

focus on

a career in
occupational therapy

local government talent: careers

What is occupational therapy?

Occupational therapy is about helping people with disabilities or long-term illnesses to live independent lives.

What kind of work would I be doing?

As an occupational therapist you would work with those who have physical or mental difficulties, either from birth, or as a result of an accident, illness or ageing, and enable them to live their lives the way they want to. You would work closely with patients to assess and understand their lifestyles. You would then devise a programme of treatment that best suits their needs and enables them to increase their independence. This may include providing specialist equipment, making adaptations to the patient's home, advising on re-housing, providing treatment to improve a patient's range of movement, or helping them cope with sensory deprivation or loss of mobility.

Occupational therapy involves visiting people in their homes and at work or school, assessing their needs, writing reports and liaising with other health and social care professionals to ensure that patients receive a high level of care.

Where can I find out more?

local government careers information,
job vacancies and talent pool:
www.LGtalent.com

national graduate development programme:
www.ngdp.co.uk

college of occupational therapists:
www.cot.co.uk

Insider view: 'I provide a specialist occupational therapy service to older people with disabilities. The job involves using occupational therapy skills to enable people to remain living at home in the community; this can include provision of equipment, adaptations, advice and training for carers. It's a great job and I particularly enjoy the client contact.'

What kind of jobs are there?

Occupational therapists may specialise in a number of different areas. A few examples include:

- alcohol and substance misuse
- burns, plastic surgery
- community disability services
- eating disorders
- HIV/AIDS
- learning disability
- neurology, head injuries
- stroke rehabilitation.

What qualifications do I need?

You will need to gain an approved occupational therapy degree. There are three different types of course:

- a three or four year full-time degree,
- a two year full-time postgraduate degree (for those with a relevant first degree),
- a four year part-time degree (for those already working in health or social care).

There may be opportunities to study towards a foundation degree whilst working.

What skills do I need?

You need to be:

- an excellent communicator,
- a good problem solver,
- able to listen to people and understand their needs,
- creative, but practical,
- sensitive and patient,
- objective and able to write reports.

How much would I get paid?

Salaries vary around the country, but occupational therapists may earn £27-32,000 per year.

What kind of work would I be doing?

Working for a local council can offer a lot of additional benefits, not least, the great feeling of being able to help people in your own community and do something worthwhile and rewarding.

Local councils may also offer some or all of the following: generous annual leave, flexible working hours, pension scheme membership, reduced price public transport, gym membership, crèche facilities, employee guidance and support groups.

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