



**Oxford Health**  
NHS Foundation Trust



# Allied Health Professions (AHPs) Strategy 2023-27

**Part of the Oxford Health Trust Strategy**  
**Building on the National AHP Strategy**

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# Allied Health Professionals in Oxford Health

Allied Health Professionals are the third largest workforce in the NHS. They practise in most clinical pathways and work across organisational boundaries at all stages of the pathway, providing solution-focused, goal-centred care to support patients' aims, independence, and autonomy. In Oxford Health we have nine of the fourteen professional groups practising across physical health, mental health and learning disability services.

We have the following Allied Health Professions within Oxford Health:



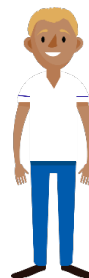
**Arts Therapists**



**Paramedics**



**Dietitians**



**Physiotherapists**



**Music Therapist**



**Podiatrists**



**Occupational Therapists**



**Speech and Language Therapists**



**Orthoptists**

## Our Ambition

Our ambition is to be *the place* to work for Allied Health Professionals. To attract, train, and retain people to deliver high quality, financially viable, effective, and respectful interventions enabling patients to achieve their best outcomes. We want to be an inclusive and diverse workforce, where individuals are valued and welcomed into the wider multi-disciplinary team. At Oxford Health we want to nurture our workforce providing opportunities to grow, develop, and be the Allied Health Professional you want to be. We are committed to the NHS People Promise; valuing a sense of team, striving to ensure that every voice is heard, and supporting our people. We want Allied Health Professionals to be at the forefront of developing, delivering, and transforming services to meet the population need. Research and evidence based practice underpins our delivery of prevention, crisis intervention, and rehabilitation services.

The Oxford Health Allied Health Professionals Strategy was co-produced with Allied Health Professionals attending the 2022 AHPs Day celebration. The participants were asked to work through a series of questions, considering the national AHPs Deliver Strategy, health inequalities, their local knowledge of services and populations, and their areas of work.

We acknowledge the complexity of meaning and terminology used when describing people who interact with our services and for the purpose of this strategy we refer to patients and communities.

The Oxford Health Allied Health Professionals Strategy is underpinned by the Trusts' mission, vision and values.





# Our Vision



# Background and Context

## What have we achieved as a result of our previous strategy?

In 2017 the first national strategy for Allied Health Professions (AHPs into Action) was developed to implement the triple aim set out in the Five Year Forward View; driving improvements in health and wellbeing, restoring and maintaining financial balance, and delivering core quality standards. The Oxford Health Allied Health Professions Strategy 2017 – 2023, focussed on developing the capacity, impact, and profile of Allied Health Professionals in Oxford Health in line with the national strategy. Despite the unforeseen consequences of an international pandemic and shift of focus; significant progress has been made towards achieving the strategic aims giving a strong base from which to deliver our new strategy.

Progress and achievements to date include:

### Profile

- Appointment of Associate Director of Allied Health Professionals.
- Allied Health Professionals leadership represented within the extended executive team and embedded across all the directorates.
- Raising the profile of Allied Health Professionals through social media and AHPs day.
- Celebrating Allied Health Professionals with the Introduction of the Trustwide BEE (Be Excellent Everyday) awards.

### Capacity

- Rotational opportunities in Dietetics, Occupational Therapy, and Physiotherapy.
- Apprenticeship roles developed and recruited to across five professional groups.
- Development of Trainee Advanced Clinical Practitioner posts.
- Recruitment of an Allied Health Professionals Workforce Lead.
- Collaborative recruitment with system partners to improve patient outcomes.
- International recruitment campaigns.

### Impact

- Expanded clinical responsibilities as part of the pandemic response.
- Optimising digital consultation opportunities.
- Appointment to Research & Development post.
- Involvement in research in Stroke and Community Therapy.
- Development of strategic working relationship with local universities.



# National Allied Health Professions Strategy

Oxford Health’s Allied Health Professions Strategy builds on the national Allied Health Professions Strategy ‘AHPs deliver 2022-27’ which sets out the national priorities for Allied Health Professionals. It has been developed to give strategic direction to the Allied Health Professions community across England, to enable the Allied Health Professionals and those they work with to maximise their contribution to improving health outcomes for all, providing improved quality of care, and sustainability of health and care services.

## Strategy principles of anti-racism and co-production

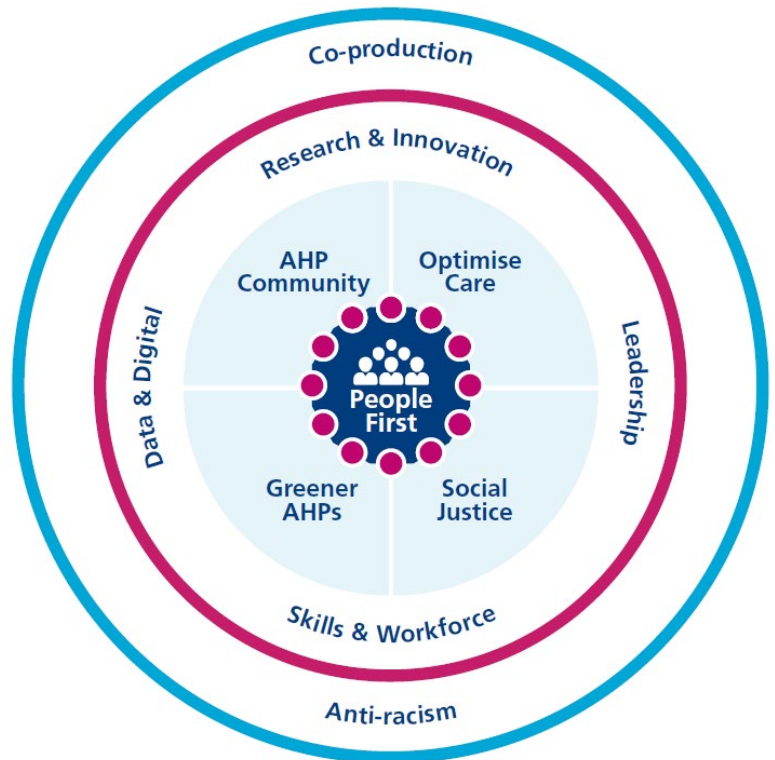
This strategy makes an overarching commitment that the AHP community will be anti-discriminatory and anti-racist in its approaches, using co-production to ensure actions are inclusive.

### Four enhanced foundations

The four priorities – described as ‘enhanced foundations’ – remain the same as in the first strategy but have been further refined and are supported by updated frameworks and policies.

### Five areas of focus

Five ‘areas of focus’ have been identified for the next five years, each complemented by a set of ambitions.



# Our Allied Health Professions Strategy at a Glance

We have based the strategic priorities within this Allied Health Professions Strategy on the Oxford Health Trust Strategy and objectives:

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## Quality

Deliver the best possible care and health outcomes

- Effective and diverse clinical leadership.
- AHPs work collaboratively across services.
- Demonstrating the impact of AHPs.



## People

Be a great place to work

- Respect diversity and embrace inclusion within our workforce.
- Provide opportunities to be the AHP you want to be.
- Be the place AHPs want to train, work and stay.



## Sustainability

Make the best use of our resources and protect the environment

- AHPs are environmentally aware and seek sustainable solutions.
- Adopt digital technology to improve effectiveness.
- Develop and deliver sustainable clinical services.



## Research

Be a leader in healthcare research and education

- Improve services to deliver the most effective and efficient practice.
- Make research part of everyday life and contribute to the evidence base for AHPs.
- Ensure that Quality Improvement is part of our culture and practice.

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# Delivering the Allied Health Professions Strategy Principles

## Committing to being anti-racist

The Allied Health Professions community is committed to achieving real and lasting change for ethnic minority AHPs, patients, and communities through proactive challenge, advocacy, and collaboration.

- Educating people and actively championing anti-racism.
- Addressing racial inequality, improving equal opportunities to access services, and employment progression for underrepresented groups in the AHP community professions.
- Being an ally by recognising that privilege exists, being proactive in our own education, and taking action to amplify the voices of under-represented patients and communities.

## Co-production is central to our work

Co-production of services is much more than consulting people; it is ensuring an equal voice in service conception, design, steering, and management. We are committed to working with our workforce, patients, and communities to ensure that wide ranging views are considered whenever designing and delivering services. This approach is set out within the patients and carer engagement strategy which will sit alongside this AHP Strategy and inform our approach to implementation.

- Ensure inclusive recruitment practises, engaging patients and communities as a fundamental part of the process.
- Use accessible language to improve communication and reduce barriers.
- Proactively seek to understand social justice and reduce health inequalities to improve experience and outcomes.





## Quality

Deliver the best possible care and health outcomes

The Allied Health Professions community is committed to having the right Allied Health Professionals, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time. This must be underpinned by enabling Allied Health Professionals to optimise their skills and deliver consistently great treatment and interventions across the Trust.

### Effective diverse clinical leadership

- Ensuring effective AHP clinical leadership and representation within services.
- Promotion of inclusive, diverse, and authentic leadership throughout the organisation.
- Expansion and creation of opportunities within the workforce for AHPs to develop leadership capability.

### Allied Health Professionals work collaboratively across services

- Cross-pathway integration and collaboration to reduce duplication and maximise effectiveness.
- Optimisation of peer support and professional supervision opportunities, actively sharing skills, knowledge, and experience between teams across the Trust.
- Develop relationships with partner organisations to enhance the AHP offer ensuring AHPs have a voice that is heard.

### Demonstrating the impact of Allied Health Professionals

- Celebrate and share what we do well raising awareness of AHP roles and the value they add.
- Effective use of internal and external communication; including social media activity.
- Use of outcome measures and patient reported measures to demonstrate clinical effectiveness.
- Development and use of comprehensive AHP competency frameworks across all professional groups and specialities.



## People

Be a great place to work

Our ambition is to have the right workforce, with the right skills, in the right place to deliver high-quality care. We will ensure we can meet the needs of our patients and communities by developing new and existing routes into the professions. We will make Oxford Health the employer of choice by celebrating our workforce, providing career frameworks, and recognising wellbeing as essential.

### Respect diversity and embrace inclusion within our workforce

- Promote a culture of psychological safety, and develop confidence to engage in difficult conversations, ask questions, and recognise bias.
- Hold personal accountability for being inclusive in our practise.
- Develop an adaptable and flexible approach within the AHP workforce.

### Provide opportunities to be the Allied Health Professionals you want to be

- Provide opportunities for continuing professional development and protected time to enable this.
- Commit to providing the best student offer across all AHP groups.
- Establish career pathways for all registered AHPs and support workers, from student to advanced clinical practice.

### Be the place AHP's want to train, work and stay

- Ensure diverse and inclusive recruitment practices.
- Grow our workforce, providing alternative entry points to the AHP professions such as apprenticeships and return to practice.
- Listen to feedback and lived experiences within the workforce to improve our offer and ensure that Oxford Health is the best place to be an AHP.
- Actively promote a culture of kindness and respect; investing in a Restorative Just and Learning Culture.
- Promote and support the wellbeing of our colleagues to ensure we are able to provide effective care for our patients and communities.



## Sustainability

Make the best use of our resources and protect the environment

Collective action from all Allied Health Professionals is crucial in helping to reduce the environmental impact of the things we procure and prescribe as part of our practise. The AHP community must advance the implementation of the AHP digital framework and harness digital technology and innovate with data. AHP communities need to be supported to successfully implement digital tools that optimise workforce capacity. Understanding population health will enable Allied Health Professionals to provide the most effective and sustainable services to improve health outcomes.

### Allied Health Professionals are environmentally aware and seek sustainable solutions

- Consider small actions that have incremental impact, for example turn lights off, reduce printing, manage food waste.
- Optimise equipment life cycles; including timely return and recycling of equipment.
- Prevention of avoidable admissions to hospital, encouraging and supporting patients to manage their own health.

### Adopt digital technology to improve effectiveness

- Optimise the use of digital consultations to support accessibility, flexibility, and minimise environmental impact.
- Provide access to digital tools and technology to enable us to better support our workforce, patients, and communities.
- Promote digital solutions to access data, evidence outcomes, and support service delivery and development.

### Develop and deliver sustainable clinical services

- Transform our workforce and teams to ensure the right AHP in the right place at the right time.
- Actively engage in health promotion and education to prevent ill health.
- Provide services that recognise the impact of social, economic, and wider determinants of health in the population.





## Research

Be a leader in healthcare research and education

Allied Health Professionals must strengthen the evidence base to inform service design, recognising innovation is critical to achieving the ambitions set out in the NHS Long Term Plan. We have seen that Allied Health Professionals are innovators throughout the pandemic and that research is key to ensuring safe evidence-based practice to support patients and clinical pathways.

### Improve services to deliver the most effective and efficient practice

- AHPs will use research and the evidence base to support practice development and service improvement.
- Raise awareness of Quality Improvement projects across professions and directorates to ensure we are sharing learning.
- Develop a safe and open learning culture to promote problem solving.

### Ensuring that research is part of everyday life and we contribute to the evidence base for Allied Health Professionals

- Actively use evidence-based practice, research, and national guidance to improve clinical expertise and effectiveness.
- Increase awareness and confidence in identifying and engaging in research opportunities to further build our research capacity.
- Enhance collaboration with universities, Biomedical Research Centre, and external organisations with support from the rehabilitation professorial role.

### Ensure that Quality Improvement is part of our culture and practice

- Actively use Quality Improvement to improve clinical effectiveness across all AHP professions.
- Increase awareness and confidence in identifying and engaging in Quality Improvement methodology.
- Give time, permission, skills, and resources to use Quality Improvement to problem solve.

## How will we know if we have succeeded?

We will assess progress through ongoing review of data, outcomes, and patient and workforce feedback. Further detail can be found in our annual objectives.

## Get involved

We are committed to working collaboratively with colleagues who deliver our services, our partners, patients, and communities who use allied health services, ensuring that their experience informs the development of future service plans. This is an ongoing conversation, and we would value your input. If you would like to find out more about this strategy please email us at [adminAHP@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk](mailto:adminAHP@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk) or visit us at [Get involved - Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust](#)

## References

The Allied Health Professions (AHPs) Strategy for England - AHPs deliver  
[NHS England » The Allied Health Professions \(AHPs\) strategy for England – AHPs Deliver](#)

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