

RCOT Regions

Guidance for newsletters

RCOT Regions are branches of the Royal College of Occupational Therapists. There are 13 regions across the UK and they support, promote and encourage member engagement at a regional as well as local level.

As part of regions' core business, each region distributes up to four newsletters per year. As newsletters are sent to all members in a region this is the most effective way to advertise events, to get members involved with your activities and keep members up to date with local news.

This guidance document is to help create engaging newsletters for regions. Please submit newsletters using the regions newsletter submission form in a MS Word version as content is transferred to an online platform for distribution.

Frequency and Distribution

Each Region can distribute a newsletter every three months. This is your main communication with members along with social media so please utilise whenever possible. Newsletters will be posted on your webpage for 18 months after distribution.

Please contact Olivia.lokko@rcot.co.uk if you have any queries about your region's distribution schedule.

Your newsletters content

Newsletter Structure

Your newsletter is made up of a series of articles organised into sections in the newsletter. There are five sections – Welcome, Our member features, Our news, Our events, RCOT news and events. The majority of the article will fit into one of the following headings - Our news, Our Features, Our events.

- Each Newsletter can have a maximum of 15 articles split across sections however to avoid your newsletter from become too long we recommend three to four in each section.
- Members are more likely to read and consume shorter bits of content rather than lengthy pieces of text

Article titles

Each article needs to have a title that gives readers the first impression about your article. It needs to be eye catching, descriptive and make readers curious. Your title should say what your article is about. You can find some tips on [writing engaging titles here](#).

Article Summaries

Each article will have a summary which will let members know what the article is about and most will encourage them to follow the call to action link in the newsletter for the rest of the information – include why this is relevant to your members.

Full articles

The full article, if needed, will be available via a privately linked page on the RCOT Website only. This will allow the reader to navigate their way through the newsletter and select which articles interest them. This will make the newsletter more engaging, will enable your reader to see all the newsletter's content quicker and choose which articles they wish to read in full.

- If further information is available on an external webpage, please include a link to be included in the newsletter
- An advantage of having to click through to view an article, is being able to track the number of views to see which articles your readers engage with more. This data can be used to improve the newsletter.
- Content should be written along with the [RCOT Language style guide](#) that was produced as part of the new brand.

Call to action

Each article will have a summary, and most will also have a call to action. A 'call to action' is what you ideally want the reader to do. This would sit at the end of the article and link to do something eg read more, get involved, sign up, contact us etc.

- This is what will link the reader to get to the full article or webpage that gives them more information, sign up to an event or participate in an activity.
- When selecting a 'call to action' think carefully about what you actually want them to do. It's better to be specific – and to mix them up – so they are not all 'read more'.
- Ideally, they should be two words only, three at a maximum and only one call to action should be included for each article.

Completing your newsletter submission form

We have recommended below the maximum number of articles each section should have but an ideal number of three or four articles per section to keep it from being too long. On occasion there may be articles that are specific and relevant to your Region which are added to your newsletter by RCOT. Before distribution, articles will be sent to Regional Communications Leads for confirmation of inclusion.

1. Welcome

This section is to welcome and/or introduce readers to the newsletter with salutation and either a content overview, highlight and/or an update from the Chair or committee. This section should be no more than 200 words and should only be one article.

2. Our news

This section can have a maximum of five articles. This section should contain local news and updated including:

- committee news, updates, and vacancies
- awards and grants/LLG updates/ local funding opportunities
- local/regional learning and development updates/opportunities
- local/regional news/updates
- local HEI news/updates
- local event reflections/updates

Our news	
No. of articles:	Maximum of five
Summary word count max:	75 words
Full article word count max:	Recommended 500 words
Call to action:	Link to the full article or if appropriate, an external webpage
Full article:	This is where the full article information is placed including any links/attachments that you would like to include with the full article.
Images:	To compliment the article. Max one

3. Our member features

Each newsletter can have a feature article(s), ideally from written by a member or committee member. This can be:

- an informative article
- professional or personal reflection
- highlighting an achievement
- a lifelong learning grant reflection

Our member features	
No. of articles/events:	Ideally one, but it could be up to three
Summary word count max:	200 words for one article or 150 words each for two or three articles
Full article word count max:	Recommended 500-1,000 words
Call to action:	Link to the full article or if appropriate, an external webpage
Full article:	Any links or attachments that you would like to include with the full article. This will be accessible via a private link to a page on the RCOT webpage.
Images:	optional image per article. Extra images could be included on the webpage with the full article.

4. Our events

This section should include details of any upcoming regional events and should be placed in date order with the RCOT booking link included. The event title should be the same as the event on the website.

Events	
No. of articles/events:	Maximum of five
Summary word count max:	150 words max Include the date and time (use 12hr format)

Call to action:	Ideally should link to the RCOT event page but in some cases can be the full article.
Link	Link to book event or for more information

5. RCOT News and Events

This section will be populated by RCOT Brand and Marketing Services and will include links to publications, website information, opportunities, and announcements. A maximum of five articles will be added.

Images

All images must be sent with the newsletter and be of the following requirements:

- Small image: 300 x 180px
- Large image: 660 x 330px
- 16:9 aspect ratio with min. file size of 100KB and max. 500KB
- JPG or PNG format

There are various tools and websites that you can use to edit images. [Online image editor](#) is an example of one of these and it is free to use.

- To personalise your newsletter, use images and/or photographs (**permission should be given for all photos**) to make it more interactive and engaging for the reader.
- Pictures draw attention so have a look and see what can be used to compliment the article.

Standard footer

This section will be populated by RCOT and will include the following:

- Issue number and month/year number
- Unsubscribe and forward links
- Copyright and registered charity information (below)
- Disclaimer (below)

The Royal College of Occupational Therapists (or 'RCOT') is a registered charity in England and Wales (275119) and in Scotland (SCO39573) and a company registered in England (No. 1347374). VAT Reg. No. 242 7829 47.

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GDPR and Copyright

- Permission of those in photograph/s and/or the photographer must be obtained before use. The source of the photograph should be noted within the newsletter.
- Newsletters and the content therein need to comply with [Copyright Law – please see information on website.](#)
- Please complete the table on the final page of the form to confirm that you have received permission/s to use any of the articles and/or images/photos contained within the newsletter.

Submission and process for distribution

1. Please send the completed newsletter submission form to Olivia.lokko@rcot.co.uk by the 5th of the month for distribution that month.
2. Receipt will be confirmed - if you do not receive this acknowledgement, please contact us to check it has been received
3. The Communities and Connections Team will review and edit the newsletter content. If there are any queries or major changes, we will check with the committee member who made the submission.
4. Newsletter form will be sent to the RCOT Web Team for transfer onto the template and onward circulation to members at the end of the month.

Top tips for newsletters

- Each title should be short and to the point while ensuring it is interesting enough for readers to pause and read it.
- Don't repeat articles, change them up and make them different each time.
- Keep your call to action short and simple – *eg Read More, Book here, find out more.*
- Add an image if you can – it helps draw attention and spark interest in the article.
- Occupational therapist should only have capitals (at the beginning of each word) if you are referring to a member's specific job title – if referring to occupational therapy generally, it should all be in small letters.
- Avoid jargon and clearly explain what you mean - acronyms should always be written in full the first time you use them and abbreviate after, for example 'Multidisciplinary Team (MDT)' and then refer to 'MDT' throughout the rest of the text.
- Make use of links to direct members to websites where they can access the full information instead of putting all the information into your newsletter – this will ensure that the way members are accessing the most up to date information and that you are keeping to the required word count.
- External events that require payment or job vacancies cannot be advertised in newsletters.