

March 2019

Dear Head of Service or Professional Lead

You will have seen the recent guidance sent out by NHS improvement and the piece in PV regarding accuracy of AHP data in the ESR system.

https://improvement.nhs.uk/documents/3772/AHP_guide_to_ESR.pdf

The correct ESR data is of particular importance to orthoptics as a recent infographic has incorrectly classified that there are 2122 orthoptists working in the NHS but only 1442 registered which clearly indicates an error of data collection and interpretation. An excess of 680 non orthoptic posts being assigned to our profession.

<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Orthoptics%20infographic%20-%20September%202018.pdf>

Orthoptics has been recognised as one of the 4 vulnerable AHP professions and we know there is a decrease in applicants since the removal of the bursary. The office for students has funded campaigns and initiatives to support the 4 vulnerable AHP professions.

The incorrect figure of orthoptists on the ESR which is directly used by HEE produces a number of additional risks for orthoptics:

- It will mask or incorrectly report our vacancy rates
- It provides an incorrect message about regulation and the protection of title
- It would fail to provide an accurate measure any impact of interventions made directly by orthoptists
- Reporting of oversupply of orthoptists in some geographical areas is incorrect
- The full vulnerability and 'at 'risk' status cannot be fully understood.

I cannot therefore stress enough the urgency of getting our ESR data correct and would like to provide you with a guide to questions you should ask of your human resources workforce team

1. Identify who has been assigned an **Allied Health Professional** staff group in your organisation – the area relates to the subjective code used on ESR to determine the regulatory or other family status (an example of an area is Allied Health Professional, Health Care Scientist, Nursing and Midwifery, Additional Clinical Support)
2. Ask the workforce team to identify who is coded under the occupational code of **orthoptics / optics**
3. Identify from this information who does not have a registration with the HCPC
4. Compare with your actual registered **orthoptists**
5. Ensure the workforce that are not orthoptists are flagged and reassigned to their correct area

The title that you see on your view of ESR when you look at the staff members In your hierarchy can have a local job title – most will say orthoptist if they are employed as an orthoptist but might have the level of

orthoptist such as band 5 orthoptist, band 6 specialist orthoptist band 7 advanced orthoptist as these are in line with the job profile terminology.

We are aware that other health care professionals often optometrists or ophthalmic technicians or assistant staff have been grouped with orthoptists as you may manage those staff or they are in your division or directorate. You will not know that the 'area' and job role is incorrect as their title will show their function within your team.

It is also important when advertising a role that the HR team are fully aware of the area or staff group and the job role reflects the AHP and Orthoptist accurately. The confusing thing is that orthoptics has an occupational code which reads orthoptics/optics and so essentially anyone related with 'optics' may be picked up in this group. BIOS is addressing this with NHSi and NHS digital.

It would be extremely useful if you could contact me with the numbers of non-orthoptists you have found in your data so I can report the changes to the NHSi team and HEE. I have cleansed and requested reassignment for about 20 staff from incorrect ESR reporting and continue to find more. It makes a huge difference.

Many thanks for your support and I look forward to hearing your successes of data cleansing

Yours



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