

## **OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **If my child is referred for occupational therapy, will they definitely be seen by an occupational therapist?**

No, it is not always necessary to be seen by an Occupational Therapist. All Requests for Assistance are screened by our highly experienced triage team. Together, they consider every request individually and whether or not an assessment is needed. Normally, this involves a telephone call to the parent, or less often, to the referrer to gather more information. Occupational Therapists are highly experienced at understanding child development and a child's ability to participate in occupations. Often, parent and carer concerns can be alleviated through a reassuring conversation or with advice. Sometimes we will signpost you to an alternative service who may be better able to meet your child's needs. Sometimes, it is clear from the detail provided on the Request for Assistance form that assessment is definitely required, and so the more information that can be provided, the better. If an assessment is required, then the child will be seen as soon as possible and an appointment sent out.

### **Where will my child be seen?**

The location depends on a variety of factors, including reason for the assessment, where you live in Grampian and the age of your child. For example, we would usually try to see most babies at your home while most teenagers may prefer to be seen at the hospital or at their closest Child Development Team. The location of the initial assessment will be detailed on your appointment letter but it may be able to select an alternative location for future appointments, sometimes including at your child's school.

### **If I am offered an appointment, what happens at our first appointment?**

Your first appointment may last for up to 1 hour.

We will gather information of your child's medical condition and any other relevant information. We do this by talking with you and your child, observing your child as they interact and engage in activity / play. We may ask your child to do some specific activities. Every assessment is different, as it will depend on why Occupational Therapy has been requested. It is possible that the Occupational Therapist will have to physically examine your child, but we will take this at the child's pace and explain everything that we are doing.

Before the start of each session we ask the child and/or the parent / legal guardian for their consent to treatment. For health and safety reasons, if you need to bring your child's brothers or sisters with you to the appointment please try to bring a relative or friend with you. They can then keep an eye on the other children, and allow you to concentrate on the appointment.

### **Is there anything else I need to know?**

If you can't attend your appointment, please contact us as soon as possible to let us know. The most appropriate number will be on your appointment letter. We can then rearrange an alternative appointment for a more suitable time and offer your appointment to another child. If you don't attend and don't let us know, we will try to find out why, but we may take your

child off our treatment list. This would not prevent you from seeking an assessment in the future.

The Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital and Dr Gray's Hospital are teaching establishments. This means that students may be present or involved in your child's session at RACH or at our other Combined Child Health centres throughout Grampian. We will ask for your consent for students to be present and hope that you will agree.

### **What happens next?**

At the first appointment, the Occupational Therapist will discuss your child's Occupational Therapy needs goals. These needs may range from no further input, occasional review or a block of treatment. When your child is ready to be discharged from our service, we will discuss this with you.

### **What happens when my child is discharged from the service?**

When your child is discharged from our service, we will advise you about any activity programmes that you may need to continue at home or school or gym. We will contact your GP (family doctor) / specialist involved in your child's care to let them know that your child's occupational therapy has finished. Sometimes parents/carers and children can feel anxious when an episode of care ends – this is especially true for children who have a lifelong condition. However, we all share the same goal of maximising potential and independence and so with new goals or significant changes, children can be referred to our service again at any time. Ending an episode of care is often really good news as it can mean that goals have been met and children are enabled to embed new skills and learn about how important self-management is as a tool towards independence. When ready, new goals may become apparent and a new request for assistance from Occupational Therapy can be made.