

Sophie Lynch

Band 5 Occupational Therapist



What does your job entail?

My day starts with attending the daily Multi-Disciplinary Team meeting. Occupational Therapy works within a MDT, alongside nurses, social workers, psychologists and Doctors.

We then run of a range of group and individual sessions both on the wards and within the OT department. Some of the group work sessions include creative and craft activities in which we assess a patient's motor and process skills for example concentration, sequencing and fine motor ability. This is also a good way to motivate patients to engage in sessions. Practical activities such as cooking which assesses a patient's ability to live independently and safely when they return home.

Group sessions are also carried out in relation to life skill development, this includes budgeting, importance of maintaining a productive daily routine and directing patients to available community supports.

Often 1:1 sessions with patients are tailored to their specific occupational needs, this can include, information / education on managing specific mental health related problems. These include things like self-esteem, anxiety or stress management techniques and how they can impact a person's ability to function. We help individuals develop ways to keep themselves well when discharged and become aware of early warning signs if their mental health deteriorates in the community.

How did you get into this line of work?

I always knew I wanted to work in a person centred career. My part time job involved working with members of the public and I wanted to continue on in this line of work in my professional career. I went to an open day in SWAH for Occupational Therapy and enjoyed the wide variety of areas that Occupational Therapists work within, I knew this was the career path for me.

Outline your career to date?

Once I graduated from Ulster University 2019 I interviewed for a Band 5 waiting list within the WHSCT and was successful in my application. I started working in December 2019 as a Band 5 Occupational Therapist in OHPCC in Reablement and Rehab. I was offered a permanent peripatetic post across Omagh and Enniskillen. I currently work in the Tyrone and Fermanagh hospital in the Mental Health in-patient facility which commenced in May 2021.

Tell us about your qualifications and training?

To gain a place at Ulster University to study Occupational Therapy I had to achieve 3 B's at A Level and attain the appropriate entry score on the HPAT – although this is no longer a requirement. I was able to attend open days and work experience organised by my school. I also volunteered during my own time at a number of different organisations – all of which I was able to write about in my personal statement.

My course at University was three years, with different placements each year covering a wide variety of areas in which OTs work – this allowed me to gain great experience in each area. I continue to learn every day and the induction and training as a new member of staff both to the Western Trust and each department allows you to do your job safely and competently.

What qualities do you feel are required for your job – personal and professional?

Be open to learning, you can never know enough. Don't be afraid to ask questions or ask for help if you need it. Be a good communicator, both within your team and with patients or service users. Be an even better listener. Work with your team and other professions, every profession assesses something different. Manage your time well. Be confident in your abilities (this comes with time) and utilise the knowledge you learn from each post. Enjoy your job and it won't feel like work!

What is the best advice you have ever received?

Take a holistic view on things.

A little bit about me

I am the first Allied Health Profession in my family.
I enjoy socialising with my family and friends

What advice would you give your 16-year-old self?

You'll learn something new every day, you don't have to know it all at once.

