

Occupational Psychiatry Special Interest Group – newsletter January 2025

Dear OPSIG members,

Conference – save the date! We will be holding our first ever 1-day conference at the College on **Tuesday 30th September 2025**. This promises to be a fantastic meeting with a core theme of mental health for healthcare workers. We also hope to include a session which continues our ‘occupations’ series following our successful autumn Webinar: [Teachers' mental health and the hazards of a profession](#). The step into a larger annual conference is a direct response to both our expansion in recent years, and the disappointment some of you faced back in March when our limited capacity in-person event sold out!

Executive Committee. None of our OPSIG output would be possible without the continual effort of a dedicated team: [OPSIG Executive Committee](#). It is fantastic to highlight a few successes including a recent BJPsych Bulletin article [Why regulation hurts: balancing the need to maintain standards with the mental health impact on public sector professionals](#), with first author our Psychiatry Trainee rep Dr Hester Mannion, and individually Prof Derek Tracy in his award of Presidential Medal while Prof Neil Greenberg is the first psychiatrist to be President-elect of the Society of Occupational Medicine. Dr Pete McAllister is now firmly in role as our Finance Officer too and will help lead us through a period of growth. Dr Olufemi Talabi – the winner of our 2024 OPSIG Poster Prize – has joined us as the Occupational Medicine Trainee representative and written our first ‘Trainees’ section’ to the newsletter below.

Work and mental ill-health. RCPsych continues to advocate on this critical issue as seen in this recent press release: [15% of households taking time off work due to mental ill-health](#). Collaboration with both the Faculty and Society of Occupational Medicine is also key to advancing awareness and understanding. The College Position Statement remains a constant source of reference here: [Occupational mental health: addressing patients' occupational, educational and psychosocial needs as an essential aspect of mental healthcare](#). Psychiatrists should continue to frame appropriate work (gaining employment, remaining in or returning to the workplace) as an important treatment outcome.

Dr Darren Minshall – Chair and Executive Committee for OPSIG
Chair.OPSIG@rcpsych.ac.uk

Trainees Section: Getting involved with Occupational Psychiatry as a trainee

I have enjoyed every bit of the training journey so far and I am very keen to support more doctors to experience this as well. I am often asked questions such as ‘what is occupational medicine and what do occupational physicians do?’. Occupational medicine strives to promote and maintain the highest degree of physical, mental and

social well-being of workers in all occupations. It is a broad specialisation involving various aspects of health that contributes to workplace productivity. For example, mental health conditions are currently a leading cause of sickness absence from work hence occupational psychiatrists are well placed to help address these issues at individual and organisational levels thus improving employee well-being and overall productivity.

The Diploma in Occupational Medicine (DOccMed) is an important qualification for those with an occupational interest and there are lots of opportunities to work in different capacities with good career flexibility and work-life balance. This [BMJ Careers](#) article further discusses the Occupation Medicine training pathway. If I have held your interest so far and you would like to explore OM further, I would like to suggest the following tips.

Mentorship. It might be useful to find an occupational psychiatrist/physician who can support you in the journey. This could be by contacting your local occupational department to arrange taster days.

Professional organisations. Please plan to attend the RCPsych OPSIG 2025 annual conference on 30th September 2025. Don't be shy! get talking to other attendees and you will find out that we are a friendly group that is always willing to help and support. The OPSIG maintains good working relationships with other organisations in the occupational medicine space such as the [Society of Occupational Medicine](#), the [Faculty of Occupational Medicine](#) and the [Division of Occupational Psychology at the British Psychological Society](#). You may wish to consult their websites to see if there are any events of interest.

Further opportunities and prizes. These provide an opportunity to carry out research, develop a portfolio and signal commitment to the space. The OPSIG Poster prize 2025 will be run at the annual conference. The Royal Society of Medicine also has an [Occupational Medicine Section](#). There are [SOM Occupational Health and Medicine Scholarships](#) too. Lastly the [National School of Occupational Health \(NSOH\)](#) is the resource for specialist training in Occupational Medicine from ST3.