

**Halton Borough Council
Adult Social Care
Principal Occupational Therapist
Annual Report 2025/2026**

Sara Griffiths

*Interim Head of Service for Independent Living Services
Principal Occupational Therapist*



Foreword

I am pleased to share this year's Principal Occupational Therapist (OT) report, looking back at what we have achieved during 2025/26 and identifying what we will focus on for 2026/27.



Having worked in Halton Borough Council for many years, I have been Principal Occupational Therapist since January 2024. Having a Principal OT highlights recognition from the Council, valuing the important role Occupational Therapy has in social care; in prevention and supporting people to improve their quality of life.

I am immensely proud of our Occupational Therapy service and the Occupational Therapist's and Community Care Workers who work incredibly hard within it to support people living with long term disabilities in their home environments. We have continued to work hard this year to try and make sustainable changes to ensure we offer the best possible outcomes and are dedicated to continuing this.

I look forward to making further improvements over the next 12 months, alongside colleagues across social care.

Sara

Sarah Foy

Director Of Adult Social Services (DASS)



As the newly appointed Interim Director of Adult Social Services, I am pleased to support this report, bringing both renewed strategic perspective and a strong continuity of organisational knowledge, having worked within this authority for a number of years. This positions me well to build on the established strengths of our occupational therapy service while maintaining a clear focus on innovation and continuous improvement.

I am committed to championing the vital contribution of occupational therapy in promoting independence, enabling people to live well in their communities, and supporting proportionate, strengths-based approaches to care. Working closely with the Principal Occupational Therapist, I recognise the importance of strong professional leadership, evidence-informed practice, and a culture of learning and development.

Together, we will continue to strengthen practice, workforce capability, and integrated working across health and social care, ensuring our offer remains responsive, effective, and aligned with both local ambitions and national priorities.

Sarah

The role of the Principal Occupational Therapist

- Provide strategic leadership and development of services
- Clinical expertise
- Strengthen the role of OT in social care
- Workforce development
- Collaboration both within the local authority and with external partners
- Advise the Director of Social Services (DASS) and other council departments on complex cases and legislation relating to OT



2025/26 snapshot

- Started a review of the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants with proposed changes presented to Senior Management
- Strengthened our “grow your own approach” with an additional OT degree apprenticeship commencing
- POT attended the Coproduction advisory group in December to discuss OT and the Disabled Facilities Grant
- Developed and published the Safety Strategies for Behaviours of Concern leaflet
- OT Week 2025-
“Right Support, Right Time: Unlocking the Power of OT”



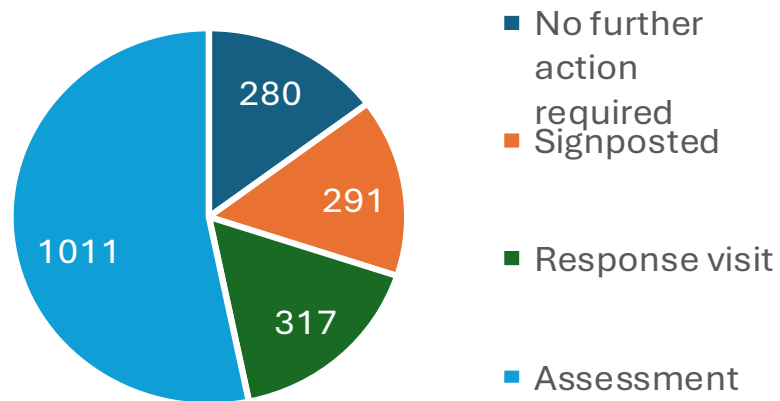
2025/26 snapshot

- Began to explore the opportunities for AI in social care
- Started to explore developments in performance monitoring
- Provided specialist housing advice and input into new developments at Mercia Place and Crow Wood Lane
- Commenced work with the Transformation team to better understand impact and effectiveness of the Prevention & Wellbeing Service, evidence outcomes for people and streamline processes
- Attended the “Step into Social Work and Care” event at Riverside College promoting Occupational Therapy as a career
- Contributed to the development of a new case file audit tool



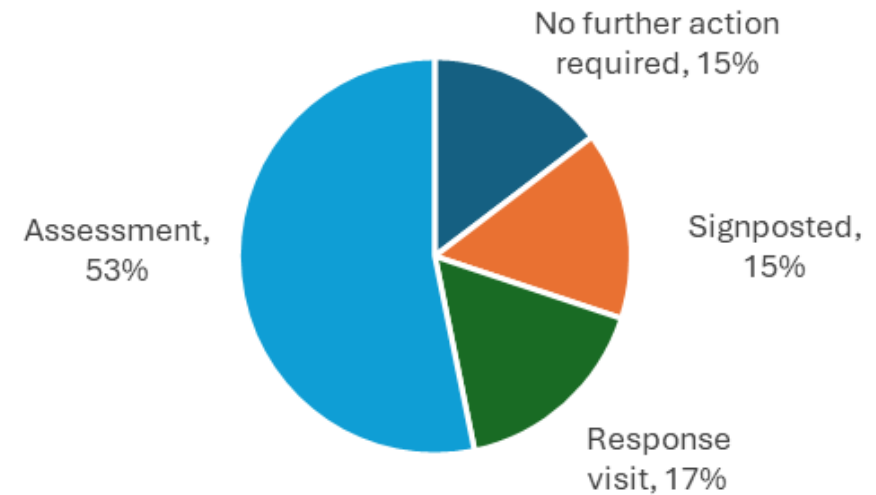
Performance overview

Number of referrals
Feb 25- Feb 26



- 300 response visits on average per year

Referral Outcomes
Feb 25-Feb 26



- 151 major adaptations completed

Achieving a CQC rating of ‘good’

- We were pleased to receive a rating of ‘good’ in our inspection which took place in March 2025, with the final report being published in July 2025.
- Occupational therapy and the preventative work at the front door of adult social care was recognised and commented upon.

The local authority demonstrated that they **acted where risks were identified** such as an **issue with waiting lists for OT-** as part of their improvement plan, they **appointed a Principal Occupational Therapist to ensure best practice and risk management**

People were **able to access equipment and minor home adaptations to maintain their independence** and continue living in their own homes and evidence that policy and process was in place to support people to apply for funding for adaptations

Achieving a CQC rating of 'good'

Data showed access to OT assessments was improving and **waiting lists had reduced** from 409 in July 2023 to **122 in February 2025**. The local authority **attributed this to the set-up of the Prevention and Wellbeing Service (PWS) and the appointment of a Principal Occupational Therapist to oversee this**. Plans were in progress to continue the improvement in waiting times

PWS implemented a screening process via dedicated duty workers to determine the priority of a referral and staff told us this had meant **people were seen more quickly and risk identified sooner**

98% equipment was delivered and 100% of minor adaptations were completed within 7 days of a referral being received

OT workforce development

- Share best practice and learning, skills exchange and complex case discussion in the OT Matters forum held every 4-6 weeks.
- Link in with Social Work Matters forum when topics of joint interest have arisen.
- OTs attended World Social Work day event and POT provided a presentation as part of the agenda.





Royal College of
Occupational
Therapists

*Occupational Therapy in
Children's and Adult social care*



health & care
professions
council



- Sara Griffiths
- Interim Head of Independent Living Services
- Principal Occupational Therapist
- 19th March 2026



HALTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

OT workforce development

- Visits from Osprey, Pressalit and Accora who demonstrated some of their equipment ranges and complex care work. The OTs have been able to visit Terry Lifts new training centre in Knutsford and Prism Medical's manufacturing based in Rhyl.
- Guest speakers such as therapists from the Functional Neurological Disorder Service based at Aintree.
- Visiting team meetings to ensure other teams know the purpose of the service and to discuss issues such as the implications of moving and handling practices on packages of care.



Apprenticeships

Lisa has worked at Halton Borough Council since 2010 starting as a Learning and Development Support Officer, before taking on the role of Office/Site Manager in a school. Lisa then joined the Prevention & Wellbeing Service as an OT Community Care Worker.

“I am finding the OT apprenticeship an extremely positive and motivating experience. Balancing work and study has been challenging at times, but overall, it has given me a strong sense of progression, increased confidence, and a clear pathway toward becoming an Occupational Therapist.

The combination of academic learning at Huddersfield University and hands-on practice has been genuinely inspiring, and I feel fully supported in developing my skills within our team. Overall, the apprenticeship has reinforced my passion for the profession and has been a hugely valuable opportunity for me”



Apprenticeships

Emma- initially began her career in Halton Supported Housing Network. She joined the Prevention & Wellbeing Service 5 years ago as an OT Community Care Worker.

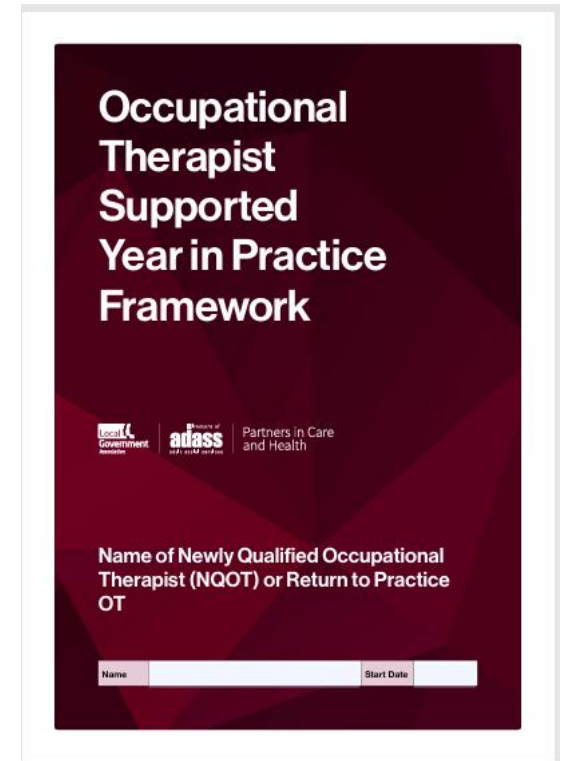
"I have been working as an apprentice Occupational Therapist for the past 8 months. I have gained valuable experience to build upon my current knowledge. I have worked closely with my work-based mentor who has supported me with my university studies, as well as working with a range of occupational therapists within the team to carry out assessments, including through floor lifts, ramps and level access showers.

In addition, I have recently completed a six-week placement of working in a forensic hospital, which has further developed and strengthened my knowledge and learning experience. I have really enjoyed having this opportunity to advance on my career"



Principal OT Network

- A key resource in delivering my role effectively is the national Principal OT Network and the Northwest ADASS Principal OT Network.
- Both provide a valuable space for: strategic leadership peer support, raising and maintaining the profile of OT in social care, sharing of best practice, learning and offering constructive challenge to support the delivery of best outcomes.
- Regionally the NW ADASS POT network meet 6 weekly with the intention of aligning practice where possible to promote a stronger representation in social care.
- This group have developed a Supported Year in Practice (SYBOT) Framework for newly qualified OTs in social care and have recently commenced the next project which is around aligning Moving and Handling Practices.



Celebrating positive feedback

Recording and celebrating successful outcomes is important for individuals and or the overall service;

“I am writing to express how grateful and appreciative we are for the support you have shown us over the past few weeks. Since meeting the OT last year, she has been incredibly supportive and helpful in every way possible. Her support, assistance, and communication have truly been second to none. Without your help and guidance, I honestly don’t know what we would have done. Thank you again for everything”

“The OTCCW was so helpful, kind and thoughtful and made an absolutely massive impact on Mum being able to register on PPP which is going to have a significant impact on the home situation”

Celebrating the positives

Celebrating Success Awards 2026

Dave Gregg, paediatric OT, was nominated for and won the Community Award.

Dave was nominated for his huge impact on families in Halton. Members of public nominated him for his dedication and compassion, for always being a listening ear, and always advocating for the people he supports.



Challenges

Recruitment & retention-

Utilising apprenticeships to support and plan future workforce needs

Finances-

Using equipment and adaptations alongside a strong prevention offer to deliver services within budget/targeted savings

Change management-

Supporting workforce and maintaining service delivery through periods of change

Demand-

Continuing to use prevention strategies to focus specialist resources on areas of need

Priorities for 2026/27

Increased coproduction
to inform service
priorities and policy
development

Continuing to drive
prevention at the
earliest opportunity

Planned review of OT
progression policy

Implementing robust
policy and pathway for
children's referrals

Applying learning from
planned AI pilots to OT
practice

Making information
more accessible

Improved data around
performance and
outcomes to inform
priorities

Implementing the
proposed changes to
ensure effective delivery
of adaptations via the
DFG

Thank you for reading through the contents of the 2025/26 report.

If you would like to discuss anything further, please feel free to contact me:

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