

Children's Occupational Therapy Service

Information for patients, relatives and carers

April 2024

About The Children's Occupational Therapy Service

The Occupational Therapy team help children and young people aged 0 – 19 participate and engage in their everyday tasks and activities to support development, health and wellbeing.

The team includes Occupational Therapists, Occupational Therapy Technical Instructors, and administrative support.

The service works with children and young people who are registered with a Gateshead GP. Referrals are accepted from all professionals e.g., GPs, Social Workers, Health and Education professionals.

What do children's occupational therapists do?

Children's Occupational Therapists work in partnership with children and young people, their families, carers and supporting professionals. The main focus of Occupational Therapy is to empower and support children and young people to live their lives as independently as possible within the context of their ability, family unit and community.

Difficulties with life skills may arise due to environmental barriers, developmental delay, disability, or illness. Children's Occupational Therapists will explore a child's strengths and assist them in working towards reducing barriers. The aim is to improve their quality of life and be able to take part, and achieve, in the activities children and young people want and need to do. Life skills include self-care, productivity and play. Occupational therapists call these 'occupations' and can include the following activities:

Self-Care - washing, brushing teeth, eating and drinking, going to the toilet, getting dressed, sleep.

Productivity - positions for learning in class, attention / concentration / sitting still, handwriting / mark making, using scissors and completing classroom tasks, P.E activities.

Play - Play is an essential multidimensional occupation that allows children to develop their individual interests and develop the skills to interact with the world around them, joining in with hobbies and activities with family or friends at home and in the wider community. Occupational Therapists can provide advice to learn and practise new play skills appropriate to a child's developmental age and to explore different ways to play in different settings. This may include toys, play equipment, the natural environment, and other people.

Accessing the Service and What to Expect

Referrals should be completed on the service referral form. This should be sent by post or emailed to our generic email address. Consent from parents should be gained before making a referral.

Referrals into the service are triaged when received to check that they are appropriate for the service, and to check if there are any urgent concerns. If the referral is appropriate, the child will be placed onto a list to be 'screened' by the most appropriate member of the team. Initial screening of referrals is typically completed via telephone to parents and carers to discuss areas of strength and prioritised areas of difficulty.

If the referral is not accepted into the service, we may request more information in order to make a more comprehensive decision or redirect the referral to a more appropriate service.

Following initial screening, a more in-depth assessment of the child's needs will be completed. This may include a telephone consultation where advice is provided, a home visit, a nursery or school visit, or a

clinic appointment. This depends on the needs and the type of challenges identified from the referral and screening process. The Occupational Therapist will discuss strategies, programmes, and equipment specific to the child or young person and their supporting adults' requirements. Intervention will be individualised, and this may include programmes such as Sensational Thinking.

Sensational Thinking

The Sensational Thinking Home Programme was created by the children's Occupational Therapists in Newcastle and forms part of The Sensational Thinking Project.

The aim of the Sensational Home programme is to offer parents and carers an overview of sensory processing, it demonstrates how sensory differences can impact upon behaviour and offers those attending the opportunity for discussion regarding initial sensory based strategies.



Occupational Therapy Resources

The Service is currently developing a range of resources, which will be uploaded to the resources section of the website.

If you do not find what you are looking for, please re-visit in the future as resources are continually being updated.

Service Opening Hours

Monday to Friday 8:30 am – 4:30 pm

Contacting the Service

Telephone: 0191 445 5579

Email: ghnt.communitychildrensoccupationaltherapy@nhs.net

Website: [Children's Occupational Therapy - Gateshead Health](#)



How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have.

If you have any suggestions or comments about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (PALS) on 0191 445 6129 (09.00 – 17.00, Monday to Friday).

You can also email PALS at ghnt.pals.service@nhs.net

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Chief Executive,
Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust,
Trust Headquarters,
Queen Elizabeth Hospital,
Sheriff Hill,
Gateshead,
NE9 6SX

The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Data Protection

Any personal information is kept confidential. There may be occasions where your information needs to be shared with other care professionals to ensure you receive the best care possible.

In order to assist us to improve the services available, your information may be used for clinical audit, research, teaching and anonymised for National NHS Reviews and Statistics.

Further information is available via Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust website ([Privacy - QE Gateshead](#)) or by contacting the Data Protection Officer by telephone on 0191 445 8418 or by email ghnt.ig.team@nhs.net.

**This leaflet can be made available in other languages and formats
upon request**