Learning and development framework for occupational therapists

New or returning to social care

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- the people and employers who shared their own projects and guidance already in place to support occupational therapists
- the people who attended and contributed to the initial scoping workshop in January 2019
- the members of the virtual advisory group who gave their time, expertise and comments on the draft sections
- the people who took part in the discussions and wider consultations
- the staff at Skills for Care and the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT) who supported and helped to shape the design and content, along with communicating and disseminating the final framework.

Why and how this framework has been developed

Conversations between employers, occupational therapists, the Royal College of Occupational Therapists and Skills for Care have recognised a need for profession specific guidance for you as:
- a newly qualified occupational therapist
- new to working in social care
- coming back to work in social care
- a manager of occupational therapy staff.

Occupational therapy teams across the UK were invited to share their existing processes and documentation. The information shared with us showed a range of systems in place to support occupational therapists working in social care and an obvious willingness to support occupational therapist new or coming back to work in social care, as a vital element of the workforce.

Occupational therapists are responsible for between 35–45% of local authority referrals and yet only make up 2% of the workforce (RCOT 2019a). The scope of practice for occupational therapists in social care across the UK is wide and varied, it differs from employer to employer and is governed by different legislation within England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Central to the role is supporting people to enable and enhance their occupational performance (RCOT 2019b) by focusing on their strengths, balancing choice and risk, facilitating their connections with their families, friends and communities enabling them to keep healthy and well (RCOT 2019c).

From reviewing the current local frameworks and guidance documents that were shared with the project team, differing levels and types of support exist with a variety of aims and objectives. Some are assessed in detail and closely monitored, others encourage self-reflection and evaluation by the individual occupational therapist, and some are a mixture of both.

There are different political drivers and strategic arrangements for regulated professions within social care and these differ between the UK countries and across professions. It is against this backdrop that this framework has been co-developed. It is important that this new framework focuses on the needs of the occupational therapy profession.

A scoping workshop held in January 2019 with a range of occupational therapists, managers, learning and development, and workforce staff from the social care sector (n=30), identified the key learning and development needs with possible support mechanisms as you enter or re-enter the social care sector. The members of the scoping workshop agreed the structure and initial content of this framework, which was subsequently shaped by a virtual advisory group.

How this framework can help

- Provide you, your manager and employer with a framework to guide your learning and development (to be read in conjunction with the companion document 'Getting the best out of the learning and development framework').

- Identify the knowledge and skills you need to develop to work effectively in a social care environment.

- Encourage you to take ownership and responsibility for your learning and development, whilst recognising that this is within the context of your employer's expectations and scope of work (Broughton and Harris 2019).

- Reassure the people who access occupational therapy services that you are continuing to develop your knowledge and skills.

The framework is not

- A formal approach to measure competence or performance management.

- A replacement of the occupational therapy regulatory and professional standards.

How the framework is structured

The framework is based on the four pillars of practice (RCOT 2017) which are widely used to guide career, learning and development for Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) including occupational therapists. The self-evaluation format helps you to identify and record your areas for development. A Learning and Development template is included for you to capture your specific plans.

The pillars of practice	
Professional Practice (P)	▪ Maintain occupation at the centre of practice ▪ Deliver safe, effective, person-centred and ethical practice ▪ Use professional judgement, reasoning and decision-making
Facilitation of Learning (F)	▪ Teach, mentor, supervise and/or assess others ▪ Facilitate placement learning ▪ Create and evaluate learning environments, tools and materials
Leadership (L)	▪ Identify, monitor and enhance own knowledge and skills ▪ Guide, direct and/or facilitate teamwork ▪ Design, implement and manage professional and/or organisational change
Evidence, Research and Development (R)	▪ Influence broader socio-economic and political agendas ▪ Create, use and/or translate evidence to inform practice ▪ Design, implement, evaluate and disseminate research

(RCOT 2017)

Each of the four interacting pillars are divided into nine career levels of practice. This framework concentrates particularly on levels 5 and 6 within each pillar of practice. Level 6 is a continuum of and builds upon the elements within level 5. Depending on your previous work and / or life experiences, you may be at different levels within different pillars.

You may wish to familiarise yourself with the RCOT Career Development Framework: Guiding Principles for Occupational Therapy (available at www.RCOT.co.uk/cpd-rcot) this will provide you with an overview of the ways of thinking, attributes, factual and theoretical knowledge at different career levels.

How to use the framework

It is anticipated that your timetable for working through the elements within the framework is approximately 12 months depending upon factors such as your working hours, patterns of work and your employer's requirements.

- Take time to familiarise yourself with the whole of this learning and development framework.
- Look at the self-evaluation descriptors.

Confident (C)	You have experience and are performing confidently and effectively in this area and can work independently with people with more complex needs.
Effective (E)	You have the knowledge and skills to work effectively within this area of practice but may need more guidance and/or training to work with people with more complex needs.
Satisfactory (S)	You are capable at a basic level with areas for improvement.
Development needed (D)	You need to develop your knowledge and skills in this area.

Adapted from Hertford Occupational Therapy Self-Assessment Tool with kind permission.

- Use the self-evaluation descriptors to rate yourself for each of the 'things you need to do'. You may want to do this with your colleagues, supervisor, mentor or manager. This may also be undertaken within a programme of support or supervision arranged by your employer.

- Make notes of any areas where you are unsure, need further explanation and/or clarification and seek further guidance.

- The framework and learning and development plan are intended to prompt discussions, use them with your colleagues, students, supervisor, mentor, manager and within the appraisal process to help you identify the skills you already have and those that you need to develop.

- Use the learning and development plan to record the areas you have identified within the four pillars of practice that you need to develop. You may need to agree the priorities, evidence required, timescales and review periods with your supervisor/manager.

- Suggestions are included for the types of evidence you may have to demonstrate your ability within each pillar - these are suggestions only.

- Ensure that you are specific when identifying your learning needs, the timescales involved and how you will record and evidence your learning and development.

The learning and development framework for occupational therapists

The framework includes a range of things you need to know and do to work effectively in social care. There will be other things specific to your employer that you may also need to include.

Think about and self-evaluate whether you feel confident (C), effective (E), satisfactory (S) or development needed (D) within each of the things you need to do (see previous page for definitions). The elements you identify can be entered into your learning and development plans which can be found at the back of this framework.

Professional Practice pillar (P)

Professional Practice pillar (P) The ability to maintain occupation at the centre of practice, delivering safe, effective, person-centred and ethical practice, using and recording professional judgement, reasoning and decision making.		
Things you need to know	**Things you need to do**	**Self-evaluation C, E, S or D**
Level 5		
▪ Political context of working in social care	P1. Understand the implications and political context of working within social care, the role and impact of the director, elected councillors and members	
▪ Key legislations, national and local policies and guidance	P2. Apply pertinent key legislation and undertake statutory duties considering eligibility criteria, issues of capacity, consent, equality, diversity, human rights and confidentiality	
▪ General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Confidentiality requirements	P3. Comply with GDPR regulations and confidentiality procedures regarding sharing of information and access to records	
▪ Departmental policies, procedures and guidance ▪ Safeguarding and child protection processes and procedures ▪ Lone-working policy and procedures	P4. Raise and report concerns succinctly and accurately P5. Participate in Safeguarding, Deprivation of Liberty (DoLs) and child protection processes as required P6. Manage personal risk including lone working, personal safety and manual handling	
▪ Your employers' strategic intentions and vision	P7. Understand and work within the parameters and boundaries of your role within your organisation	

Professional Practice pillar (P)
The ability to maintain occupation at the centre of practice, delivering safe, effective, person-centred and ethical practice, using and recording professional judgement, reasoning and decision making.

Things you need to know	Things you need to do	Self-evaluation C, E, S or D
Level 5		
▪ The way your services are organised, their place within the wider organisation and the key stakeholders ▪ Service level agreements and the scope and constraints of your service. When to joint work, refer or provide advice/information about other services ▪ Budgetary constraints and best value	P8. How to access services and information as needed, when and how to refer to other services inside and outside your organisation P9. Develop networks and professional relationships within your organisation and with other professionals, agencies and stakeholders, to ensure effective service delivery to benefit the people who access occupational therapy services P10. Joint work with other professionals, both within and outside your organisation, communicating and recording all contacts and interventions P11. Co-ordinate and collaborate effectively within and across organisational boundaries P12. Maximise the resources available considering cost effectiveness and long-term savings	
▪ Health promotion and public health services	P13. Empower and enable people to make informed choices to manage their own health and well-being	
▪ The inter relationship between the person, their environment, occupational performance and participation	P14. Adopt a strength-based approach, balancing choice and risk, facilitating people to participate in their important daily activities whilst enabling them to stay connected with their family, friends and community P15. Complete the occupational therapy process with supervision P16. Co-produce solutions with the people who access occupational therapy services and seek views of others when appropriate to facilitate shared decision making	

Professional Practice pillar (P) The ability to maintain occupation at the centre of practice, delivering safe, effective, person-centred and ethical practice, using and recording professional judgement, reasoning and decision making.		
Things you need to know	**Things you need to do**	**Self-evaluation C, E, S or D**
Level 5		
▪ Common medical conditions, physical, mental and learning disabilities, their impact on daily occupations, likely long-term prognosis and progression including the psychological impact ▪ Risk assessment, positive risk taking and risk processes for self and others ▪ Conflict resolution and conflict of interest processes	P17. Clinically reason, justify, evaluate and record your practice and interventions with consideration for people's presenting needs and eligibility criteria P18. Support people to identify potential risks and support positive risk-taking, weighing risks versus benefits P19. Understand, develop and implement moving and handling best practice techniques, risk assessment processes and handling plans P20. Develop and maintain effective verbal and written communication skills adapting style to suit the context and the audiences P21. Communicate in difficult/challenging situations and make decisions in complex, unpredictable circumstances P22. Co-produce and problem solve, finding solutions which consider needs, service resources, risk versus benefits, positive risk taking and relevant legislation P23. Manage conflict resolution, seeking support from colleagues, supervisor and/or manager P24. Raise issues of, and complete conflict of interest processes in line with your employer's guidelines P25. Provide relevant up to date advice and information to the people who access your service	

Professional Practice pillar (P)		
The ability to maintain occupation at the centre of practice, delivering safe, effective, person-centred and ethical practice, using and recording professional judgement, reasoning and decision making.		
Things you need to know	**Things you need to do**	**Self-evaluation C, E, S or D**
Level 5		
	P26. Navigate computer systems, email, calendar, intranet, internet and databases to access credible information and research evidence	
	P27. Understand and incorporate new digital technologies, including tech enabled care	
	P28. Develop digital literacy skills understanding use, terms and conditions, vulnerabilities and the ethics of your recommendations	
	P29. Demonstrate professional verbal and written communication with a wide range of stakeholders to share information, clinical reasoning and justifications to support your recommendations	
	P30. Interpret and convey detailed, complex information clearly, succinctly and accurately taking the audience needs into account	
	P31. Record clear concise case notes, evidencing clinical reasoning in accordance with professional standards and local policies	
	P32. Work independently, manage own caseload, raising issues as appropriate, prioritise work and timely closing of cases	
	P33. Order standard equipment, completing basic safety checks before use and ensure it continues to meet occupational needs	
	P34. Appropriate ordering of and recycling of equipment, obtaining competitive quotes with evidence of clinical reasoning and justifications for special equipment/adaptations	

Professional Practice pillar (P) The ability to maintain occupation at the centre of practice, delivering safe, effective, person-centred and ethical practice, using and recording professional judgement, reasoning and decision making.		
Things you need to know	**Things you need to do**	**Self-evaluation C, E, S or D**
Level 6		
▪ High level of knowledge and skills in wide and specific areas of practice	P35. Complete the occupational therapy process with a high degree of autonomy P36. Implement practices that promote people's rights and participation, in line with their choices, and support others to do the same	

Facilitation of Learning pillar (F)

Facilitation of Learning pillar (F)		Self-evaluation C, E, S or D
The ability to teach, mentor, supervise and/or assess others. To recognise and facilitate learning opportunities and create, develop and evaluate learning environments, tools and materials		
Things you need to know	**Things you need to do**	**Self-evaluation C, E, S or D**
Level 5		
▪ Mandatory/statutory training requirements ▪ Own preferred style of learning and self-directed learning	F1. Consolidate your own learning, knowledge and skills drawing on a wide range of resources, using process of reflection guided by others where necessary F2. Identify own learning needs, opportunities and goals F3. Find and access information as needed to support ongoing learning and development F4. Identify and engage with formal, informal and everyday learning opportunities	
▪ Team and local service improvement and development expectations ▪ Opportunities to work with and learn from other areas both within and outside of social care environments	F5. Develop effective team working skills F6. Read and critically evaluate information and research F7. Develop presentation skills in a variety of contexts and audiences F8. Co-create and support the creation of a culture where everyone is encouraged to learn from mistakes, receive and give constructive feedback and learn from and with each other F9. Receive, act on and provide constructive feedback F10. Support, motivate and educate others to develop new skills and techniques (e.g. students, support staff, people who access your service) adapting style to suit context F11. Encourage and enable others to engage with occupational therapy theory, research and best practice	

	F12. Promote the role, value and importance of occupations to the health and wellbeing of people	
	F13. Know when and how to seek profession specific support and guidance	
	F14. Help to develop team/local resources	
	F15. Develop and contribute to wider professional learning networks and communities to promote exchange of knowledge, skills and resources	
▪ Supervision, appraisal and CPD processes ▪ Importance of engaging in lifelong learning and continuing professional development	F16. Actively engage in supervision and appraisal processes to identify learning needs, set goals and recognise progress achieved F17. Link appraisal objectives to your learning needs and CPD, revisit and evaluate them regularly F18. Record and apply relevant learning to contribute to your own and others' CPD, identifying the impact and benefit of your learning for yourself and others	
Level 6		
▪ Knowledge of team development and performance measurement ▪ Knowledge of supervision, appraisal and CPD processes ▪ Planning, delivering and evaluating learning opportunities	F19. Lead in a specific area with some responsibility for service/team performance F20. Develop effective team working, facilitation and management skills, understanding group dynamics and roles F21. Supervise, mentor and educate others F22. Plan, organise, deliver and evaluate learning/training opportunities F23. Develop and evaluate educational resources (e.g. for students) F24. Develop, contribute and support learning networks within and across organisational boundaries	

Leadership pillar (L)

Leadership pillar (L)		
The ability to identify, monitor and enhance own knowledge and skills. To work with others, guide, direct and/or facilitate teamwork. Design, implement and manage professional and/or organisational change. Connect people and services.		
Things you need to know	**Things you need to do**	**Self-evaluation C, E, S or D**
Level 5		
▪ Importance of and responsibility for identifying and setting learning objectives (for self and others) ▪ Difference between leadership and management ▪ The political and economic climate, locally, nationally and internationally, which impact on service delivery	L1. Identify what types of learning and support you need, what is available to you and how to access it L2. Manage your designated workload, identifying priorities and raising issues appropriately L3. Manage your time, work and resources effectively within complex and changing environments and systems L4. Pro-actively contribute to the aims and objectives of your team and organisation L5. Understand the wider political context, the impact on your service delivery and communications (e.g. Purdah; Care Act Legislation) L6. Effectively develop and maintain partnerships with others within your organisation and across agency boundaries L7. Use opportunities to promote the occupational therapy profession both locally and wider L8. Positively influence others, asserting point of view and giving clear direction when circumstances require it L9. Effectively develop, maintain and use partnerships with others across organisation and agency boundaries	
Level 6		
▪ Change management and the role of leadership and management	L10. Prioritise and triage new referrals L11. Allocate cases across the team considering skill and development needs of others with supervision as required	

Leadership pillar (L) The ability to identify, monitor and enhance own knowledge and skills. To work with others, guide, direct and/or facilitate teamwork. Design, implement and manage professional and/or organisational change. Connect people and services.		
Things you need to know	**Things you need to do**	**Self-evaluation C, E, S or D**
	L12. Engage in professional supervision and mentorship of staff and others	
	L13. Formulate and influence the achievement of specific local objectives	
	L14. Take responsibility to guide/support the work of others within a defined scope of practice, with the support of more experienced colleagues as required	
	L15. Review and develop services as part of a team	
	L16. Contribute to the effective management of a budget in conjunction with others	
	L17. Contribute to the recruitment of staff/students/volunteers	
	L18. Deputise for line manager, make decisions and support your team	
	L19. Manage team conflict and contribute to resolution	
	L20. Support others in understanding the need for and facilitate change	

Evidence, Research and Development pillar (R)

Evidence, Research and Development pillar (R) The ability to access, create, use and translate research evidence to inform practice. Identify and plan own learning and development needs/goals. Actively engage in the process of CPD demonstrating benefit to self and others. Contribute to service improvement and delivery. Recognise informal as well as formal learning and development opportunities.		
Things you need to know	**Things you need to do**	**Self-evaluation C, E, S or D**
Level 5		
▪ Maintain and develop research skills ▪ Use occupational therapy theory, research evidence, practice knowledge and guidance to inform practice ▪ Process of CPD, recognising, engaging in and applying learning, using appraisal and supervision processes ▪ Local processes which contribute to quality improvement ▪ Active involvement in and use of research, surveys, clinical trials and audits ▪ Availability of grants/awards to support your own and others learning, development and research	R1. Demonstrate critical reasoning and undertake evaluation to keep your skills and knowledge current and up to date R2. Reflect on learning experiences, seeking opportunities for further development R3. Recognise and engage in a variety of learning activities, recording your learning effectively R4. Share relevant learning with others R5. Apply your learning in practice, monitoring your progress and measuring the impact on your team, those who access your services and your organisation R6. Maintain your CPD portfolio in preparation for providing evidence for registration, audit, appraisal and career progression R7. Seek, evaluate and use credible information to inform your practice R8. Critically appraise literature and research and identify gaps in evidence R9. Conduct informal desk-based research R10. Access, analyse and apply research evidence to support your practice	

▪ Understand and comply with research governance including ethics, data protection and confidentiality	R11. Recognise and reflect on own strengths, limitations, learning and development needs, understanding your own emotions and the impact of your behaviour on others	
	R12. Identify and share evidence and information through a variety of media both verbal and written	
	R13. Identify opportunities to engage in research or support others to do so	
	R14. Explore funding available at a local and national level, including via the RCOT, to support your learning and development	
	R15. Understand and comply with research governance including ethics, data protection and confidentiality	
Level 6		
How to effectively manage staff and the importance of supporting others to use and contribute to research, evidence and development	R16. Contribute to local service evaluation, audit, reviews	
	R17. Support others to understand and engage in research, evidence and development	
	R18. Contribute to local processes of quality improvement	
	R19. Contribute to development of regional/national policy and guidelines	
	R20. Participate in research activity, analysis of research information and support others to do the same	

Learning and development plan: Professional Practice pillar (P)

Name:		Date:
Name of supervisor:		
Name of manager:		

Professional Practice pillar (P)		Date to be achieved	Date achieved	Supervisor signature
Area of development identified (questions below are suggestions to think about).				
Learning needs What do you need to learn? Be specific and include realistic timescales.				
How How will you do this?				

Professional Practice pillar (P)		Date to be achieved	Date achieved	Supervisor signature
Area of development identified (questions below are suggestions to think about).				
Evidence How will you record and evidence your learning and development? How will you apply your learning in practice, monitor your development, measure and demonstrate the impact?				

Professional Practice pillar (P)		Date to be achieved	Date achieved	Supervisor signature
Area of development identified (questions below are suggestions to think about).				
What next? What do you need to do next to further develop your knowledge and skills in this area? When will you further reflect on your progress?				

Learning and development plan: Facilitation of Learning pillar (F)

Name:			Date:	
Name of supervisor:				
Name of manager:				

Facilitation of Learning pillar (F)		Date to be achieved	Date achieved	Supervisor signature
Area of development identified (questions below are suggestions to think about).				
Learning needs What do you need to learn? Be specific and include realistic timescales				
How How will you do this?				

Facilitation of Learning pillar (F)		Date to be achieved	Date achieved	Supervisor signature
Area of development identified (questions below are suggestions to think about).				
Evidence How will you record and evidence your learning and development? How will you apply your learning in practice, monitor your development, measure and demonstrate the impact?				

Facilitation of Learning pillar (F)		Date to be achieved	Date achieved	Supervisor signature
Area of development identified (questions below are suggestions to think about).				
What next? What do you need to do next to further develop your knowledge and skills in this area? When will you further reflect on your progress?				

Learning and development plan: Leadership pillar (L)

Name:			Date:
Name of supervisor:			
Name of manager:			

Leadership pillar (L)	Date to be achieved	Date achieved	Supervisor signature
Area of development identified (questions below are suggestions to think about).			
Learning needs What do you need to learn? Be specific and include realistic timescales			
How How will you do this?			

Leadership pillar (L)		Date to be achieved	Date achieved	Supervisor signature
Area of development identified (questions below are suggestions to think about).				
Evidence How will you record and evidence your learning and development? How will you apply your learning in practice, monitor your development, measure and demonstrate the impact?				

Leadership pillar (L)		Date to be achieved	Date achieved	Supervisor signature
Area of development identified (questions below are suggestions to think about).				
What next? What do you need to do next to further develop your knowledge and skills in this area? When will you further reflect on your progress?				

Learning and development plan: Evidence, Research and Development pillar (R)

Name:	Date:
Name of supervisor:	
Name of manager:	

Evidence, Research and Development pillar (R)		Date to be achieved	Date achieved	Supervisor signature
Area of development identified (questions below are suggestions to think about).				
Learning needs What do you need to learn? Be specific and include realistic timescales				
How How will you do this?				

Evidence, Research and Development pillar (R)		Date to be achieved	Date achieved	Supervisor signature
Area of development identified (questions below are suggestions to think about).				
Evidence How will you record and evidence your learning and development? How will you apply your learning in practice, monitor your development, measure and demonstrate the impact?				

Evidence, Research and Development pillar (R)		Date to be achieved	Date achieved	Supervisor signature
Area of development identified (questions below are suggestions to think about).				
What next? What do you need to do next to further develop your knowledge and skills in this area? When will you further reflect on your progress?				

Suggested evidence

The following are suggestions for the types of evidence you may have to demonstrate your ability within each pillar - these are suggestions only, you may have your own which could be more relevant to your specific area and scope of practice, your employer may also have their own preferred evidence pathway.

Suggested types of evidence to demonstrate your learning and development		
Supervision records	Case notes	CPD Portfolio
Professional behaviour and practice observed and evidenced by peer, colleague, manager	Completion of online learning courses outside your organisation e.g. Future Learn/MOOCs	Engage in a journal club (peer/local/online/social media)
Peer review/Supervision	Outcome measures	Chair team meetings
HCPC Audit process	Meeting minutes	Emails
Case studies	Grant/funding applications	Local level presentations
Reflections – written; verbal with colleagues; within supervision	Contribute to Practice Placement Educator reports for students	Record of contribution to service evaluation/audit/review
Successful completion of e-learning modules	Contributions to team discussions	Service evaluation/audit report
Publications; leaflets; newsletters	HCPC Return to Practice process	Contribute to team discussions
Active involvement in local/regional groups	Facilitate student placements	Provide others with feedback/testimonials
Supervising/mentoring others	Blog/social media record	Written reports
Publications/peer review publications	Active volunteer for specialist section/interest group	Further/Post graduate education
Membership of specialist section/interest group	Peer reviewed presentations/publications	Appraisal/review documentation
Facilitate journal club (peer/local/online/social media)	Action Learning Sets records, minutes, reflections	Anecdotal feedback from others

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