Section – People with Learning Disabilities

# National Executive Committee

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Role | Name | Description of role and contact |
| Chair | Georgia Fair | 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 | Callum MacKinnon | 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 | Vacant | 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 | Megan Potts | 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 | Kira Harvey | 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 | Elspeth Clarke | 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. |
| Social Media /web/comms Lead | Rachel Johnson | 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 | Alex Somerset  Rebecca Griffiths | 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. |
| Countries Lead | Vacant | Act as a link between the countries within the UK and the NEC - providing an overview of, and supporting, activities and member engagement. |
| Clinical Forum Lead Complex behaviours | Karen Bates | 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 Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities | Amanda Knowles and  Kate Forrest | 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. |
| Members coopted for special projects | Diana Ramsey  Jo Dwyer  Dr Judith Reep | Members who have been co-opted onto the NEC for a specific piece of work or role for a fixed period. |

If you would like to contact any members of the National Executive Committee or clinical forum, please email [cotsspld@rcot.co.uk](mailto:cotsspld@rcot.co.uk).

Aims

We promote high standards of occupational therapy practice within the area of learning disability by supporting networking and sharing expertise, latest practice, and new information and resources.

Our aims 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.
* to act as advisors and influencers for and on behalf of the profession and the Royal College of Occupational Therapists.

# 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 in learning disabilities. 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 learning disabilities.

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:cotsspld@rcot.co.uk).

**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) @RCOT\_PLD
* Instagram RCOT SS PLD

**Specialist Section webpages**

We have [pages on the RCOT website](https://www.rcot.co.uk/about-us/specialist-sections/people-learning-disabilities-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 monthly webinars relevant to our members working within the area of learning disabilities and complex behaviours. These events are free to all 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. Information on our conference will be included in your monthly newsletter.

**Connect with members local to you**

Our locality groups allow you to connect with members local to you. Whilst most events are now online for all members, our locality leads can arrange in-person meetings within their geographical area for you to meet and connect with members who live near you.

**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 in our monthly newsletter.

Members are eligible to apply for the ‘Take Me There’ award to attend conference and the ‘Research, Innovation and Practice Development’ award to fund research projects.

**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

As a member of our specialist section you have access to two clinical forums. If you have any queries about the forums or wish to share information regarding practice, [please contact us](mailto:cotsspld@rcot.co.uk).

## Clinical Forum - Complex behaviours

This clinical forum is for members working with those individuals with complex needs, who need more frequent and intensive interventions to improve occupational opportunities so they can lead fulfilled lives.

**The aims:**

* To promote best practice for occupational therapists working with people with learning disabilities and complex behaviour; this includes support, advice, information exchange, networking, and developing.
* To share knowledge and skills through the promotion of research.
* To influence, develop, contribute to and collaborate on national guidelines and initiatives, with a view to develop resources and information.
* To provide professional networking opportunities for sharing practice, developing resources and the promotion of the profession in this area.
* To support and provide professional development events.

## Clinical Forum – Profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD)

This clinical forumis for members working with those individuals with profound and multiple learning disabilities.

**The aims:**

* To promote best practice for occupational therapists working with people with learning disabilities and complex behaviour; this includes support, advice, information exchange, networking, and developing.
* To share knowledge and skills through the promotion of research.
* To influence, develop, contribute to and collaborate on national guidelines and initiatives, with a view to develop resources and information.
* To provide professional networking opportunities for sharing practice, developing resources and the promotion of the profession in this area.
* To support and provide professional development events.

# 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](mailto:housing.research@rcotbranches.co.uk).

Members can apply for an award of up to £1000. There are two awards available for research, innovation or practice development projects that relate to occupational therapy and people with learning disabilities. Perhaps you have an idea for a research project and would like to explore this with people who may benefit from the study and get their opinion on your project. This award could help you pay to hire a venue and provide refreshments, perhaps even pay service users for their time to attend.

We understand that funding can be needed for a variety of reasons during a research study and will look flexibly on funding request. Or perhaps or have been invited to present at a conference and need funds to attend? Or is there a particular conference that has direct connection to your clinical practice? If you can justify why attending will really benefit the people you work with, it may be possible to use this award to support your attendance.

We encourage applications that include matched resources from an individual and/or their employing organisation.

Research topics should be aligned to the top research priorities established by RCOT.

Funding of up to £100 is now available once a year from us to start up and develop locality groups.   
This funding has been made available to help members make better links with the locality groups and to support members to develop their networking and CPD. More information can be found on our web pages.