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**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY WEEK COMES TO BRAUNSTONE**



Occupational therapists from the Braunstone Blues team are getting out and about to raise the profile of their profession, which supports people to 'live life their way', despite any health or care needs they may be living with. The event is part of this year's Occupational Therapy Week, organised by the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT).

Taking place from 6-12 November the theme of Occupational Therapy Week this year is "I am an Occupational Therapist", building on the RCOT's call for its members to be 'loud and proud' of the value they add to the lives of hundreds of thousands of people every week.

Braunstone Blues is getting involved in doing just that by holding information stalls in the community and delivering presentations on what is occupational therapy for members of staff from the police, fire and ambulance service, who make up the Braunstone Blues team.

Braunstone Blues is a team working in the Braunstone area, made up of personnel from the three blue light services; Leicestershire Police, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service and East Midlands Ambulance Service, and now includes occupational therapists. The team also work in close collaboration with Coventry University, who provide Occupational Therapy students as part of their third year placements.

The team's purpose is to help reduce demand and repeat calls on all the emergency services by getting people in Braunstone to help themselves, by educating them about alternative support services and promoting healthy, safe and secure messages across the Braunstone estate.

On Monday (6 November) the team were at Fullhurst Community College talking to students in an interactive session during their lunch time. Students were able to touch, and have a play with, props such as Theraputty and aids to assist with occupations of daily living.

Yesterday (7 November), the team were at the Brite Centre, a local community centre, holding an information stall, speaking to residents and service users about occupational therapy and what it can do for them.

Occupational therapists have been described as the health and care system's "secret weapon". They are the only registered profession qualified to work across mental and physical health and in NHS and social care settings. This means that they are uniquely placed to see a person holistically. The occupational therapists within Braunstone Blues help patients to overcome social isolation and to help Braunstone residents to help themselves to achieve a better life.

[Research from the Royal College of Occupational Therapists](#) has shown that occupational therapists working on the frontline with ambulance services and in accident and emergency departments, can reduce unnecessary admissions by up to 80%. Occupational therapists on acute medical wards can cut stays from 9.5 days to just 1 day.

Working in social care, occupational therapy-led services have been shown to provide better quality, more person-centred services, where for every £1 spent on clients receiving it, £1.43 is saved through a reduction in the need for ongoing home care support, because clients become more independent.

Nettie Robson, Occupational Therapist student from Coventry University, who is on a placement with Braunstone Blues, said: "One of our goals of Occupational Therapy Week is to promote occupational therapy as a future profession for younger people. By getting into the local colleges and speaking with the students, we hope that we will give a better understanding of what Occupational Therapy is.

"Occupational therapists work in a wide variety of settings including emerging roles such as occupational therapy within Braunstone Blues. We hope that the information we have given will encourage residents to access the service for their benefit."

Julia Scott, CEO at the Royal College of Occupational Therapists, said: "I'm delighted that Braunstone Blues has joined the hundreds of organisations supporting Occupational Therapy Week. It is a great reflection of local community spirit.

"Holding information stalls and engaging with the community is an excellent way to promote the value of services that provide practical support to empower people to facilitate recovery and overcome barriers preventing people from doing the activities that matter to them. Occupational therapy support can make a real difference, giving people a renewed sense of

purpose, opening up new horizons, and changing the way they feel about the future."

A powerful film showing how occupational therapy can transform lives has been released to coincide with Occupational Therapy Week 2017. To watch it, or for more information about Occupational Therapy and Occupational Therapy Week, visit: <https://www.rcot.co.uk/promoting-occupational-therapy/otweek>

## ENDS

### Notes to editors:

1. To find out more about Braunstone Blues and Occupational Therapists within the team, please contact Braunstone Blues on 07800 709 802 or [Braunstone.blues@lfrs.org](mailto:braunstone.blues@lfrs.org)
2. To find out more about occupational therapy and the Royal College of Occupational Therapists please contact [MediaOfficer@RCOT.co.uk](mailto:MediaOfficer@RCOT.co.uk) or call 020 74505229.

### About the Braunstone Blues

In May 2015 Braunstone Blues was established. This is a dedicated team consisting of a Watch Manager and a Community Safety Advisor from the fire service, Police Constable, Police Community Support Officer, and a Paramedic. The team has since extended to a second Paramedic and an Occupational Therapist.

999 demand data from all three services was analysed and it was found that the small geographical area of Braunstone produced close to 8,000 calls every year. This was roughly a 49% Police, 49% EMAS and 2% Fire. The population of the area was 18,000 people living in 4,500 homes. This was shown to be the highest area of demand in all of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

The team work with partners and residents of Braunstone to deliver a healthier, safer and more secure community by educating and directing residents to appropriate services via a home visit service and delivering appropriate campaigns, to reduce the number of emergency calls in the area.

There are four main streams of work for Braunstone Blues; Home Visits, Community Events, working with high demand users and running Life Skills sessions in the community.

### Contact:

Jessica Essex  
Braunstone Blues Communications Officer  
07966 111 273 [jessica.essex@lfrs.org](mailto:jessica.essex@lfrs.org)