

Tunstall Healthcare invests in the future of occupational therapy

Apr 6, 2021

The UK's leading provider of software solutions, services and technology for the telecare and telehealth markets, Tunstall Healthcare, has awarded £1,500 worth of funding as part of the Royal College of Occupational Therapists Annual Awards 2021.

Tunstall sponsored the category for 'Technology Innovation in Occupational Therapy' which was awarded to registered occupational therapist, Alicia Ridout and her team, for the development of a new web application which forms a digital Clinical Onboarding Guide for Occupational Therapists (COG-OT).

Dr Gillian Ward, Research and Development Manager at The Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT)

emphasised how important the annual awards are in supporting members when budgets and project funding are limited. She said: "This year we were delighted to have a new award sponsored by Tunstall that aims to support technology innovation in occupational therapy, this is especially important as many services are making greater use of technology enabled services to provide support to the people they work with during the pandemic.

The funding from Tunstall offers an opportunity to make improvements to the services that occupational therapists offer to the people they work with. Without the award funding, some of this development would not happen".

COG-OT, which was launched in October 2020, uses a set of filter topic areas, underpinned by the Model of Human Occupation, to generate a downloadable set of questions and best practice resources that occupational therapists can use to structure and drive the assessment of a person's care. It is context and diagnosis agnostic, and driven by holistic and inclusive principles, seeking to develop practice of the occupational therapist using it. Underpinned by the DCB0129/0160 Clinical Safety standards, the application can be accessed by both experienced occupational therapists, students and novices via an online link.

Recipient of The Tunstall Award for Technology Innovation in Occupational Therapy, Alicia Ridout added: "We are so grateful for the funding which will be used for software development to code an advanced pop-up survey which will replace the current onboarding process, engage occupational therapists and enable us to collect routine insights from users. It will also facilitate co-creation of the app, allow us to invite users to online workshops and facilitate the future development roadmap ideas.

"The COVID 19 pandemic has catapulted occupational therapists into a digitally driven environment, with more than a third having to learn new digital skills and two thirds now delivering services in new ways. There was already a clear gap in terms of support for applying technology in professional practice, and in the past year we have seen an unprecedented leap in implementation, in many cases without sufficient training or experience.

"There is an urgent need for high quality, digital-practice development tools delivered at-pace during the pandemic and beyond, and this project aims to focus on personalised practice, through working more effectively with occupational therapists. The funding will allow us to test the current hypothesis that COG-OT is a vehicle to stimulate more holistic and inclusive approaches to occupational therapist assessment."

Gavin Bashar, UK managing director of Tunstall Healthcare, added; "We're incredibly pleased to be able to provide crucial support to professionals in occupational therapy, and increase their confidence in applying technology. The Tunstall Award for Technology Innovation in Occupational Therapy is just one of the ways we are investing in technology and innovation to improve the future of health and care, and equip professionals to deliver the best possible service to users. We're excited to see how funding supports the development of COG-OT."