

The City of Peterborough Academy Special School use NHS and consultant Occupational Therapist to provide input to children who have such provision specified in their EHC plans and are funded accordingly. The consultant OT will liaise with NHS Therapists and other staff to ensure continuity.

What is Occupational Therapy?

Paediatric Occupational Therapy uses purposeful activity and play to “work with the child to help him or her attain the highest possible quality of life. The Occupational Therapist assesses the child and uses therapeutic techniques and activities to help maximise the child’s abilities and independence.” (National Association of Paediatric Occupational Therapists).

What does an Occupational Therapist Do?

Occupational Therapists are interested with everything a child does throughout the day. The OT will observe, discuss and assess everyday tasks and activities to identify areas of difficulty, and will try to establish the reason for the presenting functional difficulties. These may be sensory, physical, emotional, environmental or social.

OT Interventions at COPASS may include:

- Education and support to carers and staff about specific difficulties e.g. sensory processing, motor skills;
- Staff training on specific conditions and interventions;
- Advice on adapting the environment to maximise participation;
- Advice on equipment to increase function and participation e.g. weighted vests, writing slopes, pencil grips;
- Direct treatment to help develop skills and independence e.g. self-regulation sensory programmes, motor skill development, personal care;
- Individual or group sessions, for pupils who have provision specified in the EHC plan and are funded accordingly;
- Specialist activity programmes for carers / staff to implement at home and school, to address underlying difficulties and maximise independence.
- Parent support
- Staff support

What are the benefits?

Evidence shows that by working collaboratively with the child and family, to achieve their goals, Occupational Therapists enable children with ASD to participate more fully in everyday life (Dunn et al, 2011.)

For those pupils that have OT specified in their EHC plans, having an OT assists in the development of a therapeutic relationship between the OT and the children, staff and parents, and facilitates the regular review and updates of individual programmes keeping them fresh and motivating for the children and adults involved. Any concerns can be addressed immediately. The OT also contributes to the EHC Plans when requested.