Occupational Therapists in Housing

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What is an occupational therapist (OT)?

- OT’s are Health professionals registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).
- Assessment and intervention focuses on all activities a person undertakes throughout the course of their day e.g. getting washed and dressed, preparing lunch or carrying out their role as a parent.
- Committed to the social model of disability, OT’s focus on the person’s needs and seek to identify the barriers they are facing.
- OT's look at alternative methods, techniques and strategies for coping with functional deficits, as well as suggesting alterations to a person’s physical environment to compensate for a loss in function e.g. provision of equipment or adaptations to a person’s home.
Role of a housing OT

- Housing OT’s are specialised in assessing the impact of someone’s home on their function.
- Intervention can be:
  - Provision of equipment
  - Minor adaptations
  - Major adaptations
  - Re-housing
  - Referring to external agencies
- Day in the life of a housing OT: [www.cih.org/mbusresources](http://www.cih.org/mbusresources)
Benefits of having an OT in your organisation - adaptations

- Faster assessments.
- More effective communication with housing and adaptation teams.
- Improved functional information for surveyors and operatives.
- Design adaptations with a long-term view based on the property type.
- Offer advice to asset management services regarding the use or disposal of adapted stock ([www.cih.org/mbus](http://www.cih.org/mbus))
Benefits of having an OT in your organisation - housing

- Assessing housing need and encouraging tenants to move rather than adapt.
- Responsive assessments of nominees to void properties.
- Knowledge of suitable stock availability and new builds.
- Working with the local authority to ensure that the right people are nominated for adapted properties.
- Providing assessment and design input to improvement (decent homes) programmes.
- Providing professional advice to other staff.
CASE STUDY - before photos
CASE STUDY - after photos
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Relationships with external agencies

- Local authority- housing allocation and strategic housing.
- Other housing associations.
- Other health and social care professionals e.g. physiotherapists, hospital OT’s, social workers, GP’s, learning disability teams, paediatric teams, mental health services.
- Collaborative care teams.
- Care agencies.
- Architects, surveyors and contractors.
- Development teams.
- Charities e.g. Age UK, MS Society.
- Support services e.g. Bromford Support, Delos.
How does poor housing affect health?

- Increased hospital admissions due to falls, infections and general ill-health.
- Housing-related hazards that increase the risk of illness/injury include damp, mould, excess cold and structural defects such as poor lighting or lack of handrails.
- Increased care costs to social care if a person’s property is not suitable to maintain their independence and safety.
- Increased demands on families for support, and risk of injury to carers.
- Lack of self-esteem and loss of role(s) leading to increased risk of depression and other mental health issues.
- Loneliness and social isolation if unsuitably housed and/or not supported in the community.
- Overcrowding; unsafe neighbourhoods; insecurity of tenure.
Care Act 2014 - what this means for housing?

- The Care Act 2014 is a significant piece of legislation that recognises local housing authorities and providers as significant partners for health and care.

- The act introduces a care and support system that is clearer, fairer and fit for the future.

- The act focuses on people’s well-being, supporting them to live independently for as long as possible.

- The act recognises the need to move from acute/crisis driven responses to preventing, reducing and delaying care and support needs.

- Lobbyers of housing and health have worked very hard to put the message across that a decent home is pivotal to ensuring a person’s well-being, and that bricks and mortar solutions can help to meet, or even reduce, social care needs.
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