



Job Title	Lead Occupational Therapist	Job Description Date	18/09/2026
Department/Team	Health & Wellbeing	Reports to	Therapies Manager
Context			
Founded in 1682, the Royal Hospital Chelsea is a unique retirement community for around 300 Army veterans, known as the Chelsea Pensioners, drawn from every corner of the United Kingdom. Located in the heart of London, it is a remarkable place defined by community, service, and a proud military heritage. Working at the Royal Hospital Chelsea means being part of a close-knit, values-driven community where staff work collaboratively, support one another, and make a meaningful difference every day. We are looking for individuals who contribute to a welcoming and inclusive environment and lead by example with kindness, integrity, and professionalism. The RHC Way underpins how we work, guiding our behaviours and reflecting our commitment to caring for Chelsea Pensioners, colleagues, and the wider community, while striving for excellence and honouring our heritage. Built around Compassionate Approach, Community Spirit, and Courageous Engagement, it shapes how we treat others with dignity and respect, work together, and take responsibility with initiative and purpose in everything we do.			
Role Purpose:			
The Lead Occupational Therapist is responsible for providing professional leadership and expert clinical Occupational Therapy services across the Royal Hospital Chelsea. The post holder will lead the development, delivery and evaluation of Occupational Therapy services, ensuring high-quality, evidence-based and person-centred care for In-Pensioners with complex physical, cognitive and psychosocial needs. The role will act as the professional lead for Occupational Therapy, promoting best practice in rehabilitation, reablement, dementia care, falls prevention, assistive technology, environmental adaptation and healthy ageing. The Lead Occupational Therapist will contribute to service development, clinical governance, workforce development and organisational objectives whilst working collaboratively with multidisciplinary teams, families and external partners to optimise independence, wellbeing and quality of life for Pensioners.			
Principal Accountabilities:			
Principal Tasks 1. Clinical Practice • Provide highly specialist Occupational Therapy assessment, treatment and intervention for Pensioners with complex physical, cognitive and mental health needs. • Manage and prioritise a complex Occupational Therapy caseload. • Undertake comprehensive assessments using standardised and non-standardised assessment tools. • Develop, implement and evaluate person-centred rehabilitation and reablement programmes.			

- Complete cognitive assessments and contribute to care planning and management of residents living with dementia and memory impairment.
- Lead complex risk assessments to support safe independence and promote positive risk taking.
- Oversee the procurement, storage and allocation of therapy equipment. Including working with the fundraising team where appropriate.'
- Support Pensioners to remain safely in their own accommodation and reduce avoidable hospital admissions and transfers to higher levels of care.
- Monitor and evaluate treatment outcomes and adapt interventions according to changing needs.
- Ensure clinical records are accurate, timely and compliant with professional and organisational standards.

2. Professional Leadership

- Act as the Professional Lead for Occupational Therapy within the Royal Hospital Chelsea.
- Provide expert Occupational Therapy advice and guidance to colleagues, managers and multidisciplinary team members.
- Promote and implement evidence-based Occupational Therapy practice.
- Develop Occupational Therapy pathways, standards and clinical procedures.
- Ensure Occupational Therapy services are aligned with HCPC, RCOT and organisational standards.
- Represent Occupational Therapy at internal and external meetings, forums and working groups.
- Promote the visibility and value of Occupational Therapy throughout the organisation.

3. Dementia, Rehabilitation and Health Promotion

- Lead Occupational Therapy initiatives relating to dementia care and cognitive support.
- Develop and implement strategies that support residents living with dementia and memory impairment.
- Deliver education and guidance to staff, volunteers, residents and families regarding dementia care and cognitive wellbeing.
- Lead falls prevention programmes and contribute to the development of related pathways and policies.
- Promote healthy ageing, independence and wellbeing through therapeutic and educational initiatives.
- Facilitate therapeutic groups and community-based activities that support participation and social engagement.
- Contribute to the development of innovative programmes that enhance quality of life and reduce social isolation.

4. Clinical Governance and Quality Improvement

- Lead Occupational Therapy clinical governance activities.
- Develop, implement and review Occupational Therapy policies, procedures and clinical pathways.
- Undertake clinical audits and outcome measurement activities.
- Monitor service quality, effectiveness and performance indicators.



- Ensure compliance with HCPC, RCOT, CQC and Royal Hospital Chelsea standards.
- Investigate incidents, complaints and risks relating to Occupational Therapy practice and implement learning outcomes.
- Analyse service data and produce reports to inform service planning, quality improvement and governance requirements.
- Contribute to organisational quality improvement programmes and strategic objectives.

5. Education and Workforce Development

- Provide supervision, mentorship and professional support to therapy assistants, students and volunteers.
- Participate in recruitment, induction, appraisal and performance review processes.
- Identify learning needs and support staff development.
- Deliver training and educational programmes for healthcare staff, volunteers, residents and families.
- Promote a culture of continuous professional development and lifelong learning.
- Maintain own professional registration, competence and continuing professional development in accordance with HCPC requirements.

6. Partnership and Multidisciplinary Working

- Work collaboratively with members of the multidisciplinary team to coordinate assessment, treatment and care planning.
- Liaise effectively with nursing, medical, social care and external health professionals.
- Develop and maintain effective working relationships with NHS organisations, Local Authorities and community services.
- Participate in multidisciplinary meetings and case discussions.
- Advocate for residents' occupational needs within service planning and care delivery.
- Escalate safeguarding concerns and clinical risks in line with organisational policies and professional responsibilities.

Behavioral & Leadership expectation

You will demonstrate the RHC Way in how you lead and support others day to day. You will lead with empathy, fairness and discretion, encourage collaboration and inclusion within your team, and help maintain high standards through clear communication, constructive feedback and a calm, solution-focused approach.

Skills Knowledge and Experience

Essential Skills

- Advanced clinical reasoning and complex case management skills.
- Expert knowledge of occupational therapy assessment and intervention.
- Ability to lead service development and quality improvement initiatives.

- Strong leadership, supervisory and mentorship skills.
- Comprehensive understanding of dementia care and cognitive assessment.
- Expertise in rehabilitation, reablement and equipment provision.
- Experience in falls prevention and risk management.
- Ability to implement evidence-based practice and evaluate clinical effectiveness.
- Excellent communication, presentation and stakeholder engagement skills.
- Ability to motivate and engage older adults in therapeutic programmes.
- Strong documentation, audit and report-writing skills.

Desirable Skills

- Experience completing Mental Capacity Assessments.
- Experience leading service redesign or transformation projects.
- Experience developing volunteer-led therapeutic programmes.
- Research, publication or presentation experience.
- Experience in assessment and prescription of complex equipment including: specialist seating, postural management, manual handling equipment, wheelchairs (electric and manual)

Knowledge and Experience

- Significant post-registration Occupational Therapy experience.
- Extensive experience working with older adults.
- Experience working with individuals living with dementia and cognitive impairment.
- Experience across a variety of clinical settings.
- Experience managing complex multidisciplinary cases.
- Experience supervising staff and leading service development.
- Experience participating in appraisal, revalidation and governance processes.

Competencies

- Leadership and people management.
- Clinical excellence and professional judgement.
- Service improvement and innovation.
- Safe moving and handling.
- Intermediate to advanced IT skills.
- Data collection, audit and outcome measurement.
- Collaborative multidisciplinary working.
- Teaching, training and supervision

Qualifications

Essential

- Degree or equivalent qualification in Occupational Therapy.



- Registration with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).
- Membership of the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT).
- Evidence of ongoing Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

Desirable

- Postgraduate qualification relevant to Occupational Therapy practice.
- Leadership or Management qualification.
- Practice Educator qualification.
- Specialist training in dementia care, rehabilitation, frailty or older persons' services.
- Training in quality improvement, coaching or clinical leadership.

Note: All RHC employees are expected to be flexible in undertaking the duties and responsibilities for their role and may be asked to perform other duties, which reasonably correspond to the general character of their role and their level of responsibility.