## Executive Summary

# Approved / Responsible Clinician Roles: Exploring the Gap for Occupational Therapy.

**Background**

Occupational Therapists have been able to act as Multi-Professional Approved / Responsible Clinicians (MPACs) since the changes to the Mental Health Act (MHA) in 2007.

Nationally uptake has remined low, with one Occupational Therapist in England working in this role.

The 2019/2020 Health Education England Mandate seeks to increase the number of MPACs in order to meet future population requirements with the expertise best matched to service user's main assessment and treatment needs and to mitigate against the current shortage of psychiatrists.

This report contributes new information about the perspectives of Occupational Therapists, primarily in the Southeast, drawn from a survey of 52 OTs; 3 interviews and a focus group of 2 Approved Mental Health Practitioner and 2 Best Interest Assessors who are Occupational Therapists.

**Findings**

Occupational Therapists are interested in the role (47%) and would like to know more (71%).

The limited number of Occupational Therapists in roles senior enough to undertake MPAC development is a constraining factor.

**Barriers** 1) workforce infrastructure issues such as remuneration, time, opportunity; 2) lack of training opportunity prior to the MPAC portfolio route 3) lack of career pathway, aspiration and preparation from pre through to post registration 4) limited number of survey respondents (#13) suggested a clash of professional values which focus group respondents dispelled.

**Facilitators** 1) Increase awareness of Occupational Therapy in MPAC roles and its value in promoting recovery with service users 2) creation of career pathways with senior clinical progression opportunities 3) Increase exposure to these and aligned roles via preregistration, placements, shadowing and closer working between Local Authority and NHS opportunities.

**Recommendations**

* Promote & inspire: Case studies which include aligned roles with statutory powers to exercise functions of the MHA and Mental Capacity Act (MCA) eg Best Interest Assessor and Approved Mental Health Profession
* RCOT to consider developing an Informed View
* HEE to consider scoping to determine if barriers and solutions are nationally applicable via Allied Health Professions Clinical Fellowship
* Embed examples and exposure to Occupational Therapists with legal functions at core of role within pre-registration curriculum & clinical placements
* LA & NHS ‘whole place’ approach to reviewing workforce gaps, likely impact of changes to MCA and MHA reform & awareness raising re: career pathways, training and shadowing opportunities across sectors.
* Intentional development of upper career opportunities including senior clinical leadership to strengthen pool from which MPACs can develop
* Individual use of shadowing, opportunity seeking & appraisal to ensure Chief AHPs are aware of aspiration.