

## EACHOT project background



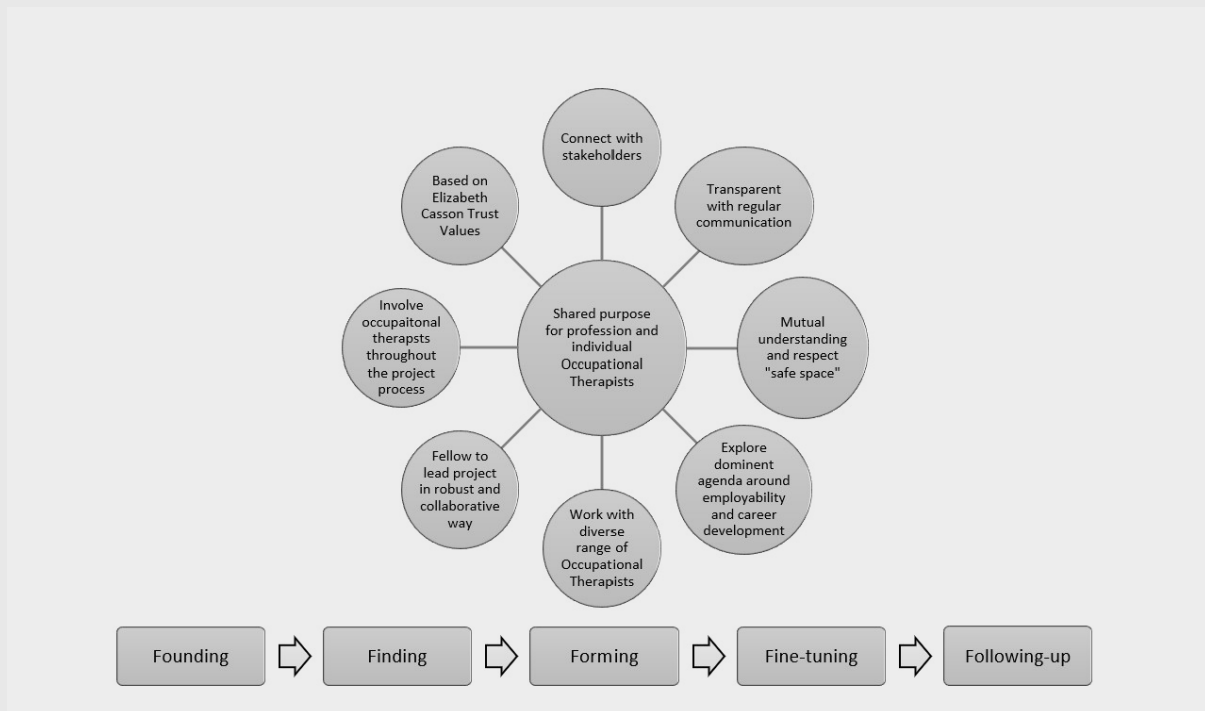
- ▶ To celebrate the Elizabeth Casson Trust's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the trustees created our prestigious Elizabeth Casson Fellowship to honour our founder and pioneer of the profession in the UK. This unique opportunity asked the successful Fellow to embark on a **substantial project that has the potential to further the profession in a significant and impactful way** also developing the individual in their career.
- ▶ The Fellowship was launched on 30th June 2023, The Elizabeth Casson Trust birthday, generating a lot of interest and conversations with Occupational Therapists across all sectors of the profession and all stages of their career. After a competitive process of short-listing and interviews, The Elizabeth Casson Trust were thrilled to be able to announce their Fellow: **Dr Lisa Taylor**.



The Employability and Career Hub for Occupational Therapists (EACHOT) project was identified as needed as the occupational therapy workforce is reported to have a poor work life balance and lack of opportunities for progression (Royal College of Occupational Therapists, 2023). Retention, mental health and wellbeing of staff needs to be the focus of workforce development (NHS, 2023), regardless of workplace context.

The EACHOT aims to support agency, self-efficacy and confidence for Occupational Therapists to proactively develop their employability and career – spanning the breadth and depth of occupational therapy contexts – from qualification to retirement – facilitating a life-long, life-wide approach to employability. The principles of co-creation shown in the Figure 1. below were embedded into the design and delivery of the EACHOT (Chambers et al., 2022; Dibley et al., 2012; Jansen and Pieters, 2017) resulting in an authentically co-created EACHOT developed **by** Occupational Therapists **for** the occupational therapy community.

**Figure 1. A visual representation of how the co-creation principles have been embedded in the EACHOT project.**

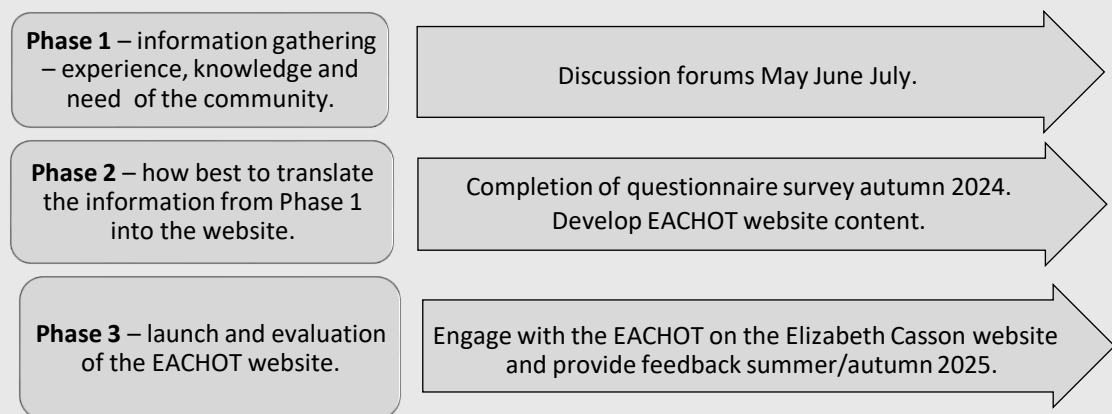


In April 2024, five co-creators and EACHOT community participants were recruited. Invites were sent across social media and the networks of the Elizabeth Casson Trust and the EACHOT community members, shared in OT News (for Phase 1 and 2) and, additionally, at the OT Show 2024 (for Stage 2), to maximise the number of Occupational Therapists participating at each stage of the project (n=50 for Phase 1 and n=81 for Phase 2 with over 100 Occupational Therapists including the OT show).

The EACHOT community represents Occupational Therapists from across the occupational therapy profession, with a wide variety of personal and professional characteristics.

Although the EACHOT project is not a research project – a robust project process has been implemented based on research design and ethical principles. Anonymity and confidentiality have been adhered to for information been shared by the participants.

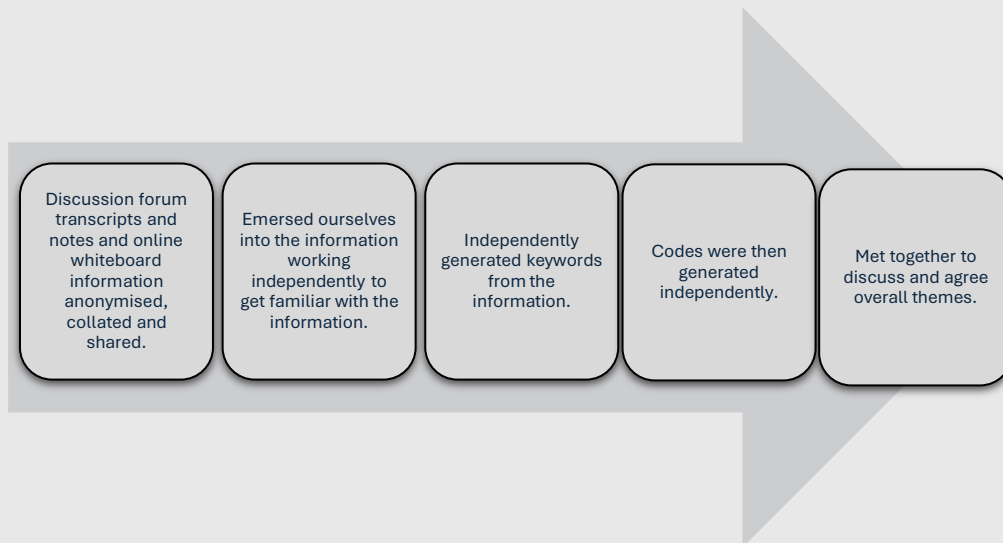
**Figure 2. The three phases of the EACHOT project.**



## EACHOT project Phase 1

Over three consecutive months, we hosted an EACHOT community online discussion forum with online anonymous whiteboards for asynchronous contributions during, and after the discussion forums. Marginalised communities were liaised with directly, separate to the discussion forums for their responses, to ensure that their voices were heard. Each forum focussed on a specific topic related to occupational therapy employability and career progression, based on the principles of co-creation - *May* – Experiences, *June* - Knowledge and understanding and *July* – Needs. The robust approach to the discussion forum process resulted in a series of comprehensive, thought-provoking discussions and information gathering, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose. The information that was collected from the discussion forums and the online whiteboards was analysed by Lisa and two co-creators independently via a process of thematic analysis (Naeem et al., 2023 – see Figure 3. below).

**Figure 3. The process of thematic analysis for the EACHOT Phase 1.**

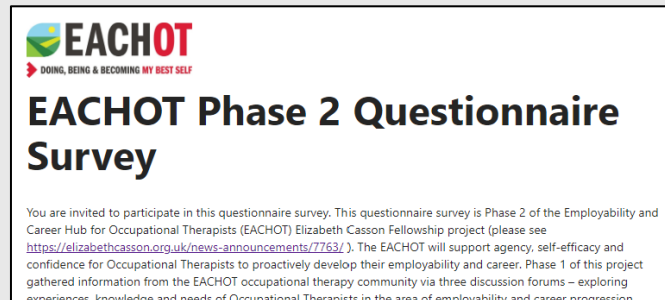


The themes from the thematic analysis are presented in Figure 4. below.

**Figure 4. The themes from EACHOT Phase 1.**



## EACHOT project Phase 2













Phase 2 of the EACHOT project involved the creation of an online anonymous questionnaire survey including quantitative and qualitative questions to:

- ✓ Explore the overall themes generated from the thematic analysis from the three discussion forums to determine information that needs to be created for the EACHOT and how that information should be presented on the website.
- ✓ Explore some key themes from the discussion forums that cannot be addressed by the EACHOT but will be shared with the wider occupational therapy community or occupational therapy/occupational therapy related organisations for their consideration.








### **Consent and use of information**




The Occupational Therapists (n=81) were introduced to the aims of the questionnaire survey prior to completion of the questionnaire. Consent was implied through participants responding to the questions completing the questionnaire survey.

A similar process of thematic analysis from Stage 1 of the EACHOT was applied for questionnaire survey qualitative data and the quantitative data was analysed descriptively. Lisa and some of the co-creators working independently with the data analysis and then met to discuss and agree the overall findings. From this process of analysis, the questionnaire survey identified 10 main areas for the EACHOT and also provided valuable information on how the information should be presented on the EACHOT.

-  Employability and career guidance – self-reflection tools and resources to build confidence in your employability and career – agency.
-  Career stories and case exemplars to inspire you.
-  Creation of communities of practice to support your employability and career journey.
-  Templates and activities to create your individual career development plan.
-  How to use and build the evidence base for occupational therapy.
-  Facilitating an accessible and equitable workplace for you and others.
-  Developing your financial literacy.
-  Using existing frameworks to support your individual employability and career journey.
-  How I can build my networks and community to support my employability and career journey.
-  How I can work towards occupational balance.

These ten identified areas for the EACHOT were then ranked by the EACHOT community via an online MS form survey or face to face by any Occupational Therapists attending the OT Show to “member check the areas” and to confirm the priority of the areas that have been identified. The following areas were ranked most important to least important overall between the two response methods.

-  Employability and career guidance – self-reflection tools and resources to build confidence in your employability and career – agency.
-  Templates and activities to create your individual career development plan.
-  How I can build my networks and community to support my employability and career journey.
-  Creation of communities of practice to support your employability and career journey.
-  Career stories and case exemplars to inspire you.
-  How to use and build the evidence base for occupational therapy.
-  How I can work towards occupational balance in my job and career.

-  Using existing frameworks to support your individual employability and career journey.
-  Facilitating an accessible and equitable workplace for you and others.
-  Developing your financial literacy.

The EACHOT community were then invited to contribute to the creation of the content for the EACHOT areas, with many providing their career stories, hints and tips and useful resources and information for the content of the EACHOT.

The EACHOT was then piloted by the EACHOT community to provide feedback on the content and presentation of the EACHOT. The EACHOT was then amended based on the feedback. A second review of the EACHOT was conducted at the OT Show November 2025 to capture feedback from the OT Show audience, with amendments made ready for the EACHOT launch on the 30<sup>th</sup> January 2026, the final day of the Elizabeth Casson Trust Fellowship.

## References

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