

# Hampshire and Isle Wight (HIOW) Occupational Therapy Recruitment Collaborative

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In December 2021, the HIOW AHP Faculty set up a new collaborative to recruit international Occupational Therapists (OTs) after identifying nearly 90 vacancies across our system. Although other OTs supply solutions are underway, such as the OT Degree Apprenticeship Collaborative, we were experiencing a shortfall following the healthcare education funding reform in 2017.

A lead-recruiter model was adopted, and Solent NHS Trust was selected to lead the recruitment on behalf of the system; building on the success of the nursing international recruitment. Unfortunately, at this time no national funding was available to support international recruitment for OTs therefore each organisation wishing to join the collaborative had to commit up to £9k per recruit. The HIOW AHP Faculty was able to provide £20k to cover the sourcing element for the first 20 recruits from the 2021/22 Health Education England South East AHP Faculty funding.

Initially, five NHS Trusts joined the collaborative, and a weekly steering group was established. The group is chaired by the ICS AHP Professional Lead and is aimed at overseeing the process, supporting learning, and facilitating collective decision-making. In addition, the AHP Faculty is working with both Primary Care and our Local Authorities who are exploring the possibility of joining the collaborative.

Initially, 36 OT vacancies were identified for the international market, across a range of clinical settings and specialties at both Band 5 and 6 levels. Within a week of 'going live' in January 2022, we started to see applications coming in. Bi-weekly interview panels were set up during the first month with acute and community OT/AHP representation and HR support. So far, the advertising campaign has attracted a high calibre of experienced candidates from European, African and Asian markets (avoiding red countries).

The collaborative is currently refining the conditional offer process, ensuring equity and parity across organisations. We look forward to co-designing the on-boarding offer which will include access to our key worker housing scheme and peer-support networks. Hopefully, we will start to welcome our new international recruits from May 2022 onward and look forward to the longer-term benefits of a more ethnically diverse workforce.

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