

# First Pearson Award helps OT with PhD studies

Lisa Dibsall is 'delighted' to have been the first winner of the Pearson Award, available to fund education, research or continuing professional development.

Currently studying for a PhD on the role of occupational therapists within reablement services, Lisa applied for the award to fund a place on a short course run by Bristol University, 'The design, analysis and reporting of randomised controlled trials'.

She tells *OTnews*: 'When I applied for the award, my PhD was in the planning stages and I intended to complete a comparative quantitative study on the effectiveness of OTs within reablement services.

'As my study progressed, it became clear that this type of

study was not feasible for a single PhD researcher. My study has developed into a qualitative case study design looking at the role of OTs in reablement services from the perspective of reablement managers, support workers and OTs.

'Despite the change in focus, the course has had a positive influence on the development of my research and has contributed to the development of my role as a senior practitioner in social care.'

She adds: 'Throughout the course, the importance of including qualitative data both to inform the design of a trial and to give meaning to the results of a trial was identified. Attending the course has helped me to shape the design of my study, so that

the results may be used to inform a potential future randomised controlled trial in reablement services.

'I am evaluating randomised controlled trials as part of my literature review and the sessions covering statistics and the analysis of results have enabled me to evaluate results more confidently. This session also confirmed to me that being a statistician is not a job for me.

'Attendance at the course has increased my knowledge of randomised controlled trials and how they could be used in the social care field. Research in social care, while increasing, still lags behind research in the health care field.

'As a senior practitioner, I encourage evidence-based

practice and would like to see more research taking place in local authorities. This includes audits of the effectiveness of services to increase the research available on occupational therapy in social care.

'Attending the course increased my confidence in working with quantitative statistics to be able to complete small scale evaluations within my current role.'

Lisa concludes: 'I encourage other OTs to apply for an award. Receiving the award enabled me to attend an excellent course that benefited both my PhD research and my development as an OT in practice.'

● **Lisa Dibsall**, Pearson Award 2012