

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 (7 pm):

8th July 2026

No meeting in Aug

9th September 2026

14th October 2026

11th November 2026

9th December 2026

AbleOTUK
is turning 5



Join us for a special online Celebration and
Learning Event
Monday 27th July 2026 7.30pm
Online via Zoom

Everyone Welcome

#BeAnAbleOTUKally

AbleOTUK is turning 5, and we would love for you to join us for a special evening of celebration, reflection, and learning.

Over the past five years, AbleOTUK has grown into a supportive network and advocacy space for occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants, students, educators, researchers, and allies with disabilities, long-term health conditions, and/or neurodivergence.

During this celebration-learning event, we will explore themes including ableism, disclosure, and what it means to be an effective ally within occupational therapy workplaces, education, and professional spaces.

Places are limited to 100 attendees, so please only sign up if you are able to attend. If your circumstances change and you can no longer join us, please let us know as soon as possible so we can offer your place to someone else.

The Zoom link will be sent to the email address you provide shortly after signing up.

Sign up here: <https://forms.gle/5gUT4N1HRcYiNvso8>

UNISON Disabled Members Conference 2026

The UNISON National Disabled Members Conference will take place in Brighton from 24-26 October 2026. The conference brings together disabled members from across the UK to debate motions, shape UNISON policy, and campaign for positive change.

Attending the conference is a fantastic opportunity to meet other disabled trade unionists, share experiences, and ensure disabled members' voices are heard. You do not need to be an experienced activist to attend, and there are opportunities to attend as a delegate or visitor through your local branch.

Several AbleOTUK members are involved in UNISON, and this year a motion on inclusive uniforms, developed with input from disabled members, will be debated.

If you are interested in attending or would like to find out more, speak to your local UNISON branch or visit:

<https://www.unison.org.uk/events/uyuy>

We would love to see more disabled occupational therapy staff represented and involved in shaping our union's future.

Update on Fitness to Train Standards

Following the discussion at the March RCOT AbleOTUK Expert Advisory Group, when RCOT brought the *Occupational Therapy Students - Standards of Medical Fitness to Train* document to the group.

We remain deeply concerned about the content of the document and the impact it could have on the future occupational therapy workforce, particularly for people with disabilities, long-term health conditions, and those who are neurodivergent. We believe it is vital that standards support a more inclusive, needs-led approach to occupational therapy education and do not create unnecessary barriers to entry into the profession.

RCOT has assured us that they are working with others to address these concerns. We will continue to engage in these discussions and will keep members updated as this work progresses.

Members can read the document for themselves here:

<https://heops.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/bsk-pdf-manager/2026/02/Occupational-Therapy-Students-%E2%80%93-Standards-of-medical-fitness-to-train-4.pdf>

Meeting with RCOT's New CEO

Members of AbleOTUK attended the June RCOT AbleOTUK Expert Advisory Group meeting, where we met RCOT's new Chief Executive, Gary. We had an open and honest discussion about issues raised by members, including access to reasonable adjustments, ableist attitudes and views within the profession, and how the voices of occupational therapists and students with lived experience can sometimes feel unheard or unwelcome.

Gary listened and engaged with the discussion, and thanked AbleOTUK members for their continued engagement and willingness to share their experiences and perspectives.

Recommended reading: Learning to Thrive (OTnews, June/July 2026)

This month's *OTnews* features an excellent article, "**Learning to Thrive**", which explores how a disabled occupational therapy student, her practice educators and the university worked together to create an inclusive and successful placement experience. Through honest reflections and practical examples, the article highlights the importance of reasonable adjustments, open communication, and collaborative problem-solving to enable disabled students to flourish in practice.

As AbleOTUK continues to champion accessible occupational therapy education and practice, we highly recommend reading this article. It offers valuable insights for students, educators, placement providers and employers, demonstrating that with the right support, disabled occupational therapists can thrive and bring unique strengths to our profession.

You can read the article **on page 35 of OT News**

Celebrating Disability Pride Month

July is Disability Pride Month, a time to celebrate disabled identities, cultures, and communities, as well as the contributions disabled people make to society. The month marks the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, passed in July 1990, and has become a global opportunity to challenge ableism, promote inclusion, and celebrate disability as part of human diversity.

At AbleOTUK, Disability Pride Month is particularly important. We are proud to be a network led by and for occupational therapists, students, researchers, and educators with disabilities, long-term health conditions, and neurodivergence.

Throughout July, we will be sharing posts across our social media channels that explore different aspects of Disability Pride and what it means in occupational therapy. We encourage members to engage with these posts, share them with others, and help amplify disabled voices and experiences.

We will also be celebrating Disability Pride Month as part of our fifth birthday event on Sunday 27 July. The event will be an opportunity to reflect on what we have achieved together over the last five years, celebrate our community, and look ahead to the future.

