Specialist Sections are branches of the College of Occupational Therapists that provide professional direction and leadership for occupational therapists working in specialist areas of practice. They share information, network and promote good practice.

The Specialist Sections’ main aims are to:
• Raise awareness and promote the development of knowledge and skills
• Promote and enable continuing professional development (CPD)
• Promote research and support the use of evidence to inform practice
• Disseminate information and provide communication networks
• Support members new to the practice area
• Function as a resource to provide expertise at national and local levels
• Act as advisors and influencers for and on behalf of the profession and the College

Why join a Specialist Section:
• Access to a UK-wide network of occupational therapists working in your specialist area and to meet like-minded people
• Expert professional knowledge and resources to support you in practice
• Receive up-to-date news via newsletters, bulletins, social media, website and journals
• Professional development and opportunities to attend conferences, learning events and study days
• Reduced Specialist Section membership rates for learning events
• Most Specialist Sections offer grants for research, professional development and events
• Information and advice from free publications dedicated to your area of practice, including briefings, evidence-based guidelines, best practice information, research
• Clinical Forums which are dedicated, speciality subgroups providing support, networking, clinical leadership and lobbying
• Opportunities to get involved in policy, practice, strategy and briefings to develop practice guidelines and leadership skills

Who can join a Specialist Section?
All British Association of Occupational Therapists (BAOT) members can be a member of the Specialist Sections.

How much does it cost?
There is an annual fee to join a Specialist Section, but they do vary by Specialist Section. You can claim tax relief on 75% of your BAOT and Specialist Sections’ fees if you are a UK tax payer.

How do I join?
Either complete a membership form for the relevant Specialist Section which can be downloaded from the individual Specialist Sections pages at: www.COT.org.uk/specialistsections
Or complete the attached form and return to the Specialist Section Manager, 106–114 Borough High Street, London SE1 1LB

Can I belong to more than one Specialist Section?
Yes, you can belong to as many Specialist Sections as you want.

Where can I find more information?
Each Specialist Section has pages on the BAOT website at: www.COT.org.uk/specialistsections
If you would like further information about Specialist Sections, read Briefing 72 on the College website.

How do I join BAOT?
Complete the membership form online. Or for more information, contact the membership team: membership@cot.co.uk or 020 7450 2348
SPECIALIST SECTION – CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES
Join a national network of members working with children and young people and be able to access expert advice from clinical advisors. As a member you can join one or all of the clinical forums:
- Children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)
- Autistic spectrum disorder
- OTs working in an acute setting
- Neonatal and early intervention

SPECIALIST SECTION – HIV, ONCOLOGY & PALLIATIVE CARE
For members who work with people who have HIV or are receiving oncology services or palliative care. There are opportunities for support, developing practice and joining a national network of experts. It promotes good practice in people living with HIV, cancer and end of life care in a variety of settings, including hospital, community, social care and the voluntary sector. There is a clinical forum for HIV.

SPECIALIST SECTION – HOUSING
This Specialist Section supports members interested in housing. Members are involved in the design of new build housing, adaptation of existing properties or development of accessible housing registers. They work closely with external organisations and professionals with a similar interest and advocate for improved standards of housing for older and disabled people.

SPECIALIST SECTION – INDEPENDENT PRACTICE
The membership is made up of new, developing and established independent OTs, from business owners running their own companies to sole traders and contractors. Support and advice is provided on business matters. Membership includes a business ‘start up pack’ at the time of joining. Individuals can join the Directory of Independent Practice and the Medico-legal Forum.

SPECIALIST SECTION – MENTAL HEALTH
For members working in mental health services, this Specialist Section has well-established networks of members and of mental health service users who support and shape its activities. They work to develop, shape and influence mental health and wellbeing policy, locally and nationally. Membership provides the opportunity to join two clinical forums:
- Forensic
- Eating disorders

SPECIALIST SECTION – NEUROLOGICAL PRACTICE
For people who want to improve their knowledge and skills of neurological conditions by encouraging awareness of up-to-date approaches, exchange of ideas, lifelong learning and research. They provide training opportunities, conferences, and advice. Membership provides the opportunity to join three clinical forums:
- Brain injury
- Long term conditions
- Stroke
SPECIALIST SECTION – OLDER PEOPLE
Membership gives the opportunity to network with people who share the same passion for older peoples’ services. Enhance your skills and knowledge while sharing and developing your own expertise and best practice. There is the opportunity to join one or all of the clinical forums:
- Acute care and emergency
- Care home
- Dementia
- Falls
- Intermediate care
- Mental health

SPECIALIST SECTION – PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES
By joining this Specialist Section you will have access to a national online network of members working in learning disability services. This will enable you to share good practice, ask questions, collect ideas, share concerns and be part of local and national developments. They work closely with external organisations to develop practice.

SPECIALIST SECTION – RHEUMATOLOGY
This Specialist Section provides a network for members that have an interest in the areas of arthritis, musculoskeletal conditions and chronic pain, working closely with external organisations and professionals with similar interests. Support is provided from expert practitioners and regional representatives. Contribute to promoting high quality services within practice.

SPECIALIST SECTION – TRAUMA AND ORTHOPAEDICS
If you wish to network with members who are interested in trauma, orthopaedics, limb deficiency and amputations this is the Specialist Section for you. It promotes the development of high standards of professional practice in these areas. They work closely with other organisations and professionals with similar interests. Membership proves the opportunity to the clinical forums:
- Upper limb prosthetic occupational therapists
- Lower limb prosthetic occupational therapists

SPECIALIST SECTION – WORK
For those interested in or working in work, vocational rehabilitation, occupational health and other work-related services. Supporting people to remain in, return to, or obtain work is a key function of occupational therapy and membership provides the opportunity for networking, sharing skills and knowledge, and making links with external organisations and like-minded people. This growing area of practice is supported by Specialist Section members who work with external organisations to lobby for occupational therapists.
For further information on joining a Specialist Section, please tick the relevant box(es), detach the form and return to:

Louise Cusack, Specialist Sections Manager
College of Occupational Therapists
106–114 Borough High Street
London SE1 1LB

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☐ RHEUMATOLOGY
☐ TRAUMA & ORTHOPAEDICS
☐ WORK

Please complete all the details under ‘About you’ in BLOCK CAPITALS

About you
Family name/Surname: ____________________________ First name: ____________________________

Title: ____________________________________________ Male    Female

Email: _______________________________________________________________________________

Organisation name: ___________________________________________________________________

Department: _________________________________________________________________________

Correspondence address: ___________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________ Postcode: _______________________

Business tel. no: ____________________________ Mobile no: ____________________________
www.COT.org.uk/specialistsections

For information, please contact
Louise Cusack, Specialist Sections Manager
The College of Occupational Therapists
106 – 114 Borough High Street, London SE1 1LB
Tel: 020 7450 2336
Email: louise.cusack@cot.co.uk