

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

No meeting in August

Wednesday 10th Sep,
Wednesday 8th Oct,
Wednesday 12th Nov,
Wednesday 10th Dec



Resource Highlight: SSHINE Website

The SSHINE Students website (Staff & Student Healthcare Initiative for Neurodiversity) is a growing hub of resources designed to enhance inclusion and support for neurodivergent individuals in healthcare education and practice.

Created in collaboration with NHS England and the Florence Nightingale Foundation, the site offers a range of tools and insights for both students and educators. Its standout feature is the Neurodiversity Module, which includes real-life experiences, practical strategies, and inclusive teaching techniques to help foster neuro-affirming environments in healthcare settings.

Beyond the module, the website also shares updates on SSHINE's ongoing work, events, and opportunities to get involved in shaping a more inclusive future for healthcare education.

 Visit the site and explore the resources:
sshinestudents.wordpress.com



Collaboration with RCOT for Disability Pride Month

This Disability Pride Month, RCOT has published a powerful blog celebrating the voices of occupational therapists with lived experience of disability, and AbleOTUK founding member Rachel Booth-Gardiner was proud to be involved.

The blog, *We Belong Here - And We're Here to Stay*, highlights the importance of visibility, equity, and pride in the profession. It also reflects RCOT's growing commitment to working alongside occupational therapists who bring lived experience to their practice and leadership.

Read the blog here: <https://www.rcot.co.uk/latest-news/we-belong-here-and-were-here-stay>

Rachel and the wider AbleOTUK network are pleased to continue working with RCOT on campaigns that centre lived experience, challenge ableism, and strengthen the voice of disabled occupational therapists across the UK.



#BeAnAbleOTUKally

Spotlight on Inclusive Design: Open Style Lab Fellowship and Events

One of AbleOTUK's lived experience volunteers, Amelia, is currently participating in the first UK summer fellowship programme as a Disabled Expert and Occupational Therapist fellow. She has been exploring the difficulties with the design of current footwear and how it has impacted herself with her disability whilst working with a group to create stylish solutions as part of the footwear accessible toolkit. She has been creating prototypes with the team with the view of solve for one, extend to many. This will be presented in a final showcase to the public.

Open Style Lab is a nonprofit organisation committed to making fashion and design more accessible by working *with* disabled people, not just *for* them. Through education, research, innovation, and community-led collaboration, they help shape inclusive design practices across industries.

This summer, their UK and US fellowship brings together disabled experts, occupational therapists, designers, and engineers to focus on inclusive footwear and accessible design toolkits.

Join an Open Style Lab Community Event

On *Saturday, 9th August*, from 4-6 pm, Open Style Lab is hosting a relaxed event at Blue Garage in Lewisham. It's a great opportunity to explore what the fellowship involves and meet those involved.

Spaces are limited, so please register in advance:

[Sign up here](#)

Can't make it?

You can still explore their work at the *Design and Disability* exhibition at the V&A South Kensington, open until *15th February 2026*.

Learn more about Open Style Lab at www.openstylelab.org

"Remember that everything AbleOTUK does is voluntary, so please bear this in mind if you ask for support or advice via email or social media."



<https://affinot.co.uk/ableotuk/>