

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymchwiliad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#)
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This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education](#)
[Committee](#) inquiry into [Implementation of education reforms](#)

IER 80

Ymateb gan: Coleg Brenhinol Therapyddion Galwedigaethol
Response from: Royal College of Occupational Therapists

Consultation response to *Implementation of education reforms* by the Senedd's Children, Young People and Education Committee

October 2025

About Us

The Royal College of Occupational Therapists Cymru welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Children, Young People and Education Committee's consultation into the implementation of educational reforms in Wales. Our response follows engagement with occupational therapists working in the Welsh NHS, local authorities and private providers who engage with ALN students across all school levels including home schooling, special schools and through the IDP process.

We are the professional body for occupational therapists (OTs) in the UK. We've championed the profession and the people behind it for over 80 years; and today, we are thriving with over 37,000 members. Then and now, we're here to help achieve life-changing breakthroughs for our members, for the people they support and for society as a whole.

OTs help people overcome challenges that impact their ability to carry out everyday activities—known as occupations—that give their lives meaning and purpose. They take a person-centred, holistic approach to assessment, working alongside individuals to identify needs and co-produce achievable, meaningful goals.

Through the NHS, local authorities, schools and directly with parents, occupational therapy has a long-established role in promoting the wellbeing of children and young people, enabling them to participate meaningfully in everyday activities. These everyday activities shape their development, identity, and sense of belonging.

OTs work closely with schools and parents to assess children's participation inside and outside of the classroom, advising on what support and adjustments should be made available and working in collaboration to deliver what is needed.

We have responded to the sections of the consultation that are relevant to our work.

Implementation of the new Additional Learning Needs (ALN) system and the effective transfer of learners from the existing Special Educational Needs (SEN) system.

Overall, members have told us that they believe the change from SEN to ALN has had significant impact on learners. However, members were split if the new system had a more positive or negative impact.

Concerns around the guidance being vague or ambiguous, along with different interpretations by local authorities has made the ALN system difficult to navigate. There are mixed results on OTs being invited into schools to assess students with limited school budgets causing apprehension within schools on their ability to fund support. These funding concerns cause

members to believe that the ALN system has caused fewer young people to engage with the system.

Members have commented that completing IDPs is requiring a significant amount of time and is not focused on the clinical needs of the child, with the SEN system appearing to be more efficient.

OTs are experiencing system delays in Section 20 referrals, leading to some becoming obsolete before members are able to undertake the assessment and schools need to bring in more outside support to enable timely completion of reports and assessments.

There is a need for greater collaboration and support for school in terms of communication. Local authorities are better placed to give support but use different forms and processes, adding additional workload to OTs working across council boundaries, parents with children in multiple schools and leads to confusion and inconsistencies.

There is also a need to review the engagement of OTs to maximise the impact of occupational therapy for children with ALN. The process needs to enable more timely access to OT expertise through earlier intervention, delivered in children's natural environments (schools and early years settings), and in partnership with other members of the children's workforce, as well as OTs providing more universal advice to teachers, not just on ALN.

In Neath Port Talbot, the health board and the council have a service level agreement for OTs to provide training, advice and support to schools on a range of developmental issues including sensory differences, attention and concentration, emotional and behavioural, dressing, co-ordination and developmental concerns. The scheme has been recognised by teachers as having a whole school impact in enabling educators to better understand the needs of their pupils. As well as having the tools and skills to meet the needs of all their students.

An evaluation of this scheme is attached (https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/UKWALES/2024/04/19/file_attachments/2852697/OT%20Service%20Evaluation%20Report%20Final-22-23.pdf).

The application of the definition of ALN, compared to presently for SEN, and whether there is any 'raising of the bar' on the ground for determining eligibility for provision.

Overall members were concerned that under the ALN system it is harder for a student to be identified as requiring ALN support. This results in the system forcing parents and children to undergo neurodivergent or neurodevelopmental assessments, rather than assessing the child's behaviour in the classroom and responding to their specific behaviour.

Members report parents being confused over what support is available when IDPS and PCPs are school led.

The professional learning and other support settings are receiving to ensure effective implementation of the Curriculum for Wales and the ALN system.

Members confirmed that they had received training but raised concerns over its effectiveness. They would like future training specifically on where the OT provision can and should be inputted. There was recognition that training for parents per council area should be

paramount due to the myriad of ways schools dealt with the IDP process. Members recommended further training and support for parents and schools to help them recognise and understand how occupational therapy can promote children's participation, inclusion and learning.

The particular challenges and opportunities facing different types of schools in varying circumstances (e.g. language medium, demographics and locality) in terms of implementing curriculum and ALN reform.

Our members working with Welsh medium schools felt that there was better implementation with significantly more resources available for ALN education, compared to English medium schools.

Contact

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Evaluation of the Education Occupational Therapy (OT) service in 2022-2023 across Neath Port Talbot schools.

Evaluation Report

July 2023



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Overview:

The World Federation of Occupational Therapy WFOT (2016) stated that Occupational Therapists (OT) should be included in education in order to support and promote full participation and wellbeing of diverse students by supporting their strengths and finding solutions to reduce or remove learning activity limitations and participation restrictions.

There is no national arrangement in funding school-based OT services, which results in a model of service delivery that is not consistent across the UK (Rivera and Boyle, 2020). There is no evidence in Wales around school-based OT. This means we must look to the limited data published in England and consider the additional information on this area in America.

It is important to note that Wales has a devolved government which means a different Education and Health service to England. This said, in England, Hutton et al. (2016) identified that there has been less attention to the provision of universal or targeted input, which means many children with functional difficulties are unable to benefit from publicly funded OT services.

Many Education Authorities across the UK and Wales do not have Occupational Therapy (OT) based within their services. Neath Port Talbot (NPT) Local Education Authority (LEA) has a service level agreement with Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB) and has invested in their own OT provision since 2016 to the current day. Over this time, OT has expanded from 0.2 days to 1.4 days a week of input. To ensure resources are used wisely, the role of OT in schools is to provide universal and targeted input, including advice, support and training across the LEA. Specialist/individualised input is provided by the Health Board Paediatric OT team.

The current OT service in NPT Education Authority provides services to 63 schools (54 Primary's, 7 secondaries and 2 special schools).



OT provides:

- **Weekly OT advice clinics,**
- **9 different training courses** (7 online/2 in person) throughout the academic year with some being repeated termly.
- **1 visit every 6 weeks** to the authorities **ASD** (autistic spectrum disorder), **SEBD** (social emotional behavioural difficulties) provisions and to the **2 special schools.**
- OT on occasion can visit additional schools to provide support as required but this is limited due to service capacity.

Over the academic year of September 2022- July 2023, OT provided:

- **219** OT advice clinics,
- **30 training sessions** delivered to **690 staff** (the training topics include Handwriting, sensory processing, Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD), Cerebral Palsy, SMART Moves, Sensory Circuits and Zones of Regulation).
- **73 school visits** which include to the provisions and special schools.

Aims of this evaluation report is to:

- **Ensure** the current service is meeting the needs of NPT teachers and pupils.
- Help evidence **the positive impact** OT can have within an education authority and if any lessons can be **learned or shared.**
- Due to limited evidence being available, OT to **produce a report** so that the **findings can be shared** and this can help other Local Education Authorities to make a case for this change.
- Help understand what **next steps** OT needs to make around **service development.**



Context::

OT's can help individuals and groups to become healthier and more connected. OT's help improve wellbeing and help people develop their functional independence. The OT profession therefore aligns itself well with Wales' 'Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015' <https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/> which is a driving factor in everything we do. NPT council have an objective in their corporate plan of 2021-23 to 'improve the well-being of children and young people: "All of our children and young people have the best start in life, so they can be the best they can be"). OT as a profession has supported this and this report will demonstrate this.

It is also important that OT support the new curriculum in Wales' by helping schools to help their pupils become more ambitious, capable and informed learners. By helping students improve their occupational performance this will support them to become more healthy, confident and creative students. OT promotes wellbeing, encouraging healthy occupations and participation in life roles. OT empowers students to develop the skills so they can manage their own health and wellbeing. OT's professional standards therefore align with Wales new curriculum and the new Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Code.

Specialist support such as OT could play a key role in improving the quality of the educational provision and meet the needs of students with ALN (Landor & Perepa, 2017 and Rivera and Boyle, 2020). The nature of OT practice in schools is complex and there is limited data on OT's currently working within Education Authorities especially in the UK. Given this, It is critical for OT to evaluate the current education OT service and share any findings from this role.

What we did

Online evaluations using Microsoft Forms were developed to better understand the impact of the OT advice clinics, OT training and the overall OT service between 2022-2023. The questionnaire themes explored frequency of accessing OT, development of knowledge/understanding, Impact and effectiveness (were staff's main concerns addressed), satisfaction and the service areas that could be developed further.

Data was collected following each advice clinic and training session. These results will be explored in the evaluation findings.

The Service Evaluation questionnaire was sent to all 63 schools across the Authority in March 2023. The data collected has been very positive about the OT service provided in Education. Teachers have expressed high levels of satisfaction and they recognise the importance of OT in their schools. Teachers have also highlighted areas for service development.



Aim of evaluation:

To engage with Teachers and staff in schools to explore their experiences and feedback on working with the Education Occupational Therapy service.

To identify benefits / disadvantages of current offer, its impact in schools and how the service can be improved.

Method:

Questionnaires for the advice clinics and training were devised through Microsoft forms by adapting the standard education evaluation questionnaire format. These were then adapted by the Education OT team to ensure specific information related to OT was gathered (function/impact/were concerns addressed etc). To quality test this, these were reviewed by both Occupational Therapists in the Local Health Board and by teachers within the LEA. The Questionnaires were then finalised and set into Microsoft Forms. The advice clinic and training questionnaires are continuing to be used in Education as both clinics and training are ongoing service provision.

This format of online questionnaires have been successful in reaching teachers as these can be complete virtually and anonymously following any training sessions or advice clinics. 34% of the advice clinic questionnaires were returned for 2022-2023.

The service evaluation questionnaire was quality assured by the research and development OT within SBUHB, a Paediatric OT manager from SBUHB and our Support for Learning manager. Once checked, these were emailed to every Headteacher and ALNCo (Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator officer) of each school in NPT in March 2023. OT set a deadline of 8 days for the service evaluation questionnaires to be completed.

All questionnaires were able to provide both qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative data was evaluated and described descriptively. The qualitative open comment questions were analysed to identify themes.



Evaluation Findings:

Advice Clinics questionnaire results:

Number of Respondents: 75

OT provided 219 advice clinics to 282 staff from Sept 2022- July 2023. The following was found:



Advice clinic qualitative comments:

Themes = practical strategies, excellent ideas, advice and support.

Practical strategies (Some comments provided):

‘James Marshman was fantastic at underpinning the objectives needed for our pupil. James was able to provide examples of resources and also share these with us. It was a wonderful clinic for supporting next steps both in the school and at home. We look forward to our next conversation’.

‘Carly was so helpful. I felt reassured that I am doing some of the strategies already but thanks to Carly I now have lots of other strategies that I can try with the child in my class so that we can move forward. Thank you very much.’



Excellent ideas. (Some comments provided):

‘Extremely informative and supportive. Gained an understanding on how to address the child’s needs and help her regulate and develop’

‘Excellent ideas and suggestions for strategies’

Advice and support. (Some comments provided):

‘OT advice was very comprehensive but it would be nice if they were able to come in to observe and demonstrate.’

‘Really constructive session that allowed open discussion but also some time to reflect on practise and review best steps in moving forward.’

‘Really helpful again, lots of support offered in the way of strategies, advice and professional dialogue shared to ensure the child in question is supported and makes progress. Thank you.’



Case Study:

Ethan was referred to an OT advice clinic by his teacher Mrs Jones. He is a 9-year-old boy in a mainstream class. He has no diagnosis and is reported to struggle with his concentration and organisation skills. Mrs Jones reported Ethan is struggling with school activities including handwriting and dressing for PE. He is reported to trip and fall and he can walk into others especially when children are sat down.

Mrs Jones reports poor body awareness and has queries if he has possible co-ordination difficulties. Regulation was raised as a challenge in class as he can suffer with outbursts that disturb the class. Ethan can then take 30-45 minutes to become regulated again. Ethan can rock back and fore in a chair or when sat on the floor.

Educational Psychology have been involved. Ethan is reported to be academically functioning roughly 2 years behind his chronological age.

Schools' main concerns were around Ethan poor regulation, concentration and attention all impacting on his ability to access learning. They also questioned if he has possible coordination difficulties.

The Following OT advice was offered:

<u>Recommendation:</u>	<u>Impact:</u>
School to attend sensory circuits training. School will trail sensory circuits with Ethan every morning for 1 full week. If an improvement in his regulation/concentration/attention is seen, this will need to be continued.	School implemented Sensory circuits and they reported an improvement in Ethan's engagement and learning in class. They also reported he rocked less in class. School therefore continued sensory circuits.
School recognised that regulation is important for Ethan's, concentration, engagement and learning. School accessed the 'Zones of Regulation' (ZOR) training provided by EP + OT. They were then advised to deliver the ZOR curriculum with Ethan and help him build his tool box of strategies so he can better regulate throughout the day. OT provided a variety of suggestions for school which included using a therapy ball, movnsit cushion, various movement breaks and different resistance tasks.	School implemented ZOR curriculum for 9 months with Ethan. School report Ethans awareness around his regulation improved with him better recognising when he dysregulates and how to return to the 'green zone'. He has several strategies (tools) that work for him which include theraband on his chair leg, completing delivery jobs, handing books out, stacking chairs in the hall and further movement breaks. Ethan's teacher reports that Ethan's concentration and learning has improved in class and she spends less time managing his behaviour as she did before.
Mrs Jones (class teacher) reported Ethan struggles with some of his letter formations (z, x, w, y and k letters). Mrs Jones was advised to	Class teacher used her handwriting training and established that Ethan had not fully consolidated his diagonal and cross pre-



<p>attend OT handwriting training. This was to help them break down where Ethan’s handwriting challenges are and help school with a way forward with this concern.</p>	<p>writing shapes. This has since been addressed. Alongside this, school also used the information obtained through the good handwriting guide shared at the training to make handwriting more comfortable for Ethan. School were clear on what interventions they needed to complete moving forward to address their concerns. Ethan’s handwriting is continuing to improve and schools can return to a future advice clinic if required.</p>
<p>Due to possible co-ordination concerns, school were suggested to complete SMART Moves package with Ethan (SMART Moves is a screening tool to assist in the early identification of children with motor co-ordination difficulties through a series of tasks based on the PE curriculum. It also has lots of fun activities and games that helps develop a child’s motor coordination skills). SMART Moves helps the school establish Ethan’s coordination skills baseline and support any areas he is struggling with. OT provide schools with support and training around using SMART Moves.</p>	<p>Once Ethan’s regulation had improved, school implemented SMART moves package. Ethan struggled in some areas around his balance and methods of travel. School have implements SMART moves intervention for one full term and an improvement has been seen. School were advised to continues to use this intervention. If future concerns arise around co-ordination, school can return to an OT advice clinic.</p>
<p>School raised dressing as an area of challenge for Ethan. OT helped school problem solve the next steps around dressing and how school can support his organisation difficulties around this task by using a visual dressing chart.</p>	<p>School worked on this and developed a method that supports Ethan with his organisation difficulties around dressing. Ethan is now dressing himself independently for PE. School also shared their findings with home so they could also use this effective strategy. School can use this new strategy with other tasks he may struggle to organise.</p>

What happened next?

Following school implementing OT’s recommendations for 9 months, Mrs Jones reports that Ethan’s regulation has improved and as a result he is showing improved concentration and attention when in class. Ethan is reported to have strategies that he uses throughout the day to help him better regulate and meet some of his sensory needs. Ethan is more familiar with his emotions and can consistently use an emotional check in. As Ethan’s engagement has improved, he has been able to better apply himself in SMART Moves and literacy interventions. Mrs Jones reports a gradual improvement in his motor co-ordination skills have been seen. Ethan’s letter formations have



improved and this is having a positive impact on his handwriting legibility. This is also likely to be supporting Ethan's self-esteem.

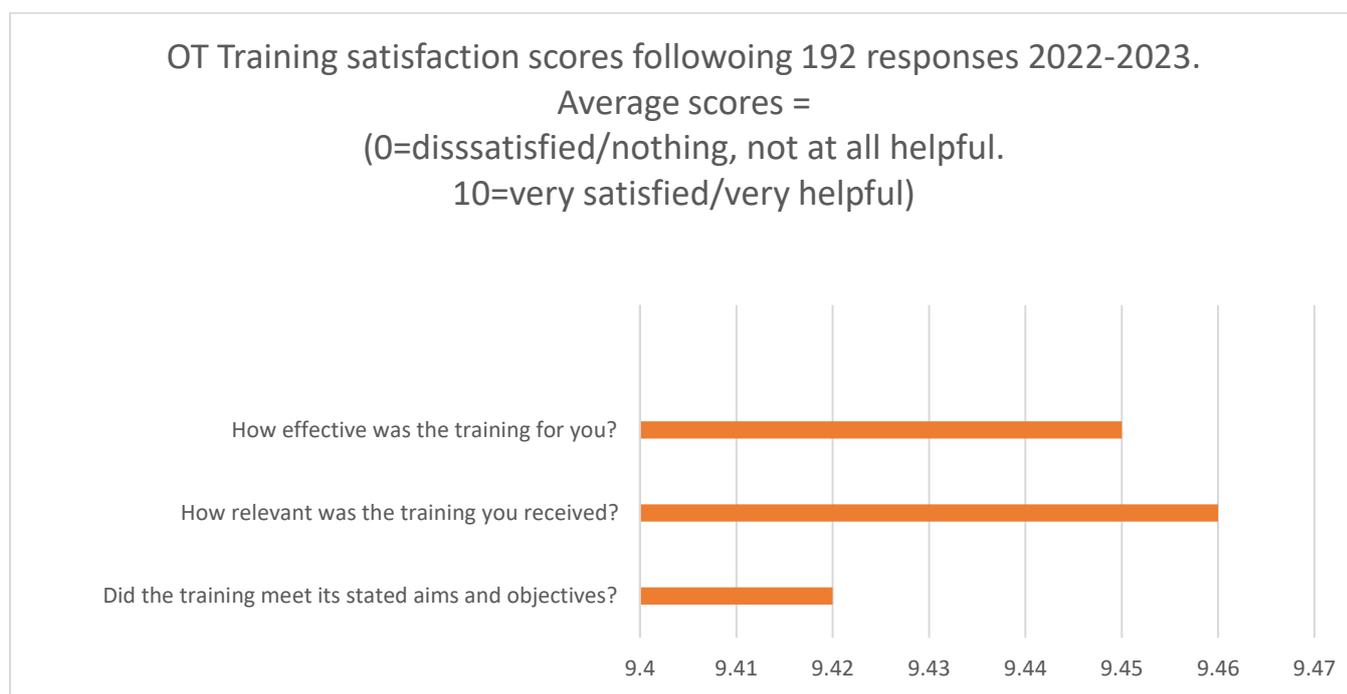
- Improved self-awareness.
- Improved regulation.
- Improved concentration at tasks.
- Improvement in motor skills.
- Teacher spends less time away from the whole class.
- Ethan's wellbeing is likely to have improved (this was not assessed).



OT's training questionnaire results:

Number of Respondents: 192

OT provided 30 training sessions from Sept 2022- July 2023. 690 staff were trained.



Themes = Informative, Strategies, Ideas, greater understanding

Greater Understanding and Strategies (Some comments provided):

‘Everything that was discussed was relevant and linked to certain children that I have in my class. It made me think differently and more empathetic about the needs I am dealing with daily.’

‘The discussion of the strategies was partially useful. Ability to access all the information- all jargon was explained and put into scenarios for better understanding within each setting. A fantastic delivery and taken lots of information back to my work place to share with colleagues’

‘The science behind children with sensory needs was very interesting and gave a deeper insight into the reasons behind these difficulties for some children. The resources and ideas shared were fantastic, James was very inclusive of everyone on the course, ensuring he covered what we wanted to get out of the course’.



‘Very good training. Can see myself using what I learnt today with the children I work with the most. Also it has given me more of an understanding on how to support the children better and what strategies to use.’

‘Training helped by breaking down the specific strategies for supporting children with coordination difficulties and how different difficulties present in different ways’

‘Fantastic training with very useful strategies to use in the classroom’.

‘Brilliant, loads of practical strategies for schools to implement. Great for us to have this awareness and knowledge to be able to raise this in discussion and support within schools. Thank you, from School In-Reach’.

Informative and Ideas (Some comments provided):

‘Excellent delivery from knowledgeable trainers. Lots of theory and practical information and ideas to apply to our every day teaching in the classroom for all pupils. Great ideas and useful links. Thank you very much!’

‘I really appreciated the theory content and the developmental details. There were also some really helpful strategies.’



Zones of Regulation training

Background:

Following lockdown 2020, OT collaborated with the Educational Psychology (EP) service to put together a training package that would support staff and pupils wellbeing and their regulation. The training linked into the work from Dan Sigel 'the window of tolerance' and the 'Zones of Regulation' by Leah Kuypers.

OT and EP chose to promote Zones of Regulation (ZOR) as we believe it is a fantastic curriculum that teaches and fosters emotional regulation for children aged 5-18. ZOR was designed by an Occupational Therapist Leah Kuypers. This curriculum consists of 18 lessons and helps children to develop self-regulation and emotional control. ZOR supports the young person to develop their own sensory supports, calming strategies and thinking techniques. This in turn supports children/teens to build their 'toolboxes' of coping strategies.

As set out on the ZOR website (<https://zonesofregulation.com/how-it-works/>)

ZOR is:

- A proactive, skills based approach.
- A simple, common language to understand, talk about, and teach regulation.
- A consistent, metacognitive pathway to follow for regulation.
- A systematic framework with a developmental sequence of lessons.
- Meant to be adapted by learners and settings.

NPT LEA recognised that ZOR could play an important role in schools so they invested in 50 ZOR books at the cost of £3000. These were shared with schools and provisions following them accessing our training. Lots of schools have also purchased additional copies as they recognise the value of this to pupils and staff.

The ZOR training we rolled out across the authority has been a huge success. **Since this training was started in November 2020, 47 out of our 63 schools** have accessed 'whole School' training.

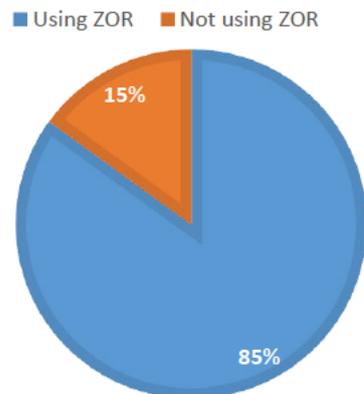
ZOR Uptake

A ZOR question was included in our service Evaluation questionnaire. We learnt the following:

Number of Respondents: 69
Number of total schools responded 41



THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS THAT REPORTED THEIR SCHOOLS WERE USING ZONES OF REGULATION :



Moving Forward:

As an Authority OT and EP are developing further training opportunities so ZOR can continue to grow and be BETTER utilised across NPT schools. One special school in NPT has printed T-Shirts for staff (see picture above) to help support their Zones work on emotions and support pupil wellbeing.

Neath College staff accessed ZOR training in July 2023 as they become aware that pupils are starting to use Zones language in higher education and they wanted to increase their awareness about this. This is hugely positive as ZOR can be used across Primary, Secondary, and potentially higher education sites within NPT.

One lead lecturer from Neath college feedback:

'NPTC Group of Colleges - Very useful training with lots of suggestions and ideas. It was very interesting to discuss ZoR and explore why pupils react and behave the way they do. Thank you for making the sessions interactive and allowing opportunities for us to ask questions/discuss -there was a helpful blend of information giving/reflection/engagement and a range of very useful resources. Some strategies may work better for primary and others for secondary but the key will be how we put this into practice and how staff trial different approaches and see what works for them and their pupils. We will try to use the zone language consistently as this will be something that pupils already understand from school and will be a good platform to build from. Diolch!'

OT recognises that further studies are needed in order to better understand the full impact Zones has had on NPT LEA. We believe it has helped to support children and staff's regulation, wellbeing, engagement and therefore positively impacted children's ability to learn.

Three trainee Educational Psychologists as part of Cardiff University are currently completing a research project as part of their doctoral course. They set out to collect views and experiences of school teaching staff across NPT that have attended the 'Zones of Regulation' training in collaboration with OT and EP for their study. No findings have been shared yet but it is hoped this will further support the impact ZOR has made in the LEA.

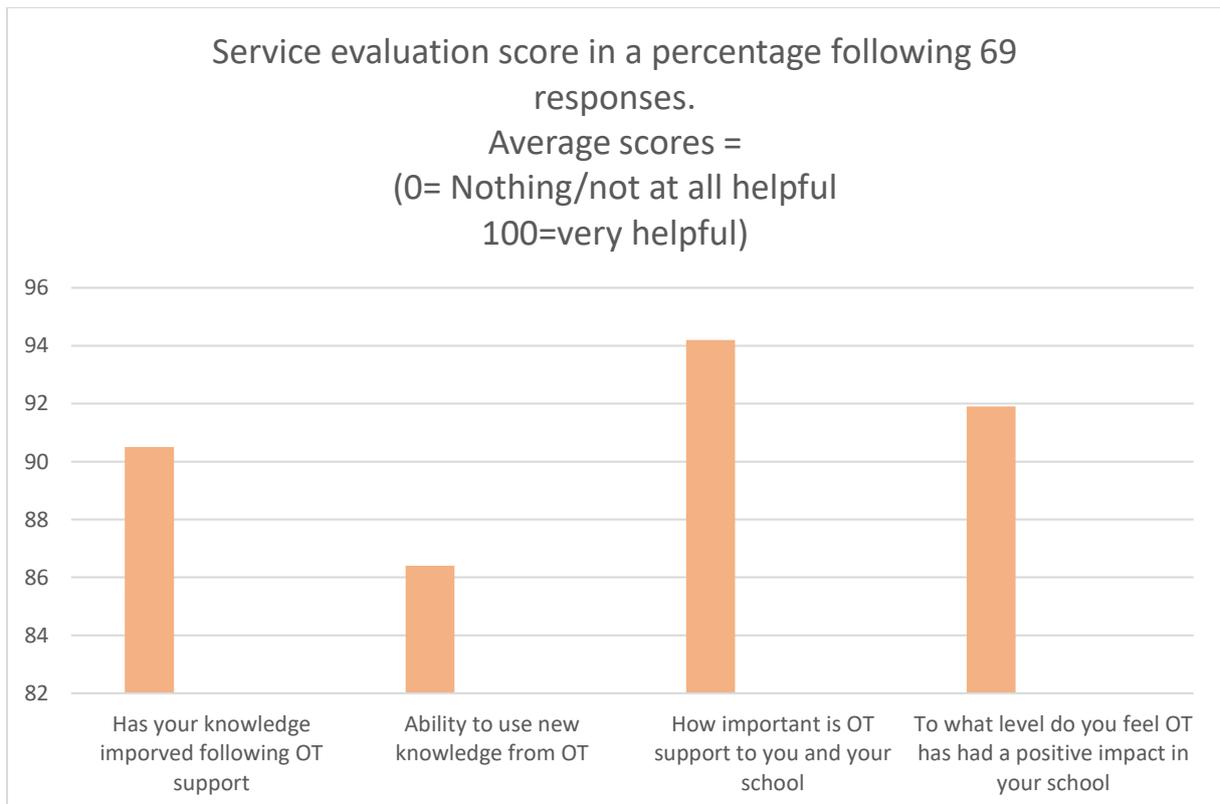


Service Evaluation Results

OT wanted to better understand the impact beyond advice clinics and training provided to schools. Therefore a service evaluation Microsoft forms questionnaire was put together. This was scrutinised by other OT's and education staff before it was sent out. The questionnaire was sent out to 126 staff which was 2 members of staff from each school in NPT (Head teacher and ALNCo). This was sent via email in March 2023. The following results were found:

Service Evaluation questionnaire results

Number of Respondents: 69
Number of total schools responded 41





Specific examples of comments on the benefits from OT:

Teachers said OT input meant they had a better understanding of pupils' needs (Quotes):

'I have discussed three pupils over the last 3 / 4 years and found the support invaluable'

'Specific children with diagnosis/traits of ASD/ADHD. We have increased their ability and independence to self-regulate physically and emotionally. A combination of the learner, the teacher, TA and their parents have developed a better understanding of their needs and have been able to use strategies to support the child.'

'Staff have better understanding of needs'.

OT input helped teachers identify strategies to support pupils' participation and engagement in learning (Quotes):

'Attendance at a PCR - James Marshman's contribution to a PCR held at school was extremely beneficial. His input, advice and knowledge has had a huge impact on one of our pupils. The information given helped the LA develop an IDP but in addition, it very much helped staff to have a greater understanding of strategies that could be used with our pupil. James also assisted by following up on the meeting with emails signposting staff to reading material, and online resources that has deepened staff knowledge.'

OT input helped students become more self-aware and better manage their own levels of regulation (Quotes):

'Pupils are more ready to learn and regulated, have greater self-awareness of their needs, improved concentration, and improved fine/gross motor skills, physical health needs met'.

'Pupils being able to identify their emotions and use strategies that have been identified in their own individual toolbox to regulate their emotions'

'As a school we value the input from OT as whole. We have focused a lot of zones recently and we have pupils now able to use zones confidently around the school. Staff are also using zones to check in for themselves.'

'Children are more regulated and engaged'.



Comments on where OT input has been successful in schools:

Whole school approach (Quotes):

‘The OT has been very helpful and effective in a number of ways. I have asked for advice on outdoor sensory equipment, advice for individual children, advice for how to use sensory equipment and advice for me as a leader in developing my staff to enable them to have the skills required to help children regulate’.

‘Very successful in developing whole staff understanding and confidence to meet complex needs. Sensory Circuits and Zones of Regulation are embedded in our school and is a part of "what we do"’.

‘Whole Training with Zones of regulation and handwriting which has helped us massively with school improvement. Also, ability to access advice clinic has been very beneficial when beginning to address different needs in the current climate’.

Meeting pupils' needs (Quotes):

‘The OT role isn't just important - it is a vital part of assisting schools in being able to meet the needs of all learners, it's vital that staff continue to have the opportunity for advice clinics, ADDs sessions, observations, attendance at meetings and staff training’.

‘We have had advice for individual children so that we can set up sensory toolboxes and exercises/ activities to regulate children. The advice has also helped with other children who may have similar needs. Support with setting specific outcomes or targets for individual children’.

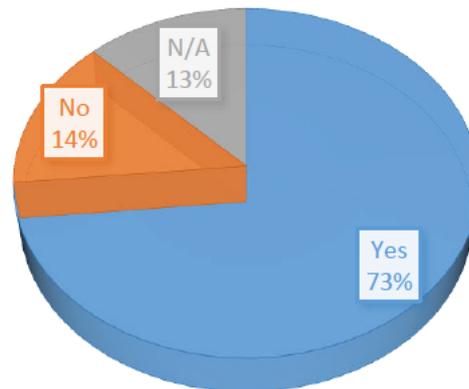
‘All areas. We have a good working relationship where we can problem solve for our complex young people’.

‘Offering children sensory circuits and zones check-ins in the mornings, this is working across the 3 buildings now. Clinics have always been so helpful to explore ways to support children, but also other issues we may not have covered’.

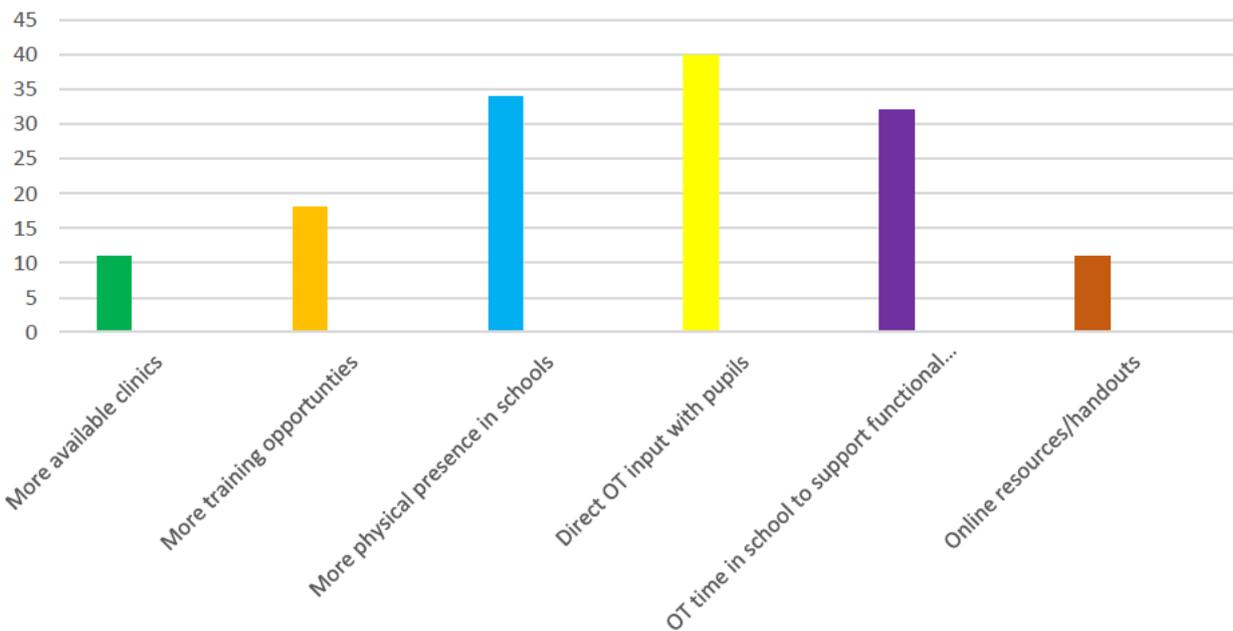


Number of Respondents: 64

NUMBER OF STAFF THAT FELT ADDITIONAL OT IS REQUIRED IN THEIR SCHOOL



WHAT WOULD STAFF LIKE TO SEE MORE OF FROM OT





Comments on what staff want additional OT in schools for:

Themes: Direct, face to face input and school observations.

Direct Face to Face contact (Some comments provided):

‘Yes for direct work with pupils. The number of pupils coming through with sensory processing difficulties seems to be increasing all the time. Clinics are really useful and helpful but direct work with pupils would be great.’

‘It would be really useful for OT to have capacity to attend some PCRs to give parents direct info and advice particularly around the importance of regulation’.

‘It would be really helpful to have face to face support in school where an OT could see the child and the difficulties that they’re experience and model effective support to support staff as they are the ones who will be running the interventions’.

School Observations (Some comments provided):

‘I feel it would be beneficial for an OT to have a physical presence in school, to see a child in person and to assess how we can support the child with the school resources available to us.’

‘With the increased number of children coming into mainstream schools with complex additional learning needs, I feel at this stage of the change, the OT service needs to attend schools and offer bespoke advice’

To give short observations of children to give advice rather than rely on a teacher conversations during clinics. To look at the resources we have in school and advise us of the best use for them. To model activities

‘There are occasions where staff would like a direct observation of the child to both give strategies and also reassure that we are carrying out intervention correctly’.

‘Since COVID, our school really misses the presence of specialists working with the children. It is sometimes difficult to explain the needs of a child in an online clinic. But having time with them in school, and watching them demonstrate particular strategies/resources to staff and with a child is always so valuable.’

(Some other comments provided):

‘OT can make such a positive difference to the child, class and wider school, but this can only be done if resources are increased and it becomes the expectation that staff attend schools and meet the children and support the staff to provide the support’.

‘WE would love for parents to be included in clinics’

‘I feel the OT support we have had this year has been exceptional! James and Carly are always so helpful and thorough. Emails are answered so quickly, with great advice, and clinics have always been arranged promptly’.



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Bae Abertawe
Swansea Bay University
Health Board



Evaluation Findings overview:

Overall feedback about the OT in Education role has been very positive. Data collected during the academic year 2022-2023 shows the following:

School staff that felt their concerns were addressed by OT:

9.88

Average Rating

School staff that felt they could use the strategies provided:

9.52

Average Rating

School staff that would recommend OT clinics to other staff:

9.90

Average Rating

School staff that consider their knowledge to have improved following OT:

9.05

Average Rating

School staff that consider OT training effective:

9.45

Average Rating

The level OT has been effective in thier school:

9.19

Average Rating

How important is OT to your school:

9.42

Average Rating



Summary:

NPT is the only local education authority that have invested in their own internal OT service, this demonstrates their forward-thinking as a council. The Education OT service started in 2016 with a small resource (0.2WTE OT) and this has grown to this present day (1.4 of a WTE OT). Education have seen the value OT has to offer and as a result they have invested in this profession.

The results within this report demonstrate that OT is a highly valued profession across all schools within NPT. Although the data collected is specific to one academic year, it has highlighted the varied impact that OT can have.

Using a universal and targeted approach, OT has been able to share knowledge and skills with over 982 staff in a single year. At a minimum, OT input will have helped each member of staff support at least one pupil. Feedback in this report shows that school staff value the role of OT and see us as a vital part of assisting schools in being able to meet the needs of all learners.

OT has been the driving force in developing a system that supports whole school regulation for all pupils. Joint training with Education Psychology has been put together for the whole authority using the 'Zones of Regulation' (ZOR) framework/curriculum. Feedback has been hugely positive with schools reporting better engagement and improved regulation. OT continues to support the implementation of ZOR across the authority with EP. The true impact of this will need greater investigation and study. Without OT's input in identifying and driving ZOR, such opportunities would not be available in the authority. OT has a big role to play within Education.

Schools have identified the need for more OT presence for direct work and to support pupils function. For this to be possible in schools, the current OT provision would need to increase within Education. It is also important to note that this could be a shared need with Health OT and therefore future services need to work together when designing services that reach across boundaries.

Moving forward OT will continue to use Microsoft forms to evaluate the impact OT has within education so this can be shared and we can continue to learn lessons and develop this service. Other mechanisms for evaluating school feedback will need to be explored.



Recommendations:

- OT has had a positive impact in NPT education. OT will continue to develop its offer, so it best meets the needs of children and school staff. OT will seek further opportunities to evaluate its effectiveness and share any findings accordingly.
- Education staff have identified the need for more direct OT input in their schools. This is something for both Education and Health managers to consider. This could be achieved if a further full time Educational Occupational Therapist was available to the team.
- OT has an important role within education services. This report displays the level of impact that can be achieved with minimal OT resource. It is hoped this will provide an effective template for other education authorities to follow when they are designing their services.

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