



Introduction to the National PICU Occupational Therapy Network

The National PICU Occupational Therapy network is a NAPICU initiative launched in March 2020. It is led by Dr Wendy Sherwood, DipCOT, MSC, PhD, Consultant Occupational Therapist, NAPICU executive committee member.

The network was developed to address the fact that there is a paucity of research literature related to occupational therapy in the specialised field of PICU, and a lack of information relating to occupational therapists' needs, challenges or what constitutes good practice.

NAPICU Occupational Therapy Network aims to:

- Share good practice and service development initiatives;
- Develop knowledge of the role and contribution of occupational therapy in PICU and Low Secure services;
- Explore the evidence-base for occupational therapy intervention;
- Promote staff support.

To support the network and attend to the need for research and publication in this field, NAPICU is collaborating with St George's, University of London, specifically with Dr Jane Cronin-Davis, Associate Professor/Programme Lead-Occupational Therapy, Deputy Dean for Students.

Who is in the network?

We have members from all four countries of the United Kingdom. Network membership criteria:

- Occupational therapists and occupational therapy support workers
- Currently practicing in PICU and secure acute mental health services
- NAPICU members (individual or ward membership)

At this early stage of the network's development, we are not inviting Engagement, Activity and Physical Health Practitioners, activity co-ordinators, therapeutic activity nurses, engagement co-ordinators, life skill recovery workers, social therapists or similar to join the network, but we do want to hear from them if they have a need and interest in networking as there may be scope to create such opportunities. Please contact wendy@napicu.org.uk

How does networking happen?

The original plan was to have two national meetings a year plus local networking opportunities. Due to the Covid19 pandemic, the approach had to change. There are monthly Zoom facilitated **network meetings** for open networking/discussion about any issues the participants

wish to discuss, and we also discuss set topics relevant to the network members. To achieve its aims, we occasionally meet more frequently in order to get an important piece of work done, such as creating the document: *Practice issues and guidance on delivering and managing occupational therapy and activity-based intervention in PICUs in the context of Covid-19*.

Monthly email updates are sent to members on the outcomes of network meetings, news and upcoming events.

There are also **CPD events** such as workshops on occupational therapy assessments and outcome measures in PICUs. Online training to support your professional development is also in development.

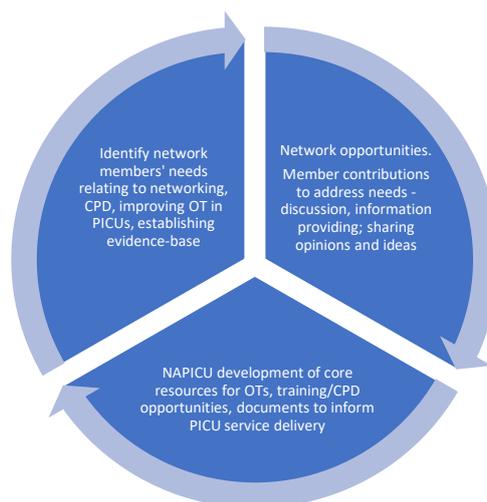
The most important factor in the network's value is **its members - you**. The network is not NAPICU or the network lead - they are facilitators only. The network is occupational therapists and occupational therapy support workers who work in PICUs and therefore have the knowledge and experiences to inform and drive the network for the purpose of meeting its aims.



What does being a network member involve for me?

You will benefit from the work of the network in terms of being supported and increasing your knowledge and skills, ultimately to benefit practice and improve/enhance the profile and valuing of occupational therapy in your PICU.

However, these benefits can only be the outcome of your active participation in and contribution to the network, otherwise, it cannot generate information and initiatives that members need. If the involvement of its members is removed from the figure below, the network cannot be effective.



So, being a network member means:

- Keeping abreast of what's happening in the network – enjoy the monthly updates
- Reading and responding to communications from the network lead, particularly when your views, ideas or information is sought

- Contributing to and benefiting from network meetings (attending 6 a year is ideal)
- Contributing to benefiting from CPD events

The commitment of NAPICU is to fund, facilitate and support the network so that it can meet its aims. In so doing, NAPICU can influence practice for the benefit of services, service users and the occupational therapy profession. Through the work of the Occupational Therapy Network,

NAPICU aims to:

- Share good practice to improve services and influence local policies;
- Provide a platform for skill sharing and discussing current issues; provide support for challenging role;
- Encourage occupational therapists to work collaboratively for provision of essential and desirable occupational therapy provision within all PICUs throughout the UK;
- Develop research and evidence-based correspondence;
- Support research and publication;
- Develop resources to support occupational therapy practice.

Through the work undertaken by network members (including research and publication), supported by NAPICU, the long-term outcomes sought by the network are:

- Demonstrate how varied and applicable occupational therapy can be for people in acute illness, challenging perceptions that an individual is too unwell for therapy;
- Provide a clear overview of the occupational therapy role, skills and scope, and the theoretical and evidence-based approaches informing good practice;
- Monitor/audit quality and parity across services regarding PICU occupational therapy provision;
- Enhance the occupational therapy professions and wider MDT awareness of an occupational therapist's role within a specialist acute mental health service.

The NAPICU Occupational Therapy network is a really great opportunity

We look forward to getting to know you and working with you.



Membership and general enquiries: info@napicu.org.uk

Network lead – Dr Wendy Sherwood, wendy@napicu.org.uk