



Orthotists



Speech and Language Therapists



Occupational Therapists



Physiotherapists



Dietitians



Orthotists and Prosthetists



Podiatrists



Radiographers



Arts Therapists

Building on Success

Future Directions for the Allied Health Professions in Scotland

A guide for patients and the public



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Making it work together



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Malcolm Chisholm, MSP
Minister for Health and Community Care
Scottish Executive Health Department

Foreword by Malcolm Chisholm MSP, Minister for Health and Community Care

Allied Health Professionals, commonly known as AHPs, play a massive part in caring for the people of Scotland.

They work with children and adults of all ages who have illnesses, disabilities or special needs. These people value the contributions AHPs make to their treatment, recovery and quality of life.

AHPs' skills and knowledge are crucial for patients and the wider health care team. They are reducing waiting times for patients through new ways of working, providing services that may help to avoid admission to hospital, and helping people to live independently in their homes.

Thirteen separate professions jointly make up the AHP workforce. Each has its own separate identity and set of professional knowledge, skills and standards which define their unique roles in caring for the people of Scotland.

Nearly 9,000 AHPs and their support staff work throughout NHSScotland. You'll also find them in community care and housing services, in hospitals, in schools and colleges and, increasingly, in jointly managed health and social care services.

This document sets out a direction and focus for this group of professionals. It has been developed in partnership with AHPs themselves, other professionals, and you, the general public.

Individuals and communities have a huge interest in the services provided by AHPs. We believe strongly that they should have a big say in how services are developed. Members of the public played a major part in deciding what should go in the document, and you'll see some of their comments as you read on.

More importantly, you'll see their influence throughout the document. The focus is very much on how AHPs can continue to help patients, carers and the people of Scotland to better health.

AHPs have not always received the recognition they deserve. I am determined to put that right. This document builds from what is already happening to set out a new course for better services in the future. AHPs are set to play a vital role in delivering the services we all want to see for the people of Scotland.

AHPs - who are they, and what do they do?

There are 13 professions making up the AHP workforce. Each offers a separate range of services to help children and adults to overcome illness and live with disability.

Profession	Main function
Art Therapists	Help patients to understand their problems and come up with solutions through the use of arts such as painting, drawing and sculpture.
Chiropodists/ Podiatrists	Diagnose and treat foot problems, carry out nail surgery and give advice on proper care of the foot especially for those with conditions such as diabetes.
Dietitians	Work with people to promote wellbeing, prevent food-related problems and treat ill health through diet.
Drama Therapists	Encourage patients to express the whole range of their emotions and to increase their understanding of themselves and others through drama.
Music Therapists	Help people to understand their behaviour and emotional difficulties through music.
Occupational Therapists	Use a variety of activities, and/or equipment and adaptations, to enable recovery after illness or injury and to support independent living and health.
Orthoptists	Diagnose and treat a range of eye disorders and defects of vision.
Orthotists	Design and fit pieces of equipment known as <i>orthoses</i> to patients who need support for a weak arm, leg or spine.
Prosthetists	Provide care and advice for patients who have lost or were born without a limb, fitting the best possible artificial replacement.
Physiotherapists	Assess and treat people with physical problems caused by an accident, ageing, disease or disability promoting recovery and relief from pain.
Diagnostic Radiographers	Produce high quality images using all kinds of radiation, such as X-rays, and other tests to diagnose illness.
Therapeutic Radiographers	Treat mainly cancer patients using radiation therapy, and occasionally drugs, and support their care through all phases of the illness.
Speech and Language Therapists	Assess, diagnose and treat people who have communication and/or swallowing difficulties.





AHPs – what they can do for you...

Illness can strike at any time of life. For most of us it will come and go, leaving no bad effects. But for others, long-term illness or disability might be the result.

AHPs support people of all ages in their recovery from illness or injury, helping them to return to work or go back to school, or just to take part in normal everyday activities again.

They help people to walk after an injury or stroke, overcome eyesight problems, cope with depression or anxiety, or eat a more healthy diet after a heart attack. They boost confidence in doing everyday things after an illness or injury, and help people to enjoy life again.

‘They treat me like an individual. They understand my problems and have really helped me to make progress since I had my stroke.’ Patient.

AHPs also support families and carers in adjusting to changes brought about by illness or disability. They often provide training in healthcare procedures and ongoing therapy, as well as support and advice in aspects of health and independent living.

AHPs improving your health...

AHPs are committed to improving the health of the people of Scotland. Much of their work is in health screening, health promotion, and making sure that people who have difficulty getting access to health services receive the care they need.

They also do vital work in the big priority health areas for Scotland – cancer, heart disease and mental health – and with key groups of people who may have special needs, such as young children and older adults.

‘It’s been so good having my rehabilitation at home. I could come home earlier from hospital and it’s helped my husband and me to cope at home.’ Patient.

AHPs listening to what you want...

The patients and members of the public we spoke to highlighted good communication with AHPs as vital.

AHPs are committed to making sure that everyone using their services gets information setting out what they can expect, the standard of care they are entitled to, and the options they have before them.

They are determined to make sure that the public's views – *your* views – are taken into account when AHP services for your community are being planned. Your voice will also be the main force for making improvements in what's on offer, so talk to your AHP and let him or her know what you think.

'The staff have been really first class, very supportive and compassionate, but with a great sense of humour. They made a very stressful experience easy to cope with.' Patient.

AHPs improving the patient experience...

Patients have told us that while they value AHPs' services, they sometimes have difficulties getting the help they need at the time they need it. They also get frustrated at the lack of communication throughout the healthcare system, where individual services seem not to talk to each other.

AHPs are now working to sort these problems out. They're setting up 'direct access' services like the one run by physiotherapists at the Westgate Health Centre in Dundee, where patients don't even need to see their GP before attending – they just walk in. And those who need to get care at home are benefiting from services like the North Ayr Speedy Action Team – an AHP-led team who go straight to the patient's home to give support and care.

AHPs are also in the forefront of national plans to produce 'joined-up' health and community care services, where information about patients is shared and exchanged between professionals.

'I really appreciate the specialist skills of the therapists and it is a real comfort to know that I can just pick up the phone at any time for advice.' Patient.





AHPs developing new services...

NHSScotland is being restructured – or ‘redesigned’ – to make sure it remains fit to meet the needs of Scotland’s people.

Redesign means that care and treatment is now being delivered in new and exciting ways. New services are aiming to reduce waiting times, improve patients’ experience of care, and make sure that the right patient sees the right professional at the right time.

AHPs are at the forefront of these new services, continually developing and increasing what they offer to meet patients’ needs. The Scottish Executive is determined to make sure that AHPs continue to get the chance to extend the range of their services in the future.

‘AHPs are in a good position to use their expertise to find better ways of doing things and provide more responsive services.’ NHS Trust Chief Executive.

AHPs ensuring quality...

NHSScotland has a way of ensuring that the services it offers to patients are of the highest quality. That means services that are not based on the whim or fancy of individual professionals, but are backed up by solid research evidence.

The system is called *clinical governance*, and it gives patients the best guarantee of quality in the care they receive. Clinical governance is deeply embedded in every hospital, GP practice and community service in NHSScotland.

AHPs are playing their part in clinical governance by getting involved in research projects to find better ways of caring for patients, developing standards to guide practice, and looking long and hard at what they do to see if it can be done better.

‘The members of the team I dealt with could not have been more helpful or reassuring, they were wonderful.’ Patient.

AHPs keeping up to date...

It's vital that patients are cared for by professionals who are well qualified and who get the education and training they need to make sure they stay up to date with the latest treatments.

AHPs have to go through a tough training programme to become qualified, but they themselves will tell you that the basic course isn't enough to guarantee quality services. Learning doesn't stop when they get their degrees – education and training have to be lifelong activities.

Ongoing education and training activities in NHSScotland now tend to involve not just one group of professionals, like physiotherapists, but a range of different professions – doctors, nurses and AHPs, for instance. They work together in teams, so it makes sense for them to learn together in teams as well.

Education opportunities are also being made for the support workers who provide such a valuable service to patients and their AHP colleagues.

'I am really enjoying the course. It's hard trying to juggle the pressures of work and study at the same time, especially when you have a family, but I really want to go on and do my training.' Occupational Therapy support worker.

AHPs into the future...

We hope this brief journey through the AHP world has given you a taste of what they have to offer.

AHPs have a long and proud history of delivering quality services both within and outwith the NHS. But they are not content to rest on their laurels. They are constantly looking to increase their skills and extend the range of services they can offer to make sure that when you see an AHP, what you need is what you get.

AHPs are ready to play their part in improving the health of Scotland's people, building on the successes of the past to ensure success for the future...

'I think they make a great team. I really don't know how we would have managed without them.' Patient.

AHPs – want to find out more?

To find out more about the kinds of services AHPs can offer, both within and outwith NHSScotland, you can contact the following organisations.

Professional Body Contacts

Society of Chiropody and Podiatry

1, Fellmongers Path
Tower Bridge Road
London SE1 3KY
Tel: 020 7234 8635 / Fax: 020 7234 3381

British Dietetics Association

5th Floor, Charles House, 148/9 Great
Charles Street
Birmingham B3 3HT
Tel: 0121 200 8080 / Fax: 0121 200 8081

College of Occupational Therapy

106-114, Borough High Street
London SE1 1LB
Tel: 020 7357 6480 / Fax: 020 7450 2331

The Society of Radiography

207, Providence Square
Mill Street
London SE1 2EW
Tel: 020 7740 7200 / Fax: 020 7740 7204

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy

14, Bedford Row
London WC1 4ED
Phone 020 7306 666 / Fax: 020 7306 6611

The Association of Professional Music Therapists

26, Hamlyn Road Glastonbury
Somerset BA6 8HT
Phone: 01458 843919 / Fax: 01458 834919

British Association of Art Therapists

5, Tavistock Place,
London WC1H 9SN
Phone 020 7383 3774 / Fax 0207 387 5513

Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists

2 White Hart Yard
London SE1 1NK
Phone 0207 378 3016

British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotics

Sir James Clark Building
Abbeymill Business Centre
Paisley, PAU 1TY
Phone 0141-561 7217 / Fax 0141 561 7218

The British Association of Drama Therapists

41 Broomhouse Lane,
London SW6 3DP
Phone 0207 731 0160 / Fax 0207 731 0160

British Orthoptic Society

Tavistock House North Tavistock Square
London WC1 9HX
Phone 0207 387 7992 / Fax 0207 383 2584

Further information about AHPs is available on:

www.show.scot.nhs.uk

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