

Advanced practice in the Allied Health Professions (AHPs)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Chief Allied Health Professions Officers in each of the four UK countries have collaborated to produce this statement in order to provide clarity for leaders and decision makers about how advanced practice for allied health professions is defined, regulated and governed.

2. Statement on Advanced Practice

Whatever the specific profession, role and context, all advanced practice AHPs will have the necessary advanced-level capabilities across all four pillars of practice needed to provide safe, high quality, holistic care with people, their families and carers.

All AHPs, including those working in advanced practice roles, are statutorily regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) or General Osteopathic Council (GOsC).¹

Robust employer governance is central to the safe and effective employment, utilisation and deployment of advanced practice AHPs.

3. Defining advanced practice for AHPs

The following provides a high-level, common definition agreed across the four UK countries.

- 3.1 Advanced Practice in allied health professions involves complex decision-making, underpinned by a post-registration master's level award or equivalent undertaken by an experienced practitioner that encompasses all four pillars of practice: clinical practice, leadership and management, education, and research. It is delivered by skilled and experienced registered health and care professionals who exercise significant autonomy, judgement and responsibility in their roles.
- 3.2 Advanced practitioners manage complex care in partnership with individuals, families and carers, analysing and synthesising complex problems, often as part of multi-professional teams. They handle clinical risk and uncertainty across significant areas of work, in various settings, developing innovative solutions to expedite access to care, optimise peoples' experiences, drive population health and prevention and improve outcomes

¹ Osteopaths are considered AHPs in England only

4. Regulation of AHP advanced practice

- 4.1 All AHPs, including those working in advanced practice roles, are statutorily regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) or General Osteopathic Council (GOsC).² AHPs must hold registration with the appropriate regulator and meet the regulatory standards applicable to their registration and practice.
- 4.2 The regulators for allied health professionals have assessed the risks of advanced practice and consider that existing regulatory arrangements are in place to manage any risks which arise from advanced practice.

5. Advanced practice governance

- 5.1 Robust employer governance is central to the safe, effective employment and utilisation of advanced practice AHPs. Specific governance requirements and arrangements will vary between the four countries of the UK, but there should always be clear lines of leadership oversight and accountability for the advanced practice AHP workforce. This should include leadership oversight from an Executive Director of AHP / Chief AHP, or equivalent.

6. More information

- 6.1 See Annex A for more information about advanced practice in the AHP workforce across the four countries of the UK.

² Osteopaths are considered AHPs in England only