RESEARCH STRATEGY FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IN WALES

Commissioned by the all Wales Occupational Therapy Advisory Forum (OTAF)

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Contents

Introduction & background

In August 2014 a group of occupational therapists (OTs) met at Cardiff University to begin the process of developing an occupational therapy strategy for Wales. The meeting was hosted by the chair of the Occupational Therapy Advisory Forum for Wales (OTAF), a group which comprises the heads of the seven health boards and the lead OTs from the 22 local authorities in Wales.

The meeting was facilitated by Professor Joyce Kenkre, Professor of primary care, University of South Wales and Dr Elizabeth White, head of research and development, College of Occupational Therapists (COT). Attendees included academics from within occupational therapy education, clinicians from health and social care, PhD students and the COT policy officer for Wales, representing a broad range of ideas and views.

To set a context for this initiative, as well as learning from existing best practice, a number of leading professionals in the research arena guided the progress of the day. Along with Professor Joyce Kenkre and Dr Elizabeth White, additional presentations were given by Professor Donna Mead, Pro Vice Chancellor Student Experience, University of South Wales; Dr Carolyn Wallace, Reader Integrated Care, University of South Wales and Helen Carey, Professional Lead in OT, Glyndwr University representing the CAHPR (Council for Allied Health Professions) for occupational therapy. This enabled those attending to recognise the wider importance of research across the country and within other disciplines, as well as providing an overview of practice already in place.

The rest of the day was spent in focused small group discussions to identify and to reach consensus on research priorities and develop an action plan. During the group discussions these priorities were refined using an iterative process of selection, resulting in consensus within the whole group regarding a final list of eight. The group as a whole then discussed the next steps required in the development of the strategy, the outcome of which was a five year action plan.

A key action identified was the instigation of a sub-group of OTAF, to be called the Programme Board for OT Research in Wales, to take responsibility for continuing the development work. Other key actions included bidding for funds for a twelve-month part-time co-ordinator post to support the work, and the development of a website as an information hub. The final task of the day was to decide on a strategy mission statement as follows:

Why a research strategy?

To bring the profession together, across academic and clinical areas of practice, in the pursuit of an evidence base for the profession which will consolidate its position as a core therapy profession in the field of health and social care in Wales. This research strategy has been written to be inclusive of students, unqualified and qualified OT personnel.

Review date

2 years from date of publication. However as this is a new strategy, it is recognised that it is likely to develop and change during the initial review timeframe.

Vision for research in occupational therapy in Wales

All occupational therapy personnel will have the opportunity to be involved in research which contributes to the development of occupational therapy practice that is informed by evidence.

Mission statement

To be recognised as a profession that has a sound evidence base for its practice and promotes the development of evidence that informs the profession and demonstrates it's effectiveness in making a measurable difference to peoples lives and wellbeing.

Goals

- To develop a Welsh research network
- To drive forward the research priorities for the profession
- To build research capacity within the profession
- To develop supportive networks and mentorships
- To impact on the outcomes of occupational therapy service provision
- To foster a research environment and culture within the profession
- To communicate and support the profession's research priorities across Wales and beyond
- To co-produce and collaborate in research with citizens, research networks and third sector organisations who have a vested interest in our services

Research Priorities

- The social and economic value of occupational therapy through measuring occupational change within the principles of prudent health and social care.
- How occupational therapists enable individuals to self manage their own situations and risks.
- The effectiveness of occupational therapy in transcending service and organisational boundaries for the benefit of individuals.
- Professional decision making within occupational therapy and its impact on occupational outcomes.

5 Year Action Plan for the Welsh Research Strategy

Goal	Objective	Responsibility
1. To develop a Welsh research network	To establish a co-ordinator role	Chair of OTAF & Programme Board
	To develop a funding bid for a research co-ordinator	
	To develop an operational policy	
2. To drive forward the research priorities	To reflect on the research priorities for COT	Programme Board
	To reflect on the research priorities of the 11 specialist sections	Co-ordinator
	To create a research development programme which is shared with all OTs interested in undertaking research in Wales	Co-ordinator & Programme Board
3. To build research capacity within the profession	To identify who are our researchers from within the profession and develop the role of Research Champions.	Co-ordinator and Programme Board
	To identify current and potential funding streams	Co-ordinator
	To develop an informative website for the Programme Board which can be accessed by all OTs.	Co-ordinator
	To promote clinical academic career pathways.	OTAF
4. To develop supportive networks and mentorships	To identify occupational therapy personnel who are motivated to engage in research	Co-ordinator and Programme Board
	To develop a mentorship scheme for new and potential researchers and identify educational opportunities for developing skills in research	Co-ordinator and Programme Board
	To develop supportive networks between Wales and UK COT.	Co-ordinator, COT Director of Research, learning and Education and Chair of COT Welsh Board
	To utilise supportive network with CAHPR	Lead of North and South Wales CAHPR Hubs

Goal	Objective	Responsibility
5. To impact on the outcomes of occupational therapy service provision	To share research outcomes throughout the network and via the website and media to inform the community in Wales	Programme Board Co-ordinator, COT Director of Research, learning and Education
	To develop a Wales wide matrix to share the impact of research on practice.	Co-ordinator and Programme Board
	To implement the emerging evidence base in services throughout Wales.	OTAF and OT managers from the 3rd sector
6. To create a research environment and culture within the profession	To encourage all OT personnel, existing and potential researchers to use available COT resources.	Co-ordinator and Programme Board
	To develop a policy of engagement with WSPRC in regard to training and funding.	Co-ordinator
	To create a link to the CAHPR to enable access to UK-wide development activities	Co-ordinator
	To develop a resource of OT publications per health board/ local authority area	Co-ordinator
7. To communicate and support the profession's research priorities across Wales and beyond	To position the OT research strategy alongside the Council for Allied Health Professions research.	Programme Board
	To develop case studies for the strategy.	Co-ordinator & research OTs
8. To co-produce research with citizens, research networks, third sector and independent sector organisations who have a vested interest in our services	To develop a policy of involvement and engagement with third sector organisations	Co-ordinator
	To develop a policy of involvement and engagement with citizens	Co-ordinator
9. To develop an understanding of funding mechanisms for research	To develop relationships between the programme board and funding organisations.	Programme Board
	To gather information on potential funding sources and disseminate through the network	Co-ordinator, Programme Board and OTAF managers

Key Contributors

Name	Title	Organisation
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Appendix: Research Priorities

The creation of research priorities within this document is designed to encourage and support occupational therapists to engage in valuable research activity. The research priorities were identified to shape and focus thinking about the types of research that would be welcomed in the OT practice community.

The following are examples of research topics or questions that could meet the criteria for the research priorities. The list is not exhaustive but will guide clinicians, university tutors and service managers of how potential research projects can be developed to match the priorities.

Priority: *The social and economic value of occupational therapy through measuring occupational change within the principles of prudent health and social care*

- Economic and clinical evaluation of a specific OT intervention
- Comparison of the cost effectiveness of therapeutic reablement verses standard reablement services.
- Effectiveness of adaptations for older people in promoting communication and occupational engagement
- Can telephone screening support the effective use of health and social OT services?
- Is there any value in using sensory integration and/or sensory assessment and intervention of people with learning disabilities and /or ASD?
- How can OTs best support people with challenging behaviour?
- What is the social impact of occupational therapy? (i.e. upon roles, routines, work, relationships, identity, community)
- How does occupational therapy impact on individuals' occupational performance and occupational engagement?
- Is occupational therapy a cost-effective intervention?

Priority: *How occupational therapists enable individuals to self manage their own situations and risks*:

- How effective is OT intervention in supporting individuals with long term condition in their own homes?
- How can OTs support mental health service-users in evaluating their own progress?
- What are service users' experiences of OT in a particular setting?
- Occupational therapy led anxiety self management programmes– what difference do they make in terms of occupational performance?
- How effectively do OT's work with service users and the public to develop and deliver the services that they need and want?
- Does occupational therapy enable carers to support condition management?

Priority: *The effectiveness of occupational therapy in transcending service and organisational boundaries for the benefit of individuals.*

- What difference do OTs make to the transition of individuals in acute general hospitals?
- What is the OT role in keeping people out of hospital?
- How effective is the role of OTs in the frailty pathway, marrying acute care and dementia care?
- To what extent do OT services meet the identified need of clients and carers in a particular setting?
- Investigation of the integration between health and social care OT as added value to service user outcomes.

Priority: *Professional decision making within occupational therapy and its impact on occupational outcomes.*

- How do OTs assess rehabilitation potential in in-patient rehabilitation settings?
- How do sensory strategies improve the occupational performance of children and young people with autism?
- Adapting an assessment within a model of practice - what difference does it make to service users?
- Effectiveness of adaptations / equipment in meeting goals - when does reablement end and equipment become essential?
- Acknowledging client empowerment and involvement – managing conditions in the community and balancing professional concerns about risk.
- How does the clinical reasoning of OT impact on the changes in occupational performance of service users?
- Are there any benefits of using Active Support to improve the delivery of OT interventions?
- Deciding modes of occupational activity interventions - what are the benefits of 'activity' verses 'talking'?
- Occupational therapy models of practice – how are they used & do the aid professional decision making?
- The role of assessment in occupational therapy decision making/ how does choice of assessment influence the outcome for occupational therapy?
- Professional decision making – how are service users / carers engaged in this process?
- How does the role of OT influence multi-disciplinary decision making?