

# Guidance on Referral to RHEUMATOLOGY OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY



“Occupational Therapy provides practical support to empower people to facilitate recovery and overcome barriers preventing them from doing the activities (or occupations) that matter to them. This support increases people's independence and satisfaction in all aspects of life. (Royal College of Occupational Therapists, 2019). ”

Before referring to the Rheumatology Occupational Therapy service, clinicians may want to consider:  
**Does the patient experience any difficulties with activities of daily living in the 3 main areas:**

<p><b>SELF-CARE</b> - including personal care tasks such as toileting and dressing; functional mobility such as walking and bed transfers and community management such as grocery shopping and driving.</p> <p>Please note: <u>patients who live alone</u> may struggle if they do not have anyone to help them with basic tasks.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>PRODUCTIVITY</b> including paid/unpaid work; looking after children and household management such as food preparation and general household activities.</p> <p>Please note: <u>patients who are struggling at work</u>, or absent from work may benefit from input from vocational rehabilitation interventions to help them remain in or return to work.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>LEISURE</b> including hobbies/interests such as reading and sport/exercise as well as socialisation tasks such as using a telephone.</p> <p>Please note: as Occupational Therapists are dual trained in physical and mental health, they can help <u>patients who find that their mood, wellbeing or relationships with others is affected</u> by their Rheumatic condition.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Even if the patients are not reporting many problems when they are seen in the Rheumatology Clinic, the Rheumatology Occupational Therapist can still advise them and make recommendations using strategies such as fatigue management, joint protection or recommended splinting and hand exercises. Clinicians may want to consider :

Does the patient have a newly diagnosed Rheumatic condition ,which is likely to impact on day-to- day tasks in the future? Yes   
No

Does the patient have a condition which causes significant fatigue or tiredness? Yes   
No

Does the patient have a condition which causes significant pain, stiffness or limit range of movement? Yes   
No

*Answering yes to any of the above questions should indicate a referral to the Rheumatology Occupational Therapy service. Clinic letters from the Rheumatologist or Rheumatology Nurse Specialist or Rheumatology AHP colleagues will be accepted. These will be vetted in order to identify patients requiring urgent input.*