



World Federation of Occupational Therapists Statement

14-15 September 2020 70th Session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe

Statement on the implementation of the Physical Activity Strategy

As the global representative of occupational therapists, the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) expresses support for work undertaken toward the implementation of the Physical Activity Strategy for the WHO European Region. The actions reported toward the Strategy are congruent with the values and language embraced by the occupational therapy profession to enable population health and well-being.

Action reported by Member States to promote physical activity early in the life course is commended. Encouragement of physical activity at early life stages is recognised as a key approach to minimising the burden of non-communicable diseases and health issues in later life. Member States are encouraged to develop similar strategies for enhancing physical activities at all ages for promoting healthy ageing throughout the lifespan.

Consultation with occupational therapists is recommended as work continues to implement the Physical Activity Strategy. Occupational therapists can share valuable experience related to the role of occupational therapy in empowering and enabling people of all ages to participate and engage in everyday occupations that bring purpose and meaning to their lives, including physical activity that is age and culturally appropriate. Occupational therapists are experts in adapting and grading activities and environments to facilitate full participation and satisfaction in physical activities; they can therefore serve as a vital resource to ensure the needs of vulnerable populations, including those with disabilities are fully addressed when developing and implementing actions toward the Physical Activity Strategy.

The progress report demonstrates that the Physical Activity Strategy is a powerful directive for empowering the European community to engage in health enhancing activities. WFOT and its member organisations are deeply committed to working with governments at all levels, non-governmental organisations and service users to address this Strategy to promote societal change for increased physical activity across the life course.