

# AbleOTUK -Newsletter

## Easier Access to AbleOTUK Support Sessions

You're automatically a member of AbleOTUK if you're on our mailing list. Our support network is for occupational therapists and students with lived experience of disability, neurodivergence, or long-term health conditions.

Sessions run online at 7pm on the second Wednesday of each month. You'll receive an email with the joining information on the day of each meeting.

To protect confidentiality, we don't send diary invites or share members' contact details, so please add the dates to your own diary.

### Upcoming Support Network Dates (7pm):

13th May 2026  
 10th June 2026.  
 8th July 2026  
 12th August 2026  
 9th September 2026  
 14th October 2026  
 11th November 2026  
 9th December 2026



## Timms Review of Personal Independence Payment – Call for Evidence

The UK Government has launched a Call for Evidence as part of the Timms Review of Personal Independence Payment (PIP). The review is focusing on four key areas:

- The role and purpose of PIP
- Eligibility, fairness, and equity
- The experience of claiming PIP
- How wider societal changes are impacting PIP

We are planning to develop a collective AbleOTUK response to this call for evidence. This will be discussed further at an upcoming AbleOTUK support group, where members can share their experiences and perspectives to help shape our submission.

Alongside this, we strongly encourage you to consider submitting individual responses. You do not need to answer every question, and evidence can take many forms, including personal experiences.

You can find more information and submit your response here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/calls-for-evidence/timms-review-of-personal-independence-payment-call-for-evidence>

If you need support to engage with this process or want to contribute to the AbleOTUK response, please join the discussion at the support group on 13th May 2026.

## Challenging Discrimination in Practice

The Health and Care Professions Council has published guidance on discrimination as part of its "Meeting Our Standards" series:

<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/standards/meeting-our-standards/discrimination/>

The guidance is clear that tackling discrimination is an active responsibility. Practitioners must reflect on how their own values and biases may impact their work, take steps to prevent discrimination, and treat people fairly in all interactions.

Crucially, it also sets an expectation to challenge and raise concerns if discrimination is happening within teams or services, reinforcing that creating inclusive environments is a shared responsibility.

For AbleOTUK, this highlights the importance of moving beyond awareness to action, ensuring that anti-discriminatory practice is embedded across education, workplaces, and everyday practice.

## From Advocacy to Action: RCOT Communities App Now Live

The new Royal College of Occupational Therapists Communities App is now live and ready for you to explore.

If you are a member of the Royal College of Occupational Therapists, you can now access Communities more easily than ever by downloading the app directly to your phone or tablet. It offers a simple way to stay connected, join conversations, and engage with other occupational therapists across the UK.

Importantly, this development has not happened by chance. It was through the advocacy of AbleOTUK that the app was agreed upon, highlighting the impact of collective voices in shaping more accessible and inclusive ways to connect as a profession.

Whether you are looking to share ideas, ask questions, or connect with others who share your interests and experiences, the app brings everything together in one place and makes it accessible wherever you are.

Once you have downloaded the app, make sure you join the Disabilities Network. This is the space where AbleOTUK activity sits within the platform, bringing together practitioners, students, researchers, and educators with lived experience of disability, long-term health conditions, and neurodivergence to connect, share, and support one another.

You can join the Disabilities Network here:  
<https://communities.rcot.co.uk/topics/53396/page/welcome-2>

Find out more about the app and how to download it:  
<https://www.rcot.co.uk/discover-membership/communities/communities-mobile-app>

Download the app, log in with your membership details, and start connecting.

## BAOT AGM 2026 – Have your say

The British Association of Occupational Therapists Annual General Meeting (AGM) will take place on **Thursday, 25th June 2026, at 12 noon**. This year includes a member vote on a proposed increase to Royal College of Occupational Therapists membership fees.

The AGM is your opportunity as a member to hear updates, ask questions, and vote on decisions that shape the future of occupational therapy.

We know conversations about fees are not easy, but membership costs have only increased once in the last eight years, while wider costs have continued to rise. This makes it an important moment to engage and have your say.

We encourage AbleOTUK members who are also RCOT members to:

- Read the information
- Attend the AGM if you can
- Take part in the discussion
- Use your vote

Find out more and book your place here:

<https://www.rcot.co.uk/agm2026>

## Minoritised Student Voices in Occupational Therapy

The Elizabeth Casson Trust has shared a powerful participatory action research project exploring the experiences of minoritised occupational therapy students:

<https://elizabethcasson.org.uk/minoritised-ot-students-experiences-participatory-action-research-developing-student-led-actions-to-address-inequities-and-promote-inclusion/>

Led with students as co-researchers, the project highlights ongoing inequities in education and placements, including barriers to belonging, well-being, and progression. Importantly, it goes beyond identifying issues by supporting student-led actions to drive change.

For AbleOTUK, this reinforces a key message: inclusion must be built into systems, not expected from individuals to navigate. Lived experience is not an add-on; it is essential to shaping a more equitable future for occupational therapy.

