

Introducing the Allied Health Professions



Art therapists · Dramatherapists · Dietitians
Occupational therapists · Diagnostic radiographers
Podiatrists · Therapeutic radiographers · Orthoptists
Speech and language therapists · Physiotherapists
Operating department practitioners · Music therapists
Prosthetists and Orthotists · Osteopaths · Paramedics

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WHAT ARE ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS (AHPs)?

AHPs are healthcare specialists who provide treatment and help to rehabilitate patients; spending their careers helping others live the fullest lives possible.

They work directly with patients, where they can really see the difference they make to people's everyday lives – relieving their pain and helping them stay independent. AHPs make up the third largest clinical workforce in the NHS, giving you so many career options to explore!

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BEING AN AHP?

AHPs enjoy:

- diagnosing, treating and rehabilitating patients
- great pay
- regular working hours
- varied and interesting work
- lots of ways to specialise and advance

The best thing is – there are so many opportunities and most graduates find a job straight away!

Visit our professions page <https://www.iseethedifference.co.uk/all-allied-health-professions> for more details on each AHP.

“With so many ways to specialise, I’m building the career I want.”

THE ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS FAMILY

Art therapists

Diagnostic radiographers

Dietitians

Drama-therapists

Music therapists

Occupational therapists

Operating department practitioners

Orthoptists

Osteopaths

Paramedics

Physio-therapists

Podiatrists

Prosthetists and Orthotists

Speech and language therapists

Therapeutic radiographers

Podiatry



Podiatrists care for the feet, ankles and lower limbs. They are experts on the structure, function and health of these parts of the body.

Podiatrists can have portfolio careers combining NHS, private and academic work. As you gain experience, you'll be able to specialise in areas that interest you, like sports injuries, the musculoskeletal system, surgery on the feet or even forensic podiatry.

You'll help anyone from babies to older people with conditions like diabetes, arthritis, dermatological and neurological disorders, among many more. Treatment can include preventing and managing problems, relieving pain, treating infections and prescribing medicines.

You'll sometimes be based on the move, acting as a liaison between GP surgeries, patients' homes, care homes, A&E departments and hospital wards, working with various other health professionals.

Prosthetics & Orthotics

Prosthetists and Orthotists design, fit, adjust and maintain mechanical devices that attach to patients' bodies, helping them move.

You could work in the NHS or a private practice. As you gain experience, you could specialise in clinical areas that interest you, such as stroke, MS or diabetes, or with children or veterans. You can also develop your career into management, public health or research.

As a Prosthetist, you'll help people of all ages, who have been born without a limb or needed an amputation. You design and fit their artificial limbs – prostheses. Prosthetics need monitoring, adjusting, and adapting. A missing limb is a life-long condition, so you will build strong relationships with your patients.

As an Orthotist, you'll help people of all ages with conditions like diabetes, arthritis, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, sports injuries and many others. Treatment can include stock or custom-made orthoses, such as spinal braces, splints, and footwear. Every patient is different, so you'll enjoy a challenge and be a creative problem solver. You'll be based in a hospital or rehab centre, possibly travelling around

different schools or clinics each day. You'll be part of a team including technicians, physiotherapists, nurses, doctors, and other health professionals.



Orthoptics

Orthoptists diagnose and treat problems that affect how eye structures develop, how the brain controls eye movements, and how the eyes work together.

Orthoptists are specialists in vision and the structure of the eye. They protect people's eyes and vision so they can read, drive, socialise, and live full and independent lives. Orthoptists are in demand right now, so a qualified Orthoptist is highly employable.

You'll help both children and adults with conditions like double vision, eye movement disorders, and disorders of the brain that affect vision. Treatment can include eyepatches, eye exercises, prisms and glasses.

You'll be based in a hospital – though orthoptists often work in schools and community clinics too – working with the eye-care team, stroke team and special educational needs team. As you gain experience, you'll find lots of opportunities to extend and specialise your role and responsibilities.



Therapeutic radiography



Therapeutic radiographers use highly advanced technology to target and destroy cancer cells with radiation.

You'll be based in a hospital, usually in the NHS, working with the oncology team and support services.

You'll help many people with conditions like cancer. Planning and administering precise doses of radiation to affected areas, and providing emotional support to patients, their family and their carers.

As you gain experience, you'll be able to specialise in areas that interest you, like computerised radiation dose planning, working with children, treating specific areas of the body, research, teaching and management.

**“I want to be there
for people on a
life-changing journey.”**



DIAGNOSTIC RADIOGRAPHY

A Diagnostic radiographer uses the latest technology such as x-ray and ultrasound machines, as well as other forms of imaging technology to look inside people's bodies and work out what is causing their illnesses.

Diagnostic radiographers can work with a huge variety of patients and conditions every day. They use x-rays to look at bones and foreign objects inside the body, fluoroscopy to livestream from inside the digestive system, and angiography to investigate inside veins and arteries, among many more techniques.

With experience, you may also contribute towards interpreting images, establishing treatment plans and helping with intervention procedures, for example the removal of kidney stones.

Jobs are available in hospitals and private clinics throughout the UK and in a range of hospital departments such as operating theatres, accident and emergency, outpatients and on wards.

OPERATING DEPARTMENT PRACTICE

An Operating Department Practitioner (ODP) cares for people having operations, before, during and after the operation itself. They can care for patients of any age, having operations for any reason.

They help prepare patients for anaesthesia and surgery, prepare the operating theatre and instruments, and support patients as they recover from their operation. They work all around the hospital, acting as a link between the surgical team and other departments.

ODPs are primarily employed within operating theatres but increasingly in other critical care areas of a hospital.



DIETETICS

A Dietitian helps people make informed and practical choices about food, based on the science of nutrition. As well as diagnosing and treating dietary and nutritional problems, Dietitians teach the public – and other health professionals – to understand food, promote good health and prevent disease.

Patients who want to lose weight, or to gain weight after an illness, or to improve their sports performance, all might visit a Dietitian. Dietitians also help patients who have eating disorders, digestive problems, HIV or allergies.

Although many Dietitians work for the NHS in a hospital or community setting, you can also work in:

- education and research
- the food industry
- the pharmaceutical industry
- sports nutrition

Dietitians may focus on specialist areas, such as:

- children's health
- diabetes
- kidney disease
- food allergies
- eating disorders

PARAMEDIC

A Paramedic responds to a range of emergency and non-emergency situations, travelling in an ambulance or car, or by bike or motorbike. Whatever the situation, Paramedics are usually the first health professionals on the scene. They assess patients and make potentially life-saving decisions about whether and how to treat people at the scene or transfer them to hospital. Sometimes this can involve providing essential treatment such as:

- resuscitating and stabilising patients
- using high-tech equipment, like a defibrillator
- applying spinal and traction splints
- administering intravenous drips, drugs and oxygen

Most Paramedics work for the NHS and are recruited and employed in individual NHS Trust Ambulance Services covering specific geographical areas.

Other employers can include:

- armed forces
- HM Prison Service
- private ambulance services
- overseas health departments
- oil and gas exploration companies



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

An Occupational therapist (OT) helps people continue their work, studies, leisure activities and everyday tasks during illnesses, injuries, disabilities or ageing.

They can help people learn to use assistive technology, help adapt their home or workplace to meet their needs, and work with people to find new ways to approach tasks.

OTs can provide practical support to help children and adults of all ages, with mental, physical, social or learning disabilities, to independently carry out everyday tasks or occupations with more confidence and independence.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY

A Speech and language therapist helps people, including babies and children, who have problems with speaking, communicating, eating, drinking and swallowing. A speech and language therapist needs to be adaptable and deal with diverse client groups, including people with:

- physical and learning disabilities
- hearing loss/deafness
- psychiatric disorders
- dementia

Speech and language therapists can also treat a range of conditions, including cleft palate, stammering, language delay and voice disorders. They can work in a range of settings, from hospitals to community clinics, and even in patients' own homes.



OSTEOPATHY

An Osteopath manipulates muscles and joints, in combination with using exercise and physical therapy, to help with pain and promote better general health.

Osteopaths are experts in the musculoskeletal system and diagnose and treat a wide range of conditions, working closely with Physiotherapists, Podiatrists and other members of the allied health family.

As an Osteopath, you'll use touch, physical manipulation, stretching and massage to treat patients with a range of conditions, including:

- back pain
- injuries
- joint pain
- digestive disorders

Most Osteopaths are self-employed and you're likely to work as an associate in an osteopathic practice before setting up your own practice or working in a group osteopathic practice.

PHYSIOTHERAPY

A Physiotherapist helps people with a range of problems affecting movement, using exercise, massage and various other techniques.

Anyone with physical problems caused by illness, injury, disability or ageing might get help from a Physiotherapist.

As well as treating patients, you'll also promote their health and wellbeing and provide advice on how to avoid injury and self-manage long-term conditions.

Patients can include children, the elderly, stroke patients and people with sports injuries.

The NHS is the major employer of Physiotherapists and skills are needed in most departments, such as:

- elderly care
- intensive care
- mental health
- occupational health
- orthopaedics
- outpatients' departments
- paediatrics
- stroke services
- women's health



ART THERAPY

Also known as Art psychotherapists, Art therapists use art to help people communicate and address a range of issues.

A patient might see an Art therapist if it's difficult for them to communicate in a straightforward way – perhaps because of an emotional, behavioural or mental health problem, a learning or physical disability, a neurological condition or a physical illness.

If you're interested in Art therapy, you will need to have at least a year's relevant work experience (either paid or voluntary) for entry onto a postgraduate training course.

DRAMATHERAPY

A Dramatherapist uses role play, movement and storytelling to help people explore and solve personal and social problems.

A patient might visit a Dramatherapist if they have trouble speaking plainly about what's going on with them. This could be because of a range of conditions, from physical illnesses to learning disabilities.

MUSIC THERAPY

A Music therapist uses music to help people deal with feelings they cannot put into words.

Music therapists are skilled musicians, but their role is not to teach people how to play an instrument. They use their musical skills to help people who have difficulty communicating, perhaps because of a neurological condition, behavioural issue or physical disability.

You'll work with children and adults of all ages and social backgrounds with a range of issues, including:

- eating disorders
- anxiety
- behavioural and emotional difficulties
- addiction
- communication disorders

The NHS and the education sector are major employers of music therapists. You may also be employed by charities, social services and on community projects.



WHAT QUALITIES ARE NEEDED TO BE AN AHP?

- Working together for patients
- Respect and dignity
- Commitment to quality of care
- Compassion
- Improving lives
- Everyone counts

These values may also be promoted as:

- Care
- Compassion
- Competence
- Communication
- Courage
- Commitment

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO TRAIN?

The requirements of each AHP differ slightly. However the usual route is a 3-year undergraduate course at university to train to become an AHP and to become a healthcare specialist. Most of the time, these courses allow you to be hands on and to deal with real patients in a real work environment – giving you a great insight into the life of an AHP.

WHAT ARE THE AVERAGE GRADES NEEDED AT A-LEVEL?

Entry requirements vary amongst universities, ranging from CCC to BBB at A-Level (or equivalent). Although many universities will accept BTEC qualifications, entry requirements may vary depending on institutions.

Our website, www.iseethedifference.co.uk has information about courses for each profession.

DO I NEED WORK EXPERIENCE?

Universities may ask students to have prior experience in a professional health environment. Why not get in touch with your local AHP departments to see if you can visit? This will also help to give you some insight into the professions and help you to make a decision. It can be challenging finding a good placement so it may also be worth considering work experience with care homes, charity volunteering or with St John Ambulance.

Feel free to contact us if you need any advice about work experience in an AHP department:
info@iseethedifference.co.uk

CAN I DO AN APPRENTICESHIP?

Apprenticeships for AHPs are still very new – however they are evolving as we speak so keep a look out for updates! Currently Podiatry, Paramedics, Prosthetics and Orthotics, Occupational Therapy, Operating Department Practice and Physiotherapy, to name a few, offer degree apprenticeships.

To find an apprenticeship, search: www.findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk/apprenticeshipsearch

There are also more details on the I See The Difference website, www.iseethedifference.co.uk/all-allied-health-professions

“Every day I make a patient’s day.”

WHAT IS THE PAY LIKE?

Pay scales and bands

Pay Scale	Lower Limit	Upper Limit
Band 5	£24,214	£30,112
Band 6	£30,401	£37,267
Band 7	£37,570	£43,772
Band 8a	£44,606	£50,819
Band 8b	£52,306	£60,983
Band 8c	£61,777	£72,597
Band 8d	£73,936	£86,687
Band 9	£89,537	£103,860

*Information is subject to change. Up to date at time of printing September 2019

All healthcare specialists within the NHS are paid according to the “NHS Agenda for Change”. Find out more on the Health Careers website <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/working-health/working-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates>

As a newly qualified allied health professional, you will be able to start working at a Band 5 position.

“I see the difference I can make to people’s lives.”

If you are interested in kick starting your career as an AHP, please visit our course finder:
<https://www.iseethedifference.co.uk/course-finder/>
Career changers, parents and careers advisors are more than welcome to explore our website as we have information for everyone!

If you have any questions you can contact us at:
info@iseethedifference.co.uk

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