



Royal College of Occupational Therapists  
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David Cullum/Lewis Macdonald  
Health and Sport Committee  
[HealthandSport@parliament.scot](mailto:HealthandSport@parliament.scot)

21st November 2019

Dear David,

### **The supply and demand for medicines: Health and Sport Committee Inquiry**

I'm contacting you, on behalf of the Royal College of Occupational Therapists, regarding the Committee's call for views on the supply and demand for medicines inquiry.

As you will be aware, occupational therapists can support healthcare services by providing prevention and early intervention solutions for patients. This preventative approach to delivering health care can potentially have a significant impact on monies spent on medicines.

As this inquiry into medicines is closely linked to the ongoing Committee inquiry on primary care, the Royal College would like to highlight the unique contribution occupational therapy makes within primary care. Ultimately, the Royal College believe that in order to improve primary care there needs to be a fundamental move to person centred care which is focused on what is important to the individual.

The supply and demand for medicines inquiry is considering ways to improve the primary care system and ensure patients receive the most clinically and cost-effective treatments; I would, therefore, like to draw your attention to a project in NHS Lanarkshire where an occupational therapy service was integrated into primary care multidisciplinary teams.

Between December 2017 and January 2019 two GP practices took part in a project with an occupational therapist based within each practice. During this time all members of the GP practice team could refer registered patients (aged 16 and over) to the occupational therapy service with issues arising from mental and physical health related to their occupational performance and /or environment.

The positive impacts of the project have been clearly evidenced with 55% of patients having fewer GP appointments after occupational therapy intervention than before<sup>1</sup>. One patient was noted to have experienced a drastic improvement in their lifestyle following occupational therapy intervention which had the direct result that the GP was willing to reduce antidepressant medication.

The project provided a new way of working that offered different treatment options and improved access to preventative interventions. The overall evaluation of the project has demonstrated the impact occupational therapists can make in primary care including<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Occupational Therapy in Primary Care: Interim Report (2019)*, Health & Social Care North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership, NHS Lanarkshire.

<sup>2</sup> Sinclair A (2019) Evaluating the Occupational Therapy in Primary Care Service. NHS Lanarkshire report



- Reduced reliance on medication;
- Reduction in need for referrals to secondary services;
- Reduction in need for home care;
- Reduced falls risks in older adults;
- Reduced sickness absences and reliance on sickness benefits;
- Reduced health inequalities; and
- Improved carer wellbeing.

Due to the positive outcomes the project has now been extended to cover 25 practices, across two localities (Bellshill & Hamilton) within Lanarkshire and we believe the committee would benefit from examining the cost-effectiveness of such an approach with regard to the use of medicines.

Should you require further information, or would like to discuss further, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AKS'.

**Alison Keir**

Policy Officer - Scotland

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