

Resource Pack for Careers Advisers and school-based Careers Leaders



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1. INTRODUCTION

This pack is to support careers advisers and careers leaders to give guidance to young people considering pursuing a career in the health and care sector.

Many young people have the potential to become Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) – a family of 15 specialist health professions. AHPs are not doctors or nurses, but frequently work alongside these other professions within the NHS, and sometimes also in private practice. They make a huge difference to millions of patients’ lives every day.

Several of these careers are under-subscribed, though the NHS Long Term Plan (www.longtermplan.nhs.uk) makes clear that there will be growing demand for their skills in the future. Lack of awareness of these professions is one of the reasons for this lower demand, so it is important that careers advisers and teachers providing careers guidance are aware of them and can highlight them to students who show potential.

This pack carries general information on the family of Allied Health Professions, including the necessary values and aptitudes that are required from people wishing to apply for training courses. It will help you to explain Allied Health Professions to your students and increase their awareness of the substantial opportunities available: Allied Health Professionals enjoy well-paid, flexible careers, with autonomy, job security, and opportunities to advance and specialise. The entry requirements are generally lower than for medicine, and the period to qualification shorter. The Allied Health Professions are an excellent option for many young people who are motivated to pursue a career in which they make difference to people’s lives.

Much more information on the individual professions, targeted at young people and career changers themselves, is available at the I See The Difference website iseethedifference.co.uk, along with more detailed careers guidance and education resources.



2. SUPPORTING YOU AS AN ADVISER AND PRACTITIONER

PLACING THE ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS INTO CONTEXT

The National Health Service (NHS) is one of the largest institutions in Europe. In the UK 1.3 million people work in the NHS across a range of settings including clinics, surgeries, hospitals, community centres and people's homes. In just one 24-hour period a staggering 1.5 million patients are treated by the NHS.

There are 350 different roles in the NHS, most of which focus on clinical care and support patients directly in their day to day job. Some of the 350 roles can be split into sub-categories. The NHS have defined these as:

- Allied Health Professions
- Ambulance Service
- Health Informatics
- Healthcare Science
- Management
- Medical and Dental
- Medical Associates
- Midwifery
- Nursing
- Pharmacy
- Psychological Therapies
- Public Health
- Wider Healthcare Team

One of the categories of professions outlined above is the Allied Health Professions (AHPs). After doctors, nurses and midwives, the AHPs collectively form the biggest community of clinical practitioners working in the NHS.

There are currently around 117,000 AHPs, but the UK urgently needs more to meet growing patient demand. There are 15 specialist AHP roles:



All the AHPs are specialist professions in their own right and practitioners train through a specialised degree or degree apprenticeship route. Three professions – Art Therapy, Music Therapy and Dramatherapy – require post-graduate qualifications, so students need to do a different undergraduate degree first.

AHPs work in teams, often with other AHPs from different disciplines and with other healthcare professionals including doctors and nurses.

In the next part of this chapter you will learn more about each of the AHPs in turn and what makes them specialists in their own right.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE 15 ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS

Working with People is at the heart of what AHPs do

It is very important when advising about an AHP career to ensure that the person would want to work with, care for and support people. They will also need to be able to work in a team as they will work alongside a variety of healthcare professionals and other staff who work together to deliver health-related services. An AHP student will be provided with training and support throughout their degree or degree apprenticeship to ensure they have the skills and confidence to do the work required.

Where do AHPs work?

AHPs work in a range of settings including hospitals, people's homes, clinics, surgeries and schools. They work in partnership with health and social care colleagues across primary, secondary and social care, as well as in the independent and voluntary and charitable sectors. Most AHPs train and begin their career in the NHS. Some choose to go into private healthcare. Often the NHS services are based in a large hospital, but there are many other areas that AHPs work in. For example, an Occupational Therapist may provide care in patients' homes, a Dramatherapist may work in a prison or mental health unit, a Podiatrist or Physiotherapist could run their own private care clinic, a Therapeutic Radiographer may work for a cancer charity, and an Orthoptist may work in a school.

Many of the UK degree qualifications in AHP work are recognised overseas. For example, as a Diagnostic Radiographer you could work in countries such as Australia, New Zealand or Canada as your qualification is transferable (working visa application permitting).

What hours do AHPs work?

AHPs generally work core hours – that is, 9–5pm, five days a week. This contrasts with some of the nursing, midwifery and medical profession (doctors) who may often work shifts. However, some specific AHP roles will be required to do on-call work or shift work. For example Paramedics and Diagnostic Radiographers sometimes work unsociable hours.

Specialist and varied work

Each AHP has a diverse range of skills and many specialise, which provides opportunities for varied work. A Therapeutic Radiographer, for example, may initially work for a few years delivering front line clinical radiotherapy treatment work and may then choose to specialise in radiation computer planning or a particular cancer care speciality such as breast or prostate cancer care. A Podiatrist typically enters practice in the NHS as a generalist but could specialise in an area such as sports injuries, diabetes or musculoskeletal conditions, and could enter private practice.

AHPs have many transferable skills, such as working in or leading teams, research, project management, training and education, quality management, patient safety, counselling skills and advanced communications skills. It is important that the person you are advising researches each individual AHP job that may be of interest to them, to look out for the differences in work environment and type of subject they will be studying. A Podiatrist may work with a list of patients focusing on lower limb rehabilitation and work fairly independently during their day (although they will link with other health care professionals when needed). Meanwhile an Operating Department Practitioner's (ODP) day to day work will involve being part of a larger surgical team. Paramedics tend mostly to work in pairs as part of an ambulance crew and could rotate through call centres managing emergency phone advice.

There are opportunities for portfolio careers, should this be of interest. Many of the skills acquired are transferable to other health or public sector roles, depending on how the person would like their career to unfold. For example, a Therapeutic Radiographer may become a specialist breast cancer care consultant who has a doctorate (PhD) qualification and can prescribe radiation and medicines, lead research and manage an area of specialist care such as breast cancer alongside their clinical doctor colleagues. A Dietitian may choose to go into training and education and be based in a university, teaching and educating student dietitians or supervising their clinical placements. A Speech and Language Therapist could develop in leadership and management and progress into senior divisional hospital management (beyond speech and language therapy services) therefore leading a set of hospital services and staff.

Employability

Allied Health Professionals are in demand and employment rates for graduates of AHP degrees or degree level apprenticeships are generally high. These training programmes can be intense compared with some studies. However, an AHP degree is a professional qualification and graduates can register with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). This allows them to work as soon as they are qualified. Not only are they learning all the academic knowledge needed during their degree or apprenticeship, but they are also out on placements applying all of their learning, observing and carrying out the work that will be undertaken once qualified.

Therefore they receive “on the job training” throughout the three years as well as a chance to be mentored, supervised and supported by experienced staff. This enables students to build the confidence and skills required during their training, and directly see the difference they make to patients and their families right from the beginning of their training. The 15 AHP roles are extremely rewarding.

Detailed information about the 15 individual profession is available in our leaflet www.iseethedifference.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/08-19_CollegeOfPodiatry_Leaflet_Web-003.pdf

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.
Correct as of 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 www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/working-health/working-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates

As a newly qualified Allied Health Professional you would be most likely to start working in a Band 5 position.



MAKING THE LEARNING STICK! CATEGORISING THE AHPS

There are various categories you can apply to the AHPs to show the range of 'personalities' of the roles involved. Most professions belong to more than one category:

Creative:

- Art Therapists
- Dramatherapists
- Music Therapists

Sporty:

- Osteopaths
- Physiotherapists
- Podiatrists
- Prosthetists and Orthotists

High pressure:

- Operating Department Practitioners
- Paramedics

Physics based:

- Diagnostic Radiographers
- Orthoptists
- Prosthetists and Orthotists
- Therapeutic Radiographers

Engineering based:

- Podiatry
- Prosthetists and Orthotists

Biology based:

- Diagnostic Radiographers
- Dietitians
- Occupational Therapists
- Operating Department Practitioners
- Orthoptists
- Osteopaths
- Paramedics
- Physiotherapists
- Podiatrists
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Therapeutic Radiographers

Mental Health focus:

- Art Therapists
- Dietitians
- Dramatherapists
- Music Therapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Speech and Language Therapists

3. SUPPORTING YOU TO UNDERTAKE GUIDANCE INTERVIEWS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

WHAT ARE THE VALUES REQUIRED OF ALL NHS EMPLOYEES?

The NHS has published a set of values which it wants to see its students and employees living by in everything they do. The values form a part of interviews for all roles in the NHS, from AHPs and nursing students to consultants and heads of service. These are important values for the clinical staff, but everyone in the NHS from gardeners to project managers must apply them in their everyday work.

When preparing for an interview at a university or healthcare organisation, it is important to demonstrate how you have followed these values in work experience, volunteering and in everyday life. This is not restricted to hospitals – the values can be demonstrated using examples from work with community groups, hospices or anywhere else. Some of the values might seem more patient-focused, but it's important to understand that every single person within the NHS has a role to play to help patients. In a community group, you might not heal patients, but you can commit to showing care and compassion, and this is what they want to see.

NHS VALUES

WORKING TOGETHER FOR PATIENTS

AHPs are often part of a multidisciplinary team and will work together for the benefit of the patient.

RESPECT AND DIGNITY

This applies to how patients are treated, regardless of their differences or abilities. It also applies to how other staff are treated.

COMMITMENT TO QUALITY OF CARE

Providing high quality care is at the heart of what the NHS does and AHPs fulfil this with training and personal development.

COMPASSION

Understanding that not everyone is in the same position, and showing compassion in times of need.

IMPROVING LIVES

This is ultimately what AHPs are here to do, and they do it daily by performing well in their jobs.

EVERYONE COUNTS

No matter what stage of life they are at, everyone can access the NHS and this forms the basis of its core values.

THE SIX CS

Another set of values that are often referred to by health and care practitioners is the Six Cs of Caring. These were drawn up in 2012 by nurses and rolled out across the whole of the NHS in 2014. All NHS staff, clinical and non-clinical, are expected to observe the Six Cs.

CARE

Care is at the centre of everything. Patients come to the NHS because they are in need. AHPs provide care and help to get people back on their feet and back to normal.

COMPASSION

Sometimes patients will have been in an accident or been through trauma and an AHP needs to be compassionate and understand that sometimes what a patient needs is a listening ear.

COMMUNICATION

A patient needs to understand their therapy and why they're undergoing treatment. They could be children or stroke survivors who need the information explained in specific ways.

COMPETENT

AHPs are professionally trained to be able to give good, safe care and not endanger patients. This can be ensured through experience and continued professional development.

COURAGEOUS

This means being able to think outside the box, problem solve and go ahead with whatever they think is best for the patient. They need to be able to stick up for what they think is best and fight their corner for better care.

COMMITTED

Committed to the individual patient and committed to the wider healthcare team and organisation, whether this be by staying an extra half hour to see that last patient or making sure a business proposal to help the department is completed to the best of their ability.

APTITUDES AND PERSONALITY TRAITS – WHAT MAKES A GOOD AHP?

On top of the values expected of NHS workers, there are a number of traits which all AHPs have in common:

- Good communicator – In a multi-disciplinary organisation such as the NHS it is important to be able to effectively communicate with your patients and colleagues
- Caring
- Problem solver
- Curious
- Motivated – It can be hard work but the rewards you get from it are worth it

When advising young people about career options within the Allied Health Professions, it is useful to think about what the different attributes candidates will need to display when applying for training courses.

'WHAT MAKES A GOOD....?'

...Physiotherapist

- Interest in science
- Happy to be hands on
- Good listener
- Calming
- Motivating
- Good communication skills
- Business skills for private practice

...Dramatherapist

- Creative
- Flexible
- Resourceful
- Non-judgemental
- Resilient in dealing with other people's strong emotions
- Sensitive and mature
- Business skills for private practice

...Art therapist

- Creative
- Flexible
- Resourceful
- Non-judgemental
- Resilient in dealing with other people's strong emotions
- Sensitive and mature
- Business skills for private practice

...Speech and Language Therapist

- Interest in science
- Enjoying using language and communication to help people
- Motivating
- Reassuring
- Business skills for private practice
- Problem solving
- Excellent communication skills

...Music Therapist

- Creative
- Flexible
- Resourceful
- Non-judgemental
- Resilient in dealing with other people's strong emotions
- Sensitive and mature
- Business skills for private practice

...Dietitian

- Interest in food and science
- Positive and motivating attitude
- Understanding
- Patient
- Good communication skills
- Business skills for private work

...Orthoptist

- Caring
- Able to work with adults and children
- Interest in science
- Able to work both alone or as part of a team
- Attention to detail
- Good observation skills

...Prosthetist and Orthotist

- Interest in science
- Interest in how engineering can be used to help people
- Happy to be hands on with patients
- Motivating
- IT skills
- Business skills for private practice

...Podiatrist

- Interest in science
- Happy to handle other people's feet and lower limbs
- Good listeners
- Caring
- Good organisational skills
- Business skills for private practice

...Therapeutic Radiographer

- Interest in science
- Resilience
- Physically fit as the job involves a lot of standing
- Safety conscious
- Interested in technology
- Patient and understanding
- Able to follow instructions exactly
- Good communication skills

...Paramedic

- Interest in science
- Able to understand a situation quickly
- Calm in a stressful situation
- Confident and reassuring
- Resilient
- Prepared to go into unknown or unpredictable situations

...Occupational Therapist

- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills
- Interest in science
- Good organisational skills
- Patience and enthusiasm
- Creative, with the ability to find solutions to problems
- Team player

...Operating Department Practitioner

- Interest in science
- Compassionate nature
- Team player
- Able to work in a highly technical area
- Excellent problem solving and organisational skills
- High concentration levels
- Very good communication skills
- Resilience
- Physically fit as the job involves a lot of standing

...Diagnostic Radiographer

- Safety conscious
- Interested in technology
- Patient and understanding
- Able to follow instructions exactly
- Physically fit as it involves a lot of standing
- Good organisation skills
- Good observation skills
- Reassuring

...Osteopath

- Interest in science
- Curious and creative
- Independent
- Good communication skills

4. LINKS TO USEFUL RESOURCES AND WAYS YOU CAN STAY UPDATED

www.iseethedifference.co.uk

Our website gives comprehensive details on each of the Allied Health Professions, with information for students, parents, teachers and careers advisers. It features a course finder and the latest information on funding for AHP careers.

You can also stay up to date with the I See The Difference campaign on social media:
Twitter: [@ictthedifference](https://twitter.com/ictthedifference)
Facebook and Instagram: [ictthedifference](https://www.facebook.com/ictthedifference)

Other useful resources on AHPs:

- The WOW Show – a film made for schools in 2019, featuring all of the AHPs.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ggb_kLppc
- AHP Careers, a Universe of Opportunities – an interactive resource from Health Education England
www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/allied-health-professions/supporting-development-ahp-workforce-ahp-careers
- Step into the NHS – information about NHS careers for Key Stages 2, 3 and 4
www.stepintothens.nhs.uk
- Health Education England career planning resources for career advisers and teachers
www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/career-advisers-and-teachers/teaching-resources
- NHS England Allied Health strategy for AHPs (2016)
www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/ahp-action-transform-hlth.pdf