

AbleOTUK -Newsletter

Update: Easier Access to AbleOTUK Support Sessions

We've made it simpler to join our monthly support groups. You no longer need to register via Eventbrite; all members will now receive an email on the day of each session with the Zoom link.

To protect privacy, we won't send calendar invites.

Please pop the dates in your own diary or calendar app.

These sessions are for UK-based occupational therapists and students who identify as disabled, neurodivergent, or as having a long-term health condition. They're held monthly, offering space to connect, share, and support one another.

2025 Support Group Dates - 7 pm

Wednesday 12th Nov,
Wednesday 10th Dec



Occupational Therapy Week 2025: Right Support, Right Time – Unlocking the Power of OT

Occupational Therapy Week 2025, running from 3-9 November, celebrates the vital role of occupational therapists in enabling people to live their lives to the fullest. This year's theme, "*Right Support, Right Time*", highlights how occupational therapy can make a life-changing difference when delivered early and appropriately, helping to prevent crisis and promote independence and well-being.

The campaign calls attention to the importance of early intervention and personalised support across all settings. Occupational therapists are uniquely skilled in working with people to identify what matters most to them, focusing on meaningful occupation as the foundation for health and participation in daily life.

By championing prevention, accessibility, and inclusion, "*Right Support, Right Time*" reflects the essence of occupational therapy, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to engage in the activities that give their lives purpose and value.

RCOT Royal College of
Occupational
Therapists



Right Support, Right Time: Unlocking the Power of OT


rcot.co.uk/RightTimeOT


Don't forget to join us in person in London!



We're excited to invite you to an AbleOTUK in-person meet-up at the V&A Museum in London on Saturday, 13th December 2025, to explore the *Disability and Design* exhibition together. This is a wonderful opportunity to connect with fellow members, discover inclusive design, and enjoy time together in a relaxed, creative space.

Meet-up details:

 V&A Museum, South Kensington, London

 Meet outside the museum at 11.00 am

Exhibition entry: Please book a ticket for 11.15 am or 11.30 am

Tickets: Range from free to £16

Disabled visitors: Free ticket + free companion/carer ticket

Book early as time slots sell out - [Book here](#)

If you'd like to join our optional WhatsApp group for the day, email us at ableotuk@gmail.com with your name and mobile number once you've booked.

Guidance for Neurodivergent Speech and Language Therapists

The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) has produced some fantastic guidance to support neurodivergent SLTs throughout their careers – covering everything from workplace adjustments to creating inclusive environments. Most of these resources are free to download for RCSLT members, so it's well worth checking them out. You can find them on the RCSLT website under the *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion* section: www.rcslt.org

These resources are also relevant for occupational therapy staff, and it's great to see conversations starting about whether RCOT should create something similar. Ketan from RCOT has shared his thoughts on this on the RCOT Communities Disability Network, so please do go and join the discussion here: [RCOT Communities - Disability Network Discussion](#).

UK Covid Inquiry Module 8 - Children and Young People

Kirsty Stanley attended the Covid Inquiry on the 1st October as part of her role in Long Covid Kids Charity - a core participant in the inquiry. This module was focused on children and young people, and the charity's CEO, Sammie McFarland, gave oral evidence. Long Covid is now one of the leading causes of disability in children. You can watch Sammie's testimony here - <https://covid19.public-inquiry.uk/hearings/children-and-young-people-module-8-public-hearings/hdid/38740/>, but I would also advise listening to Nuala Toman's testimony too. Both demonstrate the sad fact of the inherent ableism within society and how little children and young people were considered in pandemic preparedness.

If you work with young people and are unfamiliar with Long Covid, please take some time to look at our educational toolkit and share it with any schools you have contact with. <https://www.longcovidkids.org/>

Update: PIP Review and Welfare Reform

The government's review of Personal Independence Payment (PIP), led by Stephen Timms MP, has drawn criticism after reports in *The Telegraph* (31 October 2025) confirmed it will not aim to cut costs. Instead, the review will focus on ensuring the system is "fair and fit for purpose."

This marks a shift from earlier plans to tighten eligibility and reduce spending on disability benefits. The review will use a co-production model involving disabled people and representative organisations, which many see as a positive move towards greater inclusion.

For occupational therapy, the outcome of this review will be significant. PIP enables people to participate in meaningful occupations and maintain independence key principles at the heart of our profession.

The review comes amid wider debate about the future of welfare support and the rising cost of disability benefits. Many campaigners are urging the government to focus on improving fairness, consistency, and understanding within the assessment process, rather than pursuing cost savings.

UNISON National Disabled Members' Conference – Liverpool, 25–27 October 2025

Rachel Booth-Gardiner attended the UNISON National Disabled Members' Conference in Liverpool in her role as a disability representative. The annual conference brings together disabled UNISON members from across the UK to discuss key issues such as accessibility, workplace inclusion, the social model of disability, and ensuring disabled people's voices shape union and workplace policy.

UNISON is the UK's largest trade union, representing workers in health, local government, education, and public services. The union is made up of local branches, each offering support, advice, and representation to members. If you're a member of UNISON and aren't sure which branch you belong to, you can find this information on your UNISON membership card, through your workplace union rep, or by visiting www.unison.org.uk and clicking "My UNISON" to log in.

For occupational therapists, it's important to know that if you're a full RCOT member, your BAOT (British Association of Occupational Therapists) membership automatically includes UNISON membership. This gives you access to workplace representation, legal support, and opportunities to engage with self-organised groups such as the Disabled Members Network.

You can find out more about UNISON's work for disabled members – including campaigns, training, and upcoming events – on their website: <https://www.unison.org.uk/about/what-we-do/fairness-equality/disabled-members/>