

# Evaluation of a model of Occupational Therapy in primary care: a LOT to offer

Lisa Greer, Advanced Occupational Therapy Practitioner  
Shonaid McCabe, Advanced Occupational Therapy Practitioner  
Colette O'Reilly, Improvement Manager Primary Care Improvement Team

Pressures on primary care are well documented and change is required to meet the growing need for healthcare services. Occupational Therapists (OTs) are part of the multidisciplinary team offer to help GPs streamline their workload while meeting patient need.

This project is part of the Lanarkshire Primary Care Improvement Plan. One of its aims is to clarify the unique contribution of occupational therapy within primary care and develop a model of practice which can be rolled out across Lanarkshire and inform service development in other Scottish health boards.

## How did we do it?

Using quality improvement methodology, we tested:

- ◆ awareness raising training for GPs and practice staff;
- ◆ occupational therapy criteria and referral pathways;
- ◆ standard operating procedure across two GP practices;
- ◆ data and measurement framework.

Evaluation of 288 patients referred over a 14-month period measured key performance indicators, including:

- ◆ patient functional and quality of life outcomes;
- ◆ patient and GP satisfaction;
- ◆ impact on GP workload.

## What did we achieve?

**55%** of patients had fewer GP appointments after Occupational Therapy intervention than before.

**96%** improved satisfaction with chosen everyday roles COPM <sup>1</sup>

**97%** improved Quality Of Life WHOQOL <sup>2</sup>

**88%** improved occupational performance in chosen everyday roles COPM <sup>1</sup>

improved patient improvement and satisfaction and quality of life



## What patients and GPs said<sup>3</sup>

### Well informed

"She has put you in the sphere of your own age group ...and you can go and find out whereas before I wasn't involved in anything"

### Consistent

"She knows what's going on in my life and that now, and the way to cope with stuff."

### Effective

"To start feeling that I'm not helping this woman... but now it's different. She's been transformed and everything's much more positive."

### Person-centred

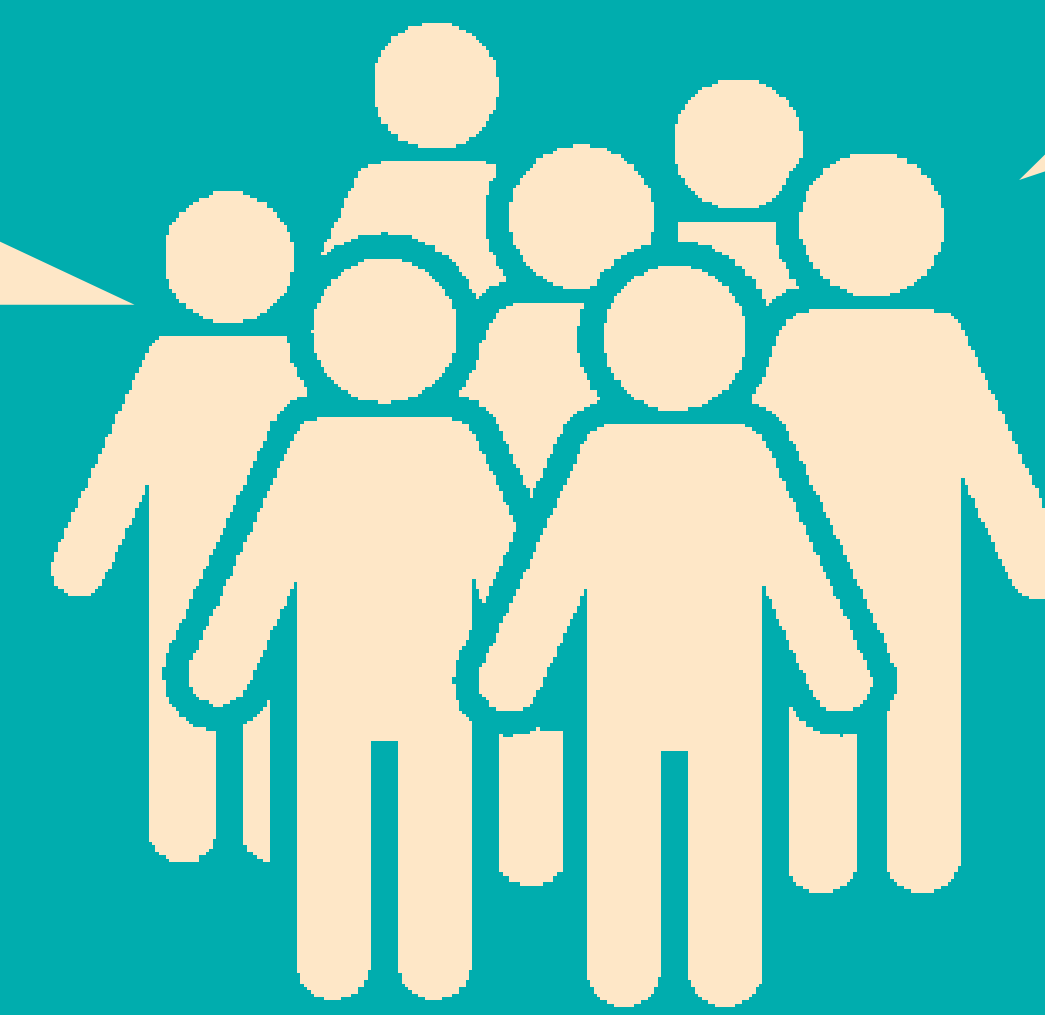
"There were suggestions about things... Could you try that? Or have you thought of this? it was all, well, I'm here for you"

### Flexible

"Patients have found it helpful to have a bit more time to discuss through issues and have some practical suggestions."

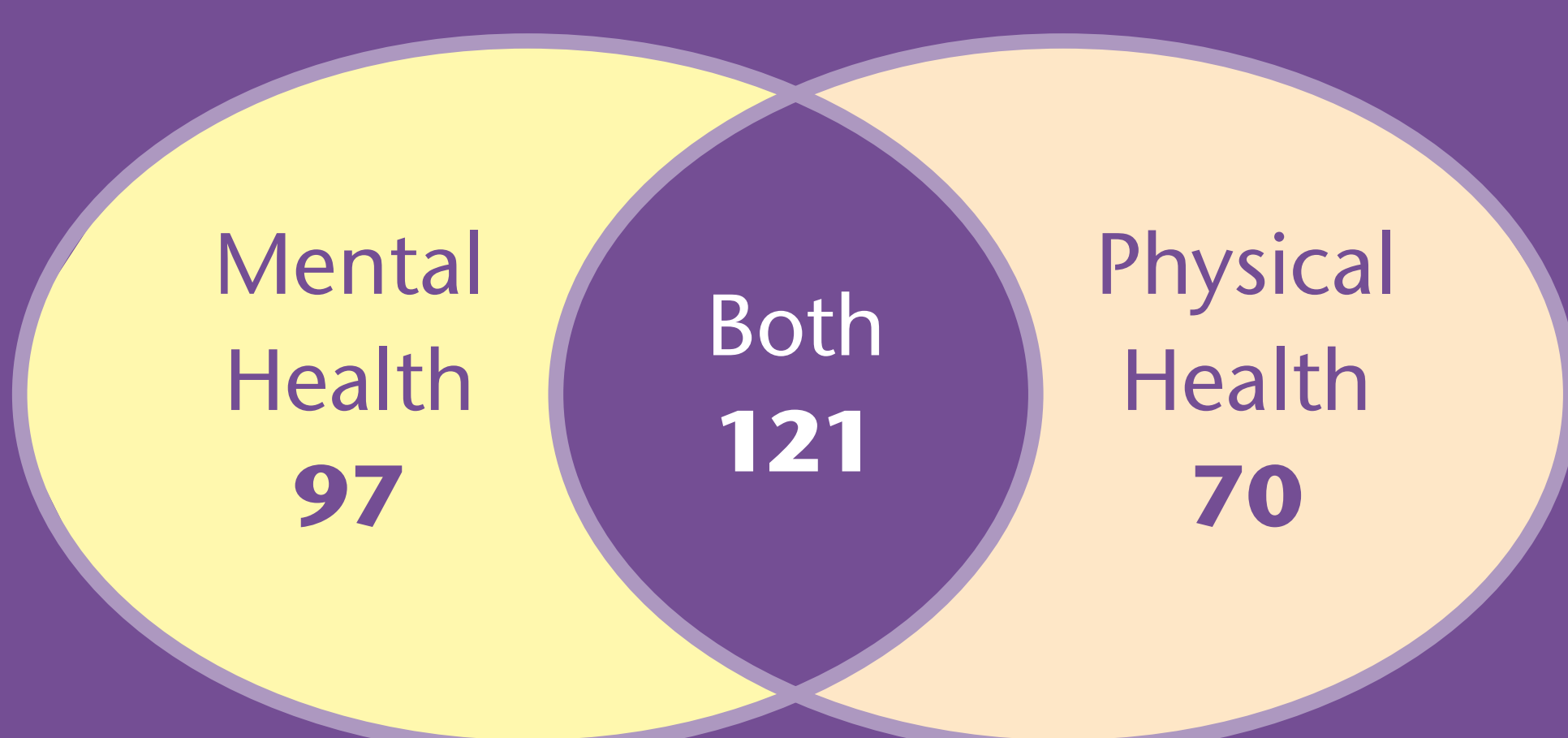
### Responsive

"The more we've seen, the broader the range of people we feel OT can benefit"



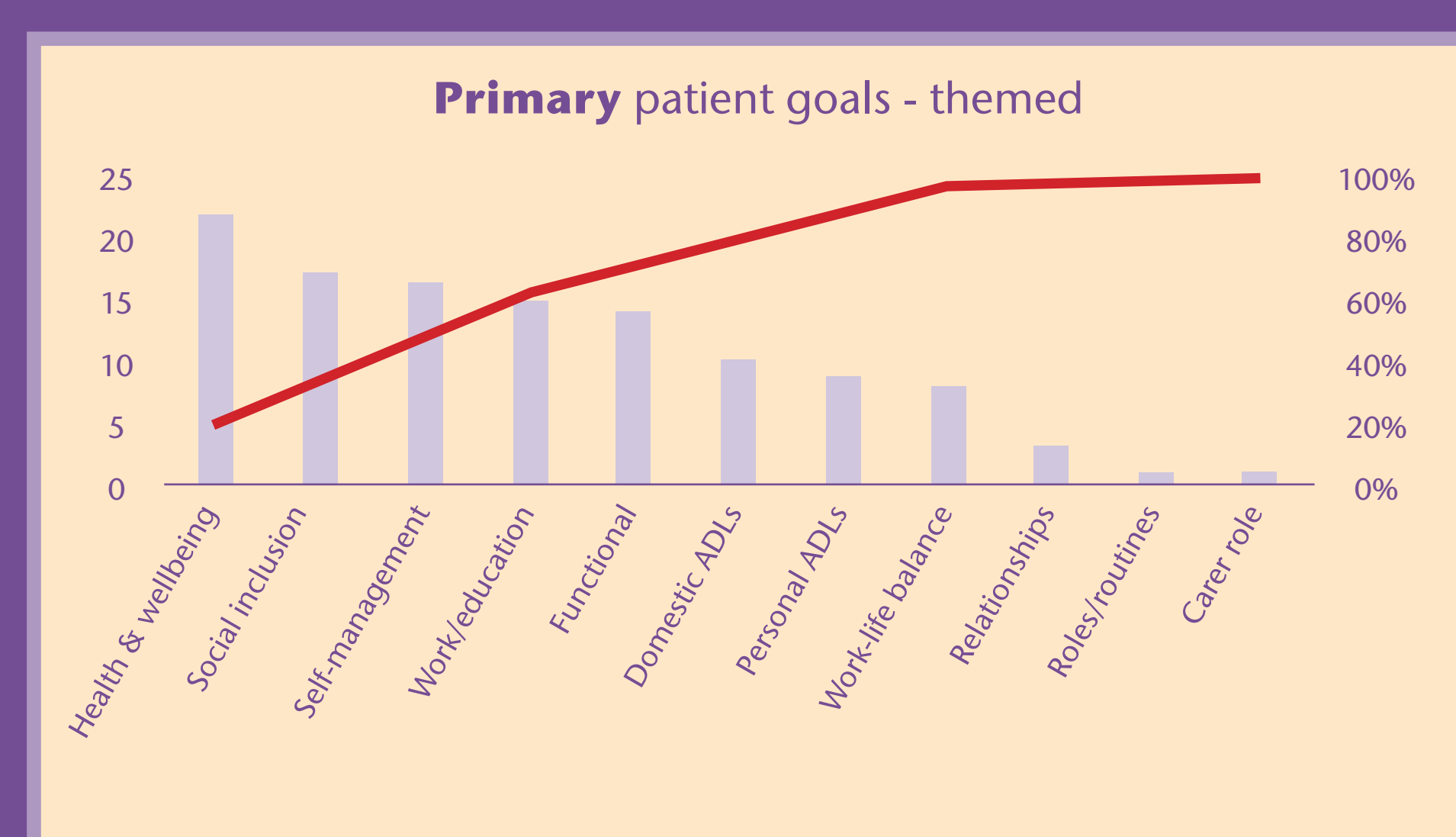
## What difference do Occupational Therapists make in primary care?

People who experience barriers to functioning due to **mental and physical** health conditions have access to streamlined support.



Number of patients referred with mental or physical conditions or both

Comprehensive assessment and a focus on **'what matters to you'** improves identification and resolution of a wide range of unmet needs.



Improved access to preventative interventions and community assets facilitates self-management, builds resilience and keeps people safe.

Evaluation shows that the impact of this has been:

- ◆ reduction in need for referrals to secondary services;
- ◆ reduction in need for home care;
- ◆ reduced reliance on medication;
- ◆ reduced falls risks in older adults;
- ◆ reduced sickness absences and reliance on sickness benefits;
- ◆ reduced health inequalities; and
- ◆ improved carer wellbeing.

Improved access to early intervention results in better compliance and shorter interventions.

### References

1. Law M, Baptiste S, Carswell A, McColl MA, Polatajko H, Pollock N (1998) Canadian Occupational Performance Measure CAOT Publications ACE Power M (2003)
2. Development of a common instrument for quality of life. A Nosikov and C. Gudex EUROHIS: Developing Common Instruments for Health Surveys. Amsterdam: IOS Press 57:145-163
3. Sinclair A (2019) Evaluating the Occupational Therapy in Primary Care Service. NHS Lanarkshire report