



**Emily Costello**

**Clinical Lead Occupational Therapist**

### Introduce yourself. Where do you work? What is your job role?

Hi, I am Emily Costello, and I am the Clinical Lead Occupational Therapist within the Community Discharge Service.

### What does your job entail?

My role is a varied, which ensures every day is different. The three main aspects of my role include community-based OT assessments, assessing clients within their own home following recent hospital discharge and promoting a discharge to assess ethos. I also spend a couple of days a week within the discharge hubs in the acute hospital sites screening referrals to ensure clients discharge under the best available pathway and ensuring a safe discharge. As clinical lead my time is also spent ensuring professional standards are met by the team, supporting the OT staff and spending time to develop the service and ensure we are delivering the best quality of care.

### How did you get into this line of work?

I must admit my knowledge on OT was very limited when I initially applied to the university course. I knew from a young age I wanted to work within health and social care and, just prior to applying to university, my nanny had a visit from an OT, although this was a one off visit my nanny told me this OT reminded her of me and just pictured me in the role. I kept my options open and applied for OT, nursing, and social work. After doing more research and attending open days I knew OT was the career for me.

### Outline your career to date

I initially started my career in South Eastern Trust within the Ulster Hospital and rotated throughout various wards, including orthopaedic, care of elderly and endocrine. I then moved to discharge to assess with the South Eastern Trust, this was the first discharge to assess team within Northern Ireland and I was involved at the very start in setting up processes, referral criteria and paperwork. I then moved into my supervisor's maternity post as specialist OT within the discharge hub in the Ulster. During this maternity cover it seemed like the perfect opportunity to explore other options and changing trust would allow me to gain new experience and knowledge whilst allowing me to adapt to new challenges. I became a discharge coordinator within the community discharge service. I enjoyed my year in this post but decided that it was not the role for me. I did not enjoy being office based every day and I enjoy having a change of scenery within my workspace. I was very lucky to have been successful in getting my current role as clinical lead OT within the Community Discharge Service, I love having the variety between my leadership role, assessing clients within their home, assisting in interim beds as required and working within the acute discharge hubs.

### Tell us about your qualifications and training

My OT career started after receiving a BSc in OT. During my career I have ensured I have made the most of opportunities for additional training offered. I have completed a master's module in Community Rehabilitation and Reablement, which was a very informative and practical module. I am currently completing a PgC in collective leadership for AHPs, this is the first year of this course being run and I have thoroughly enjoyed it, the assignments are not so enjoyable though.

### What qualities are required for your job – personal and professional?

An OT needs to be a people person and have a heart for people. OTs promote independence in meaningful activities, and it is always a joy seeing clients achieving something important for them. Good communication skills and flexibility are required. OTs are known for their initiative and out of the box thinking to tackle new challenges. Self-care is important for any career within HSC at present due to the high demand on all services.

### What is the best advice you have ever received?

At my recent training for the PcG in collective leadership we were reminded of the proverb "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." This is really important in relation to teamwork with colleagues. We need to remember this when working with our clients. We need to ensure we are working towards goals meaningful to our clients, if we assume what is important to them then we will achieve less.

### What do you like to do in your spare time

I re-joined the gym at the end of last summer after using lockdown as an excuse. I have really surprised myself my how motivated I have become, and I try and go each day I am available. I am enjoying using the gym and going to more fitness style yoga, I have started to also attend body pump regularly. I spend a lot of my time within church and lead a young adult group and help out in Sunday School. I also enjoy going to the cinema and going out for dinner.

### Tell us an interesting fact about yourself

I have two cats, Cosette and Sansa. Having two cats was not planned, Sansa had gone missing for 13 months and turned up two days after getting a new cat!

### Who has inspired you most in your life?

My nanny has been the biggest inspiration as I would not be an OT if it was not for her. My nanny was also an inspiration as she had her struggles, but always carried on and made sacrifices to ensure her family were looked after.

### What advice would you give your 16-year-old self?

To have more confidence and to embrace who you are. Everyone is different and we don't always have to fit in with everyone else.