

rehabilitate  
therapy ltd presents

# Independent Living Trials

A battle worth fighting

This focused on-demand online training hosted by occupational therapy specialists **Rehabilitate Therapy** explores

**Independent Living Trials (ILTs)** – offering essential insight for professionals involved in rehabilitation support planning for individuals on a pathway to greater independence.

This multi-disciplinary training will explore the role of ILTs in supporting independence, rehabilitation, and outcomes for clients, with insights from clinical teams, legal representatives, case managers and more.



BOOK

**Standard rate: £175 + VAT**

20% discount for NHS, Statutory Services & Charities

**On-demand online resource package**

This includes:  
12 presentation video's slides and CPD/ APIL certificate for 5 points

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## Programme



### Video 1 Welcome from the sponsor

David King, Senior Associate Solicitor, Irwin Mitchell

### Video 2 The wonderful world of Independent Living Trials

This opening session will set the tone for the training, providing a warm welcome to all delegates and an introduction from Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd. It will include a brief overview of Independent Living Trials, highlighting their purpose, impact and relevance to a rehabilitation journey within a medico legal context.

Dr Kate Heward, Clinical Director, Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd  
Dr Phil Crowther, Business Director, Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd

### Video 3 Living It: A Client's ILT Experience

Leon's ILT was in 2019 and since then his case has settled and his vocational rehabilitation has led him to working with Rehabilitate Therapy leading the client community. In this section, Leon shares his candid reflections on his ILT experience, offering a genuine client perspective and highlighting the anxieties and complexities for the MDT to support and manage.

Leon Clarkson, Client Liaison, Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd

### Video 4 ILTs Disentangled

The journey of an ILT from the earliest conversations to the very last hoorah is a series of many and varied stages and activities; involving everyone from the client at the centre to their families, support, MDTs, legal teams, insurers, and beyond. When most effectively planned and delivered there is an integrated (and necessarily flexible) process. This segment disentangles and shares proven tools, processes and insights.

Dr Kate Heward, Clinical Director, Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd

### Video 5 Independent Living Trials: Two Sides of the Funding Debate

In this session two experienced solicitors, will discuss and debate the legal principles and practicalities around litigation funding for ILTs. The solicitors will approach the discussion from opposing sides of the litigation landscape and the discussion will explore the different approaches and strategies adopted by insurers and claimants respectively when considering funding for rehabilitation generally and ILTs in particular.

John Davis, Non-executive Director, Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd  
Ken Young, Partner, Head of Complex & CAT PI, Keoghs  
Ben Townsend, Partner, Head of Personal Injury (Leeds), Stewarts

### Video 6 Case Manager Perspective

Case Manager's reflection on some of the knotty topics emerging from the mornings ILT discussion. Examining and sharing experiences relating to some of the challenges that emerge for case managers endeavouring to facilitate ILTs with legal parties, MDTs, and with clients and their families.

Rhiannon Stokes, Occupational Therapist, Chair of CMSUK & Managing Director, Stokes Case Management

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### Video 7 Clinical Meets Legal

We open the afternoon with an energetic panel bringing together legal and clinical voices to tackle real-world ILT challenges. Expect a fast-moving exchange of insights, differing perspectives, and audience driven questions that bridge the gap between rehabilitation and the courtroom.

**Dr Kate Heward, Clinical Director, Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd**

**Rhiannon Stokes, Occupational Therapist, Chair of CMSUK & Managing Director, Stokes Case Management**

**John Davis, Non-executive Director, Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd**

**Ken Young, Partner, Head of Complex & CAT PI, Keoghs**

**Ben Townsend, Partner, Head of Personal Injury (Leeds), Stewarts**

### Video 8 MDT discussion of a successful / unsuccessful ILT

A case manager, SLT, and OT, reflect on their shared experience of an infinitely valuable and necessary ILT that was fraught with challenge and risk. The ILT in question might well be judged to have failed in its rehabilitative outcomes but succeeded through other significant criteria. For the case manager and MDT it was at times a bruising process that raises questions about what is and what is not an ILT.

**Sam Nightingale, Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapist, Nightingale Speech & Language Therapy**

**Olivia Dennison, Clinical Case Manager, Olivia Dennison Ltd**

**Dr Kate Heward, Clinical Director, Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd**

### Video 9 Vignettes: Revealing Insights from different perspectives

A series of bitesize contributions to enrich the day by providing perspectives from family and other MDT colleagues around ILT inventiveness. The session shares wide ranging anecdotes, from those at the heart of ILTs, and what we can learn from them. The emphasis for this session is on inventive and tenacious approaches.

**Gemma Hobson, Specialist OT, Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd**

**Victoria Butterall, Case Manager, Northern Lifetime**

**Katie Banks, Specialist OT**

**Hannah Dodds, OT Assistant, Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd**

**Sara Grimshaw, Specialist OT, Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd**

### Video 10 Implications for case managers and MDTs and wrap up

The sessions will reflect and react to the day's conversations by highlighting the key learning for case managers and MDTs embarking in Independent Living Trials. In simple terms what are the high value takeaways you can use to shape future and successful ILTs.

**Rhiannon Stokes, Occupational Therapist, Chair of CMSUK & Managing Director, Stokes Case Management**

**Dr Kate Heward, Clinical Director, Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd**

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## Biographies



**Dr Kate Heward, Owner, Clinical Director & Consultant Occupational Therapist, Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd**

Kate Heward is a highly regarded, experienced Occupational Therapist with a specialist focus on neurological rehabilitation and medico-legal practice. Since qualifying in 1994, she has held senior NHS roles, completed a PhD in neurorehabilitation, and lectured at Sheffield Hallam University.

In 2009, she co-founded Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd, with Dr Phil Crowther, where she proactively leads an extensive team of specialist Occupational Therapists and Occupational Therapy Assistants delivering bespoke, client-centred rehabilitation. Her work is driven by a passion for improvement in function, meaningful occupation, and vocational reintegration. She was awarded the Royal College of Occupational Therapists Merit Award in 2016.



**Dr Phil Crowther PhD, Business Director, Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd**

Phil's background, before becoming co-owner and Business Director of Rehabilitate Therapy, was a mix of senior management (within hospitality and leisure) and then as a consultant and academic. His career began as General Manager of Cinemas and Health and Racquet Clubs for a few years, and even Executive Head of Sales at Blackpool Pleasure Beach. Having completed a PT Executive MBA, his career transitioned into marketing and small business strategy consultancy and academia.

His academic career, which began in 2025, led him from Senior Lecturer to Principal Lecturer and then Reader at Sheffield Hallam University, where he also did his PhD by Publication, publishing over 15 articles and a book. Despite retaining some international teaching in Switzerland and France, his career has now evolved to become a very full time role leading Rehabilitate Therapy with Dr Kate Heward. Phil's passion is business development / marketing, and after 18 years growing Rehabilitate Therapy, and in the early years reviewing / editing hundreds of reports, he should surely be an 'honorary OT'.

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## Biographies



**Leon Clarkson, Client Liaison, Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd**

Leon Clarkson is Client Liaison, for Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd, and he has delivered talks at SYABIF, Salford University and Lincoln University – not to mention inspiring our clients and OTs as an integral part of the Rehabilitate Therapy team. He was also recently awarded the Stephen McAleese award for inspiration at the UKABIF awards in Manchester. He is an inspiring and motivational speaker. Here's a little bit more about Leon and his journey:

In 2010, at the age of 28, Leon's life was turned upside down when he was rushed to hospital due to his airway closing as a result of glandular fever. Leon suffered a hypoxic brain injury and began a long road of extensive rehabilitation to rebuild his life. Leon will tell you that it hasn't been an easy journey for him, and it took him a long time to accept that he has a disability, but he has overcome and achieved so much. Since then, he has learnt to drive and bought his first home. He now plays a key role in our client community by inspiring and motivating others to keep going. He co-facilitates both the online and face to face groups, co-leads the client steering groups, and meets up with clients on a 1:1 basis or in a group setting to provide them with the support they need. He now dedicates much of his time to raising awareness of the crucial role of neuro rehabilitation and supporting other brain injury clients who are going through a similar journey.



**John Davis, Non-executive Director, Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd**

John Davis spent his legal career representing people with complex and life-changing injuries, particularly brain and spinal cord injuries. Vastly experienced, during his 30+ year career he was regarded as one of the leading solicitors in his field and has been recognised as a 'leading individual' by the Legal 500 and Chambers directories and accredited by APIL as a specialist in the field of brain and spine injury litigation. John retired from legal practice in 2023 and now works alongside the team at Rehabilitate Therapy to support their work delivering OT service, particularly in the medico-legal context.



**Ken Young, Partner, Head of Complex & CAT PI, Keoghs**

Ken leads the national complex and CAT PI team. He has over 25 years' experience in defendant personal injury insurance litigation, all at Keoghs.

He handles complex and high value motor, employers' and public liability claims on behalf of insurers, with values typically in excess of £5million. He has a particular interest and speciality in cases involving amputations, brain and spinal cord injuries. Ken is a great believer in the use of ADR as a means of resolving claims and regularly attends joint settlement meetings, both with and without counsel. He is ranked in both Chambers and Partners and the Legal 500.

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**Ben Townsend, Partner, Head of Personal Injury (Leeds), Stewarts**

Ben is a partner in the Personal Injury department at Stewarts, the only UK firm to achieve average compensation for its clients of nearly £5,000,000. He specialises in brain and spinal cord injury claims, supervising the team of lawyers at Stewarts' Leeds office handling catastrophic injury claims on behalf of injured people. He has personally handled a considerable number of multi-million pound claims, and has supervised many more. He is a founding assessor for the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers' brain injury and spinal cord injury panels. He is a member of the Inclusion and Diversity Committee at Stewarts.



**Rhiannon Stokes, Occupational Therapist, Chair of CMSUK & Managing Director, Stokes Case Management**

Rhiannon is a visionary in health, rehabilitation, and legal services whose career spans over 29 years across the NHS, independent practice, and leadership in the private and third sectors. She began her professional journey as an occupational therapist within the NHS, steadily progressing to management level. Along the way, she developed and led innovative occupational therapy services that improved patient outcomes and modernised service delivery. Motivated by a desire to broaden her impact, Rhiannon later moved into independent practice at a time when few occupational therapists in Wales were doing so helping to shape this emerging field within the profession. In 2015, Rhiannon founded Stokes Case Management, driven by her belief that truly client-centred, creative approaches to case management are possible through collaboration across health, legal, and allied sectors. She also established an expert witness practice, combining her clinical expertise with a deep understanding of complex legal processes. Under her leadership, Stokes continues to deliver high-quality, tailored support for individuals facing life-changing injuries and conditions. Rhiannon's commitment to advancing the profession is evident in her role as Chair of CMSUK, where she is the first Occupational therapist to hold this position. She is also a founding member of The Sketcher Project, a community art initiative in Cardiff for people with acquired brain injury, and remains active in charitable and educational work across Wales and the UK. A regular guest lecturer at Welsh universities and a sought-after speaker across the UK and internationally, Rhiannon shares her experience with the next generation of clinicians, case managers, and allied professionals helping to shape the future of care both nationally and beyond.

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## Biographies



**Sam Nightingale, Highly Specialist Speech and Language Therapist,  
Nightingale Speech & Language Therapy**

Sam Nightingale is a Highly Specialist Speech & Language Therapist working in the field of Adult Acquired Neurological conditions across Yorkshire. Sam has over 30 years of experience, initially in the NHS, then setting up her Independent Practice in 2008. She specialises in adult acquired neurological conditions, particularly Brain Injury and Stroke. Sam has a great ability to integrate with the team and a strong ability to connect with her clients. She is passionate about empowering clients to become self-confident communicators. At this conference, Sam will discuss the importance of the contribution of the Speech & Language Therapist in the Process of the Independent Living Trial, especially with a client with cognitive communication difficulties. When not engaged in clinical work, she enjoys outdoor adventures, always more fun with a Labrador!



**Olivia Dennison, Clinical Case Manager, Olivia Dennison Ltd**

Olivia Dennison, Case Manager, is a qualified physiotherapist with an MSc in Psychology. She has over 10 years' experience providing services to clients with complex needs as a result of life changing catastrophic injury and trauma.

Olivia's diverse clinical experience equips her with a unique skillset, and an extensive depth of knowledge and understanding of each individual client she works with.

Olivia offers a meticulous, confident, and pragmatic approach to each case. She exercises an effective combination of organisation, planning, creativity, critical thinking, and excellent client skills that are highly valued by clients and professionals alike.

Olivia is successful in promoting levels of engagement whilst maintaining an awareness of the psychosocial, economic, environmental, religious, and cultural dynamics that influence the individual differences of the clients she works with.

Olivia is registered with The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and is also a member of British Association of Brain Injury and Complex Needs (BABICM) and The British Psychological Society <https://www.bps.org.uk/> (BPS).

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## Biographies



**Gemma Hobson, Clinical Specialist Occupational Therapist in Neuro-rehabilitation, Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd**

Gemma qualified as an Occupational Therapist from Teesside University in 2003 and began her career at Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, gaining experience across Orthopaedics, Elderly Medicine and Paediatrics before progressing to a senior OT role in neurosurgery and neurorehabilitation. She later became Clinical Lead OT at Barnsley Hospital, where she founded and developed the acute inpatient service for stroke and neurology patients.

In 2017, Gemma joined Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd as an associate OT, specialising in neurorehabilitation and complex trauma. She also worked in a project role to develop the Community of OT Assistants, a service that has since grown to provide vital support for clients and OT associates. Gemma works closely with clients, families and MDT colleagues to deliver person-centred rehabilitation, particularly for those aiming to live independently. Independent Living Trials are now a major focus of her work, involving tailored planning, culturally sensitive approaches, bespoke support packages and strong teamwork to achieve meaningful, realistic outcomes.



**Victoria Butterell, Case Manager, Northern Lifetime Ltd**

Victoria is based in Sheffield and has worked as a Case Manager for over 8 years, supporting adults with complex and serious injury, on a single and jointly instructed basis, who cases are both pre and post settlement. She is registered with the IRCM and is in the process of undertaking her advanced membership assessment with BABICM.

She has experience of working with clients with a variety of clinical conditions such as brain injury, birth injury, amputation, spinal cord injury, functional neurological disorder and burns. Her roles with clients include support worker management, the instruction and co-ordination of large multi-disciplinary teams and the transition of clients from residential to community settings. Prior to case management, Victoria worked as a specialist neuro-physiotherapist, for 20 years, in the NHS, with her final role being a Therapy Team Leader, for 16 years, on an inpatient neuro-rehabilitation unit and neuro- community service in Mansfield, North Notts.



**Katie Banks, Clinical Specialist Occupational Therapist & Client Community Lead at Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd**

Katie Banks is an experienced occupational therapist with a background in both inpatient rehabilitation and community-based practice. She currently leads the client community at Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd, where she empowers clients to support one another and actively shape the services offered. Katie also has experience in running independent living trials, working collaboratively with occupational therapy assistants to promote client independence and confidence in real-world environments.

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## Biographies



**Hannah Dodds, Occupational Therapy Assistant,  
Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd**

Hannah has worked as an occupational therapy assistant for Rehabilitate Therapy for 2 years. During this time she has supported clients with a range of rehabilitation goals including multiple independent living trials. Additionally, Hannah works with Rehabilitate Therapy's Client community, aiming to connect clients who have had similar experiences.



**Sara Grimshaw, Senior Associate & Service Development Occupational Therapist,  
Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd**

Sara is a highly experienced occupational therapist with 28 years of practice across orthopaedic, neurological, and polytrauma rehabilitation. She brings considerable clinical expertise and a holistic, client-centred approach to her work.

For the past nine years, Sara has served as a senior associate occupational therapist with Rehabilitate Therapy Ltd, where she also contributes to service development and project work, helping to shape and improve therapy delivery models.

Her career includes being an inaugural case manager within the NHS, which led to independent medico-legal work. She has also led international service development, having established a new occupational therapy department in Abu Dhabi.

Passionate about the future of the profession, Sara is dedicated to mentoring and developing the next generation of occupational therapists. She advocates for a practice that is firmly rooted in occupation-based, meaningful goal setting, which is genuinely centred around the client's needs and values.

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Our client Liam,  
with his mum, Mel



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\*Legal 500 & Chambers Ranking

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