

Occupational therapists

Valid from: 1 September 2023

Standards of proficiency

At the point of registration, occupational therapists must be able to:

- 1 practise safely and effectively within their scope of practice**
 - 1.1 identify the limits of their practice and when to seek advice or refer to another professional or service
 - 1.2 recognise the need to manage their own workload and resources safely and effectively, including managing the emotional burden that comes with working in a pressured environment
 - 1.3 keep their skills and knowledge up to date and understand the importance of continuing professional development throughout their career

- 2 practise within the legal and ethical boundaries of their profession**
 - 2.1 maintain high standards of personal and professional conduct
 - 2.2 promote and protect the service user's interests at all times
 - 2.3 understand the importance of safeguarding by actively looking for signs of abuse, demonstrating understanding of relevant safeguarding processes, and engaging in these processes where necessary
 - 2.4 understand what is required of them by the Health and Care Professions Council, including but not limited to the Standards of conduct, performance, and ethics
 - 2.5 respect and uphold the rights, dignity, values, and autonomy of service users, including their role in the assessment, diagnostic, treatment and / or therapeutic process
 - 2.6 recognise that relationships with service users, carers and others should be based on mutual respect and trust, maintaining high standards of care in all circumstances
 - 2.7 understand the importance of and be able to obtain valid consent, which is voluntary and informed, has due regard to capacity, is proportionate to the circumstances and is appropriately documented
 - 2.8 understand the importance of capacity in the context of delivering care and treatment
 - 2.9 understand the scope of a professional duty of care, and exercise that duty
 - 2.10 understand and apply legislation, policies and guidance relevant to their profession and scope of practice
 - 2.11 recognise the power imbalance which comes with being a health care professional, and ensure they do not abuse this for personal gain
 - 2.12 understand the effect of legislation on the delivery of care

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HIGHLIGHTED STANDARDS ARE GENERIC ACROSS ALL PROFESSIONS

3 look after their health and wellbeing, seeking appropriate support where necessary

- 3.1 identify anxiety and stress in themselves and recognise the potential impact on their practice
- 3.2 understand the importance of their own mental and physical health and wellbeing strategies in maintaining fitness to practise
- 3.3 understand how to take appropriate action if their health may affect their ability to practise safely and effectively, including seeking help and support when necessary
- 3.4 develop and adopt clear strategies for physical and mental self-care and self-awareness, to maintain a high standard of professional effectiveness and a safe working environment

4 practise as an autonomous professional, exercising their own professional judgement

- 4.1 recognise that they are personally responsible for and must be able to justify their decisions and actions
- 4.2 use their skills, knowledge and experience, and the information available to them, to make informed decisions and / or take action where necessary
- 4.3 make reasoned decisions to initiate, continue, modify or cease treatment or the use of techniques or procedures, and record the decisions and reasoning appropriately
- 4.4 make and receive appropriate referrals, where necessary
- 4.5 exercise personal initiative
- 4.6 demonstrate a logical and systematic approach to problem solving
- 4.7 use research, reasoning and problem-solving skills when determining appropriate actions
- 4.8 understand the need for active participation in training, supervision and mentoring in supporting high standards of practice, and personal and professional conduct, and the importance of demonstrating this in practice

5 recognise the impact of culture, equality and diversity on practice and practise in a non-discriminatory and inclusive manner

- 5.1 respond appropriately to the needs of all different groups and individuals in practice, recognising this can be affected by difference of any kind including, but not limited to, protected characteristics¹, intersectional experiences and cultural differences

¹ The Equality Act 2010 defines the protected characteristics as age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity. Equivalent equality legislation in Northern Ireland protects age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

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- 5.2 understand equality legislation and apply it to their practice
- 5.3 recognise the potential impact of their own values, beliefs and personal biases (which may be unconscious) on practice and take personal action to ensure all service users and carers are treated appropriately with respect and dignity
- 5.4 understand the duty to make reasonable adjustments in practice and be able to make and support reasonable adjustments in theirs and others' practice
- 5.5 recognise the characteristics and consequences of barriers to inclusion, including for socially isolated groups
- 5.6 actively challenge these barriers, supporting the implementation of change wherever possible
- 5.7 recognise that regard to equality, diversity and inclusion needs to be embedded in the application of all HCPC standards, across all areas of practice

6 understand the importance of and maintain confidentiality

- 6.1 adhere to the professional duty of confidentiality and understand when disclosure may be required
- 6.2 understand the principles of information and data governance and be aware of the safe and effective use of health, social care and other relevant information
- 6.3 recognise and respond in a timely manner to situations where it is necessary to share information to safeguard service users, carers and / or the wider public
- 6.4 understand the need to ensure confidentiality is maintained in all situations in which service users rely on additional communication support (such as interpreters or translators)
- 6.5 recognise that the concepts of confidentiality and informed consent extend to all mediums, including illustrative clinical records such as photography, video and audio recordings and digital platforms

7 communicate effectively

- 7.1 use effective and appropriate verbal and non-verbal skills to communicate with service users, carers, colleagues and others

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- 7.2 communicate in English to the required standard for their profession (equivalent to level 7 of the International English Language Testing System, with no element below 6.5²)
- 7.3 understand the characteristics and consequences of verbal and non-verbal communication and recognise how these can be affected by difference of any kind including, but not limited to, protected characteristics³, intersectional experiences and cultural differences
- 7.4 work with service users and / or their carers to facilitate the service user's preferred role in decision-making, and provide service users and carers with the information they may need where appropriate
- 7.5 modify their own means of communication to address the individual communication needs and preferences of service users and carers, and remove any barriers to communication where possible
- 7.6 understand the need to support the communication needs of service users and carers, such as through the use of an appropriate interpreter
- 7.7 use information, communication and digital technologies appropriate to their practice
- 7.8 understand the need to provide service users or people acting on their behalf with the information necessary in accessible formats to enable them to make informed decisions
- 7.9 actively listen to a service user's occupational narrative and analyse the content in order to plan for the future
- 7.10 understand the values, beliefs, culture, behaviours and interests of service users and carers, through interview and personal discussion

8 work appropriately with others

- 8.1 work in partnership with service users, carers, colleagues and others
- 8.2 recognise the principles and practices of other health and care professionals and systems and how they interact with their profession
- 8.3 understand the need to build and sustain professional relationships as both an autonomous practitioner and collaboratively as a member of a team
- 8.4 contribute effectively to work undertaken as part of a multi-disciplinary team

² The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) tests competence in the English language. Applicants who have qualified outside of the UK, whose first language is not English and who are not nationals of a country within the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland, must provide evidence that they have reached the necessary standard. Please visit our website for more information.

³ The Equality Act 2010 defines the protected characteristics as age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity. Equivalent equality legislation in Northern Ireland protects age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

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- 8.5 identify anxiety and stress in service users, carers, and colleagues, adapting their practice and providing support where appropriate
- 8.6 understand the qualities, behaviours, and benefits of leadership
- 8.7 recognise that leadership is a skill all professionals can demonstrate
- 8.8 identify their own leadership qualities, behaviours, and approaches, taking into account the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion
- 8.9 demonstrate leadership behaviours appropriate to their practice
- 8.10 act as a role model for others
- 8.11 promote and engage in the learning of others

- 8.12 understand the need to engage service users and carers in planning and evaluating assessments, treatments, and interventions to meet their needs and goals
- 8.13 ensure intervention reviews are informed by changes in service user's circumstances
- 8.14 understand the need to work with those who provide services in and across different sectors, in order to best meet service user's needs. Recognise the involvement of public, private, and voluntary sector providers in the delivery of health, care and other services which affect occupational performance.
- 8.15 understand the need to adopt an approach which centres on the service user and establish appropriate professional relationships in order to motivate and involve the service user in meaningful occupation
- 8.16 understand the value of enabling and empowering service users, with the aim of enhancing their access to all services and opportunities available to them
- 8.17 understand group dynamics and roles, and facilitate group work in order to maximise support, learning and change within groups and communities
- 8.18 understand the need to capitalise, where appropriate, on the dynamics within groups and communities in order to harness the motivation and active involvement of participants
- 8.19 work in appropriate partnership with service users in order to evaluate the effectiveness of occupational therapy intervention

9 maintain records appropriately

- 9.1 keep full, clear, and accurate records in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols, and guidelines
- 9.2 manage records and all other information in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols, and guidelines
- 9.3 use digital record keeping tools, where required

10 reflect on and review practice

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- 10.1 understand the value of reflective practice and the need to record the outcome of such reflection to support continuous improvement
- 10.2 recognise the value of multi-disciplinary reviews, case conferences and other methods of review
- 10.3 recognise and evaluate the potential of occupational therapy in new and emerging areas of practice

11 assure the quality of their practice

- 11.1 engage in evidence-based practice
- 11.2 gather and use feedback and information, including qualitative and quantitative data, to evaluate the responses of service users to their care
- 11.3 monitor and systematically evaluate the quality of practice, and maintain an effective quality management and quality assurance process working towards continual improvement
- 11.4 participate in quality management, including quality control, quality assurance, clinical governance and the use of appropriate outcome measures
- 11.5 evaluate care plans or intervention plans using recognised and appropriate outcome measures, in conjunction with the service user where possible, and revise the plans as necessary
- 11.6 recognise the value of gathering and using data for quality assurance and improvement programmes

12 understand and apply the key concepts of the knowledge base relevant to their profession

- 12.1 understand the structure and function of the human body, together with knowledge of physical and mental health, disease, disorder, and dysfunction relevant to their profession
- 12.2 demonstrate awareness of the principles and applications of scientific enquiry, including the evaluation of treatment efficacy and the research process
- 12.3 recognise the role(s) of other professions in health and social care and understand how they may relate to the role of occupational therapist
- 12.4 understand the structure and function of health and social care systems and services in the UK
- 12.5 understand the occupational nature of human beings and how they function in everyday activities such as self-care, productivity and leisure and their changing needs during the lifecycle
- 12.6 understand the inter-relationship between the person, their environment and their chosen occupation, barriers, and enablers in this system and how to change each component as part of rehabilitation

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- 12.7 apply the theoretical concepts underpinning occupational therapy, including concepts of:
- anatomy
 - physiology
 - pathology
 - human development
 - ergonomics
 - biomechanics
 - psychology
 - sociology
 - occupational science
- 12.8 Be able to apply the theoretical concepts underpinning occupational therapy to inform the understanding of physical, emotional, and mental health
- 12.9 understand the effect of occupational alienation, dysfunction deprivation and injustice, recognising the importance of restoring and facilitating opportunities to achieve occupational wellness
- 12.10 understand and analyse activity and occupation and their relation to and effect on, health, wellbeing, and function as part of occupational formulation, diagnosis and therapeutic use of occupation
- 12.11 understand the theoretical basis of, and the variety of approaches to, assessment, planning, intervention, and evaluation that focus on occupational outcomes
- 12.12 understand the need to identify and assess diverse occupational, physical, psychological, cognitive, cultural, and environmental needs and problems of service users and carers
- 12.13 demonstrate awareness of physical, attitudinal, social, economic, educational, environmental, and work-related policies and services and their effect on people within a diverse society
- 12.14 recognise the value of the diversity and complexity of human behaviour through the exploration of different physical, psychological, cognitive, environmental, social, emotional, and spiritual perspectives
- 12.15 demonstrate awareness of the origins and development of occupational therapy, including the evolution of the profession towards the current emphasis on autonomy and empowerment of individuals, groups and communities
- 12.16 understand the use of the current philosophical models for occupational therapy that focuses on service users and holistic person-centred care, and a person's ability to participate in occupations, taking into account physical, biological, psychological and social factors and the environmental context
- 12.17 understand the concept of, and support others with, the facilitation of, teaching and learning including teaching self-management strategies to service users and carers

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13 draw on appropriate knowledge and skills to inform practice

- 13.1 change their practice as needed to take account of new developments, technologies and changing contexts
- 13.2 gather appropriate information
- 13.3 analyse and critically evaluate the information collected
- 13.4 select and use appropriate assessment techniques and equipment
- 13.5 undertake and record a thorough, sensitive, and detailed assessment
- 13.6 undertake or arrange investigations as appropriate
- 13.7 conduct appropriate assessment or monitoring procedures, treatment, therapy, or other actions safely and effectively
- 13.8 recognise a range of research methodologies relevant to their role
- 13.9 recognise the value of research to the critical evaluation of practice
- 13.10 critically evaluate research and other evidence to inform their own practice
- 13.11 engage service users in research as appropriate
- 13.12 understand the need to consider the assessment of the health, social care, employment and learning needs of service users including the need for risk assessment and positive risk taking
- 13.13 select and use relevant standardised and non-standardised assessment techniques and observation to gather information about the service user's functional and occupational abilities, occupational performance, and participation, taking account of the cultural and environmental context
- 13.14 formulate specific and appropriate care or case management plans including the setting of timescales
- 13.15 understand the need to agree the goals and priorities of intervention in relation to occupational needs in partnership with service users, basing such decisions on assessment results
- 13.16 select as appropriate, the specific occupations and activities for use as therapeutic media, taking into account the particular needs of service users
- 13.17 understand and use the scientific theories, concepts, principles, and professional frameworks underpinning occupational therapy practice
- 13.18 demonstrate awareness of the broad range of occupations and activities that can be used in intervention and how these should reflect the individual's occupational needs and preferences
- 13.19 select or develop therapeutic media and environments, and adapt these as appropriate to meet service user's needs, build on their abilities and enhance their occupational performance and participation
- 13.20 understand the need to meet the emotional, social, psychological, cognitive and physical health-based occupational needs of service users across a range of practice areas and how this can vary across a range of practice areas

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14 establish and maintain a safe practice environment

- 14.1 understand the need to maintain the safety of themselves and others, including service users, carers, and colleagues
- 14.2 demonstrate awareness of relevant health and safety legislation and comply with all local operational procedures and policies
- 14.3 work safely, including being able to select appropriate hazard control and risk management, reduction, or elimination techniques in a safe manner and in accordance with health and safety legislation
- 14.4 select appropriate personal protective equipment and use it correctly
- 14.5 establish safe environments for practice, which appropriately manages risk
- 14.6 understand and apply appropriate moving and handling techniques

15 promote and prevent ill health

- 15.1 understand the role of their profession in health promotion, health education and preventing ill health
- 15.2 understand how social, economic, and environmental factors (wider determinants of health) can influence a person's health and well-being
- 15.3 empower and enable individuals (including service users and colleagues) to play a part in managing their own health
- 15.4 engage in occupational health, including being aware of immunisation requirements