

# The Future of the Prosthetic and Orthotic Workforce in England: One year on.



# The Future of the Prosthetic and Orthotic Workforce in England: One year on.

## Contents

	Page
<b>Executive Summary</b>	5
Workforce supply	5
Core curriculum development	6
Apprenticeships	6
E-learning	6
Utilising the wider workforce effectively	7
Workforce planning	7
Communication and engagement	7
Conclusion	7
<b>Introduction</b>	8
<b>Background</b>	9
Who are Orthotists?	9
Who are Prosthetists?	9
How many Prosthetists and Orthotists are there?	9
How are Prosthetists and Orthotists trained?	9
How is the training funded?	10
How many are trained each year?	10
<b>Outline of progress and next steps</b>	12
Communication and engagement	13

<b>Workforce Supply</b>		14
	Awareness of profession/career profile	14
	World of Work (WOW) careers TV project	15
	Further careers opportunities	17
	Work Experience	19
	Strategic interventions in Health Education Disciplines (SIHED) Programme	19
	The Year of Engineering project	20
	Return to Practice (RTP)	22
<b>Workforce Developments Prior to Registration as a Prosthetist and Orthotist (Pre-registration)</b>		24
	Core Curriculum Development	24
	Entry routes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level 6 (BSc) apprenticeships</li> <li>• Level 6 degree apprenticeship</li> <li>• Level 6 apprenticeship development milestones</li> </ul>	25 26 26
	Level 3 and 5 apprenticeships	27
	Level 3 apprenticeship	27
	Level 5 apprenticeship	28
	Developing and supporting the learning environment	30
	E-learning package	30
<b>Workforce development Post-registration</b>		33
	Preceptorship	33
	Utilising the wider workforce effectively	34
	Support for Service Delivery	34

	Scoping exercise to explore the provision of Prosthetic and Orthotic skills within other AHP professions	34
<b>Advanced clinical practice</b>		36
<b>Level 7 apprenticeship</b>		38
<b>Workforce planning</b>		38
<b>Acknowledgements</b>		40
<b>Appendix 1: Summary of future actions</b>		41

## Executive Summary

In 2017, the report 'The Future of the Orthotic and Prosthetic Workforce in England' was published by Health Education England (HEE). The report was written following an HEE education summit, which looked at the current issues facing the Prosthetic and Orthotic (P and O) workforce. This summit, held in January 2017, was attended by delegates representing patients, clinicians, NHS England, NHS Improvement, Health Education England and various other bodies, including 34 NHS providers and 11 commercial providers of P and O services.

This current report describes the progress made one year on, towards improving the service.

A summary of the areas looked at in this report follows below:

### Workforce supply

There has historically been a low number of applications to undergraduate places to study P and O. Therefore, work to raise awareness of the profession has been essential:

- Health Careers website – all information has been updated and developed.
- Health Careers has recently collaborated on a scheme aimed at schools, called the World of Work (WOW) TV project. This has produced a TV programme, that has introduced the roles to approximately 18,000 school children. This project was run as a pilot and has the potential to be expanded to a much wider audience.
- HEE is working with other organisations, such as 'Medic portal' and 'Inspiring Futures' to help raise awareness of the profession.
- The P and O workforce will be able to tap into Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) funding offered by the Strategic Interventions in Health Education Disciplines (SIHED), which is a three-year, £3 million programme of work to support higher education in small, specialist healthcare disciplines that are experiencing difficulty in recruiting and retaining students.
- The British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists (BAPO) are engaging in promoting the awareness of P and O within Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) settings.
- The HEE/BAPO and other stakeholders will produce further materials, such as career presentations, which can be accessed and delivered by P and O professionals with schools, colleges and community groups.
- BAPO and service user groups will explore the value of developing impact stories from elite athletes/Olympians/veterans.

In addition, HEE has been looking at work experience and there is currently a work stream looking at how potential opportunities can be created.

Finally, promotion of the AHP return to practice scheme is ongoing. HEE, BAPO and NHS providers will continue to support the identification of and upskilling of individuals to re-join the Healthcare Professions Council (HCPC) to re-register as a P and O.

### Core curriculum development

A core curriculum for all undergraduate Prosthetic and Orthotic courses is due to be published later in 2018. This will build on the 'Scope of Practice' and 'Competency Framework' documents which have already been published. These were produced after extensive work commissioned by BAPO and supported by HEE.

### Apprenticeships

There has been much work carried out in developing P and O apprenticeships at levels 3 and 6.

At level 3 support worker/technician roles have been created, which can support the HCPC-registered, qualified P and Os.

At level 5 the Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeship Standard is being implemented. However, no specific work has been undertaken at this stage to utilise this specifically for the P and O workforce or to develop a specific level 5 apprenticeship standard for P and O. It is envisaged that the level 3 role will allow for access and progression to the level 6 apprenticeship, ensuring a clear pathway for the development of the P and O workforce.

A level 7 multi-professional advanced practice apprenticeship has also been created, which will ensure new opportunities across the P and O profession.

It is important to keep attracting people into the role, ensuring that the Advanced Clinical Practice (ACP) opportunities are available to P and Os, as well as to other AHPs. This will help to realise innovative models of service delivery, as well as making the professions more attractive.

### E-learning

HEE has commissioned and launched a pilot e-learning resource on the e-learning for healthcare platform to support current learners and clinical educators during clinical placement experiences and to support preceptorship for newly qualified P and Os. This resource has been developed by the University of Salford and has been oversighted professionally by BAPO.

## Utilising the wider workforce effectively

There has been a scoping exercise to explore the core skills of other Allied Health Professional (AHPs) to ascertain if there is potential for some areas of P and O roles to be undertaken by other AHPs. The conclusion from this exercise has been that, although there are some similarities between the AHPs, there are also some significant areas of knowledge and skills that are specific to P and O. Therefore, further work needs to be done to determine whether other professions can support the delivery of P and O management. This includes the need to explore educational programmes to support professional skills development.

## Workforce Planning

HEE has worked with NHS Digital to ensure that the occupation codes for P and O have been included in their NHS workforce data figures. The P and O workforce includes a significant number of professionals who work in commercial organisations, and further work is still required to understand wider P and O workforce, vacancies and staffing. A data sharing agreement is being developed between all providers of NHS commissioned services and needs to be communicated and actioned appropriately by all employers of P and Os.

## Communication and engagement

A new communications strategy will be put in place to ensure that all P and O stakeholders are kept up-to-date with the latest information relating to the workforce.

## Conclusion

One year on from the last report, the majority of the actions from the planning event have been achieved. New actions are set out in this document, which will continue to support and develop the stabilisation of the workforce.

## Introduction

In July 2014 NHS England commissioned NHS Quality Observatory to undertake a review of orthotics services. The findings of the review were shared at a roundtable event in March 2015 and the key issues and learning from the event were included in the report *Improving the Quality of Orthotic Services in England* published in November 2015<sup>1</sup>.

In 2017, HEE responded to this, with the publication of a workforce report “*The future of the prosthetics and orthotic workforce in England*”. This report summarised the outcomes of a Workforce Summit run in January 2017 and sets out several actions. The Workforce Summit brought together the majority of NHS and Commercial providers, people with lived experience, educators and academics alongside HEE, NHSE and NHSI.

This document will report on the actions to date and outline further plans required to support future Prosthetic and Orthotic (P and O) workforce development. Actions set out were co-produced in the tone of the education summit, which modelled the NHS constitution by valuing the input of all and placing people and populations at the heart of what we do.

Prosthetics and orthotics is an exciting, challenging and diverse allied health profession which has a relatively small workforce spanning NHS, commercial, military and charitable sectors.

This profession has faced and will continue to face several workforce challenges but good progress has been made and there remains great commitment from all sectors including patient representatives, to continue to consolidate and develop the P and O workforce to ensure sustainable and quality service delivery.

The British Association of Prosthetic and Orthotics (BAPO) continues to provide support and vision to lead the profession and has worked collaboratively with HEE to plan and action a strategy for future P AND O growth.

<sup>1</sup>NHS England (2015) *Improving the Quality of Orthotic Services in England*. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2015/11/orthcs-final-rep.pdf>

## Background

It must be noted that a significant proportion of the prosthetic and orthotic workforce are employed by commercial providers in England, providing NHS commissioned services. It is acknowledged that ensuring engagement and communication with all stakeholders requires a different approach.

### Who are Orthotists?

Orthotists are autonomous registered practitioners who provide gait analysis and engineering solutions to patients with problems and conditions of the neuro, muscular and skeletal systems. Their qualifications make them competent to design, manufacture and provide orthoses (such as insoles, braces, splints, callipers, footwear, spinal jackets and helmets) that modify the structural or functional characteristics of the patient's neuro-muscular and skeletal systems. These then enable patients to mobilise, eliminate gait deviations, reduce falls, reduce pain, prevent and facilitate healing of ulcers. In addition, orthotists help people recover from, or avoid injury, or live with lifelong conditions.

### Who are Prosthetists?

Prosthetists are autonomous registered practitioners who provide gait analysis and engineering solutions to patients with limb loss. Their qualifications make them competent to design and provide prostheses that replicate the structural or functional characteristic of the patient's absent limb.

### How many Prosthetists and Orthotists are there?

'Prosthetist' and 'Orthotist' are protected titles in the UK and there are now 1,051 Prosthetists and Orthotists registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) (18/04/18), compared to 1,061 in June 2017. Of these approximately 500<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> are estimated to be working as orthotists across the UK.

### How are Prosthetists and Orthotists trained?

They are extensively trained at undergraduate level in mechanics, bio-mechanics and material science along with anatomy, physiology and pathophysiology and emerge as dual registered as P and O with a BSc in prosthetics and orthotics.



<sup>1</sup> British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists (2015) *Improving the Quality of Orthotic Services in England*.

<sup>2</sup> All Party Associate Parliamentary Group on Limb Loss (2014) *Campaign for More Orthotists*.

Where are they trained?

Currently there is only one university in England (and one other across the wider UK) offering a Prosthetics and Orthotics programme:

- University of Salford offer a 3-year BSc (Hons) Prosthetics and Orthotics. (Moved from 4-year BSc (Hons) in 2012/13).

NB. The University of Strathclyde offers a 4-year BSc (Hons) Prosthetics and Orthotics in Scotland.

## How is the training funded?

Since the comprehensive spending review (CSR) in England and its implementation in September 2017, funding for P and O education costs have moved over to the Student Loan Company and are no longer supported by NHS bursaries and commissioned by HEE.

## How many are trained each year?

Currently approximately 30 Orthotists and Prosthetists are trained each year in England. Prior to the spending review HEE commissioned 30 places per year. Since removal of the NHS bursary scheme, there has been concerns around a reduction in the numbers of those applying for places at HEIs in England to study P and O.

In 2017-18, only 28 students enrolled to study P and O at the only UK P and O education provider in England; five of these students were identified during clearing.

There has been a year on year reduction in applications at the same point compared to previous years and the HEI entered clearing in 2017/18 for the first time in many years in an attempt to recruit sufficient students (see figure 2). However, there are many confounding factors which may have influenced this, including removal of the bursary, Brexit and a changing age profile of the population with an overall reduction in the number of 18-year-olds applying to university.

Academic year	Applications	Offers	Accepted offers
2017-18	90	50	15
2018-19	73 (22% reduction)	61 (22% rise)	12 (19% reduction)

Figure 2 Recruitment for P and O undergraduate places in England on April 1.

Overall there have been a 19% reduction in student applicants in 2018/9 compared to the same time in the previous year, however more early offers have been made to appropriate applicants (22% increase), in an attempt to secure those students earlier. The number who have accepted offers are reduced compared to this time last year (20%).

Potential students will be waiting to make decisions and not all those accepting offers will take them up due to various reasons. Following removal of the commissioning cap there is a target of to recruit 35 students for 2018/19 and further students will be sought during clearing.

Many other health professions courses are also finding challenges to recruitment including learning disability nursing, therapy radiography, orthoptics and podiatry. It is important to consider that as many other similar courses will enter clearing for the first time due to under-recruitment, the competition for suitable students will be higher.

Prior to the removal of the NHS bursary, the P and O programme received applications in excess of the required numbers from high calibre applicants and a selection process was used. The course had not entered clearing the in the three years prior to the removal of bursaries and some unsuccessful students were offered places on the P and O programme for the following year.

HEE is working collaboratively with the office for students (OFS) to monitor small and vulnerable professions to ensure that courses remain viable during this transition phase post CSR and with the national downturn in 18-year-olds, and the uncertainty of Brexit.

This programme will be monitored closely in collaboration with the HEI provider and any new entrants to the market, to ensure that the advent of apprenticeships does not destabilise existing undergraduate provision.

A generic one-year health foundation entry course will commence in 2018 at Salford University, which will prepare students for entry onto health degree courses including P and O which may increase the numbers of applicants in future years.

Academic entry tariffs will also be lowered to try and facilitate appropriate students to enter P and O education programmes however it is important that students have the academic ability to complete the course.

Prosthetists and Orthotists continue to be included on the Migration Advisory Committee Shortage Occupation List<sup>3</sup>.

Future Action	Responsibility	Timescale
HEE will work collaboratively with the office for students to monitor course uptake and the continued impact post CSR and the impact of the apprenticeship over time.	HEE OFS	Ongoing 6 monthly review

<sup>3</sup> HM Government (2017) *United Kingdom Shortage Occupation List*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-k-shortage-occupation-list>

## Outline of progress and next steps

Several actions were laid out in the initial P and O workforce review. These previous actions are presented with an update on progress to date with next steps identified for future work. Where actions have been met these have been stated as achieved. Where further work is needed these have been reconsidered as part of future action points. Workforce issues can be considered as those pertaining to; supply into the profession, pre-registration (during training) and post-registration as outlined in figure 2.

Great strides have been made in the pursuit of securing and developing the P and O workforce, however there is still much work to do.

*“The Orthotics Campaign is delighted to see the comprehensive range of strategies that this collaboration is implementing, with support from Health Education England. Sadly, the patient experience of orthotic care has been seriously impacted over recent years by a lack of qualified and experienced orthotists. It is encouraging to see the level of commitment and hard work from all involved to address this, so patients shall be able to access the care of compassionate, skilled orthotists in the future.”*

Rebecca Loo, Service User Representative, The Orthotics Campaign.

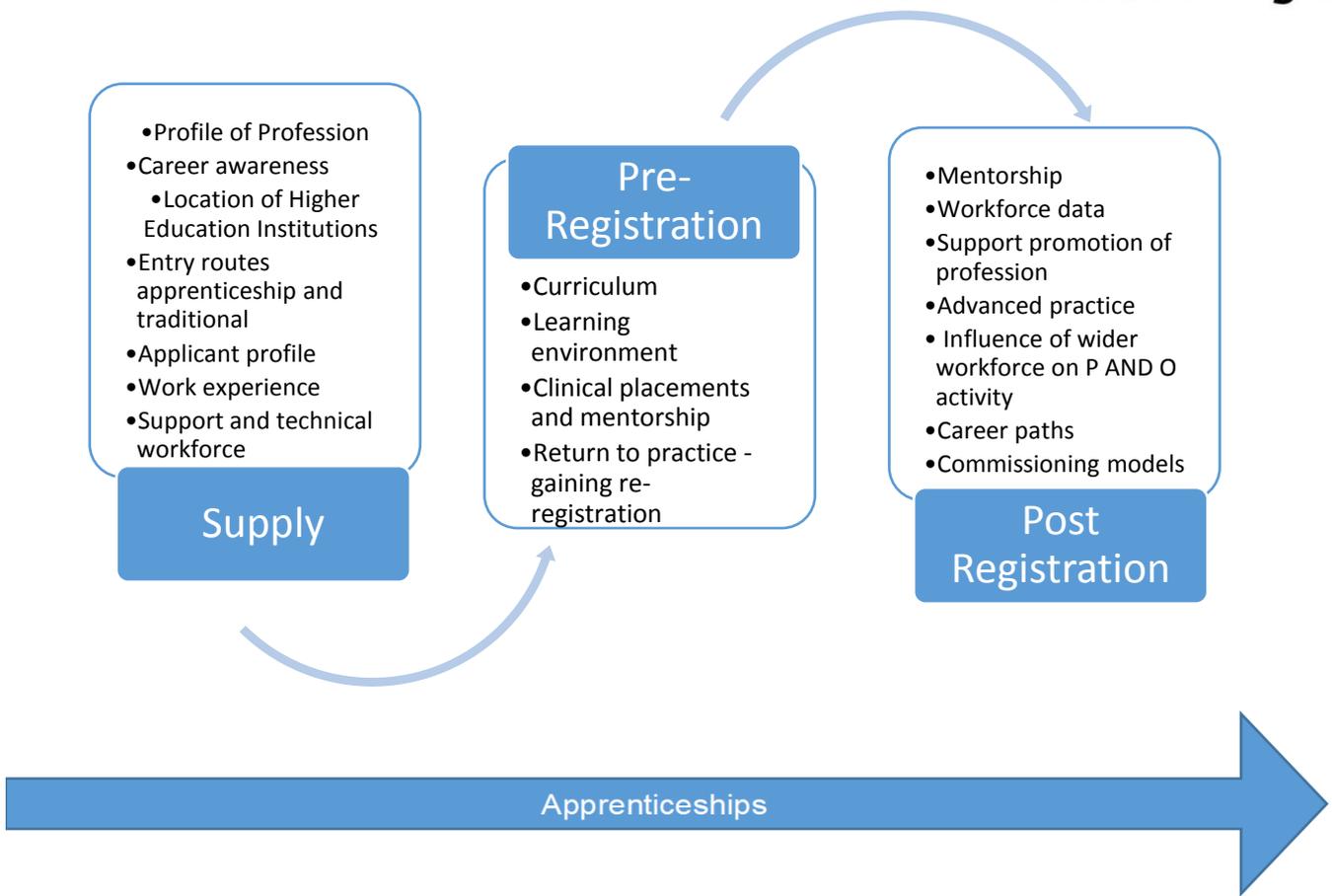


Figure 2: Factors identified as Influencing P and O Workforce.

## Communication and Engagement

Throughout all the work done and consultation phases there it has been evident that there is a clear need for improved communication between all P and O stakeholders. Communication of workforce developments must be consistently disseminated through all parts of the P and O workforce including NHS, commercial, education, service-user representatives and charitable sectors to ensure the whole P and O workforce is informed and able to engage and collaborate.

**NEXT STEPS**

Future Action	Responsibility	Timescale
HEE will work with BAPO and commercial, service user and NHS representatives to ensure a clear communication strategy is in place to disseminate information in a comprehensive and structured way.	HEE, NHS representatives, BAPO, Service user and commercial sector	Oct 2018

**Workforce supply**

**Awareness of profession/career profile**

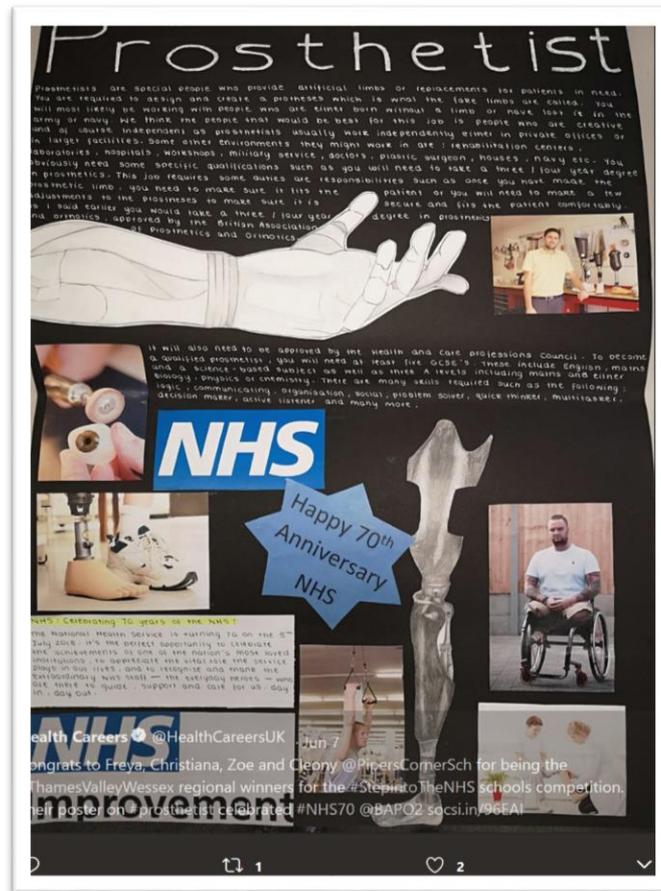
Action	Owner	Completion Date
BAPO will work with Health Careers to create updated content to be uploaded on the Health Careers website and included in any future Health Careers publications.	BAPO/Health Careers	May 2017  ACHIEVED

Much work has been done to raise awareness of P and O as profession and as an exciting and rewarding career choice. Health Careers has worked with BAPO to create and update resources for both their ‘Health careers’ website and ‘Step into the NHS’ websites, both aimed at increasing knowledge and awareness of all health professions including P and O.

HEE commissioned an Allied Health Profession (AHP) digital audit to better understand where people were directed to when searching for AHP careers or specific AHP careers information. The Health Careers website was found to be the top ranking, non-sponsored UK website content when searching for P and O roles.

During the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018, Health Careers had 23,995 views of its pages relating to P and O careers with 71% of those viewing pages relating to the prosthetic and orthotic roles with the average viewer spending over one and a half minutes on the pages. Some 179 went on to view the real-life case story video for P and O.

The 'Step into the NHS' website recently hosted a [competition for Primary Schools](#) and of the regional winners designed a poster featuring the role of prosthetist (see figure 3).



<https://twitter.com/HealthCareersUK/status/1004637889207132160>

Figure 3: Winning regional poster featuring the role of prosthetist.

## World of Work (WOW) careers TV Project

HEE provided the health segment of an innovative health careers project. The new [WOW careers](#) pilot TV channel was streamed live into 350 schools on 2 May 2018 and is now available to view more widely on demand via YouTube. This unique project was sponsored by City and Guilds, The Edge Foundation, the BandCE charitable foundation and a number of national employer organisations included HEE, as well as the Local Enterprise Partnership network.

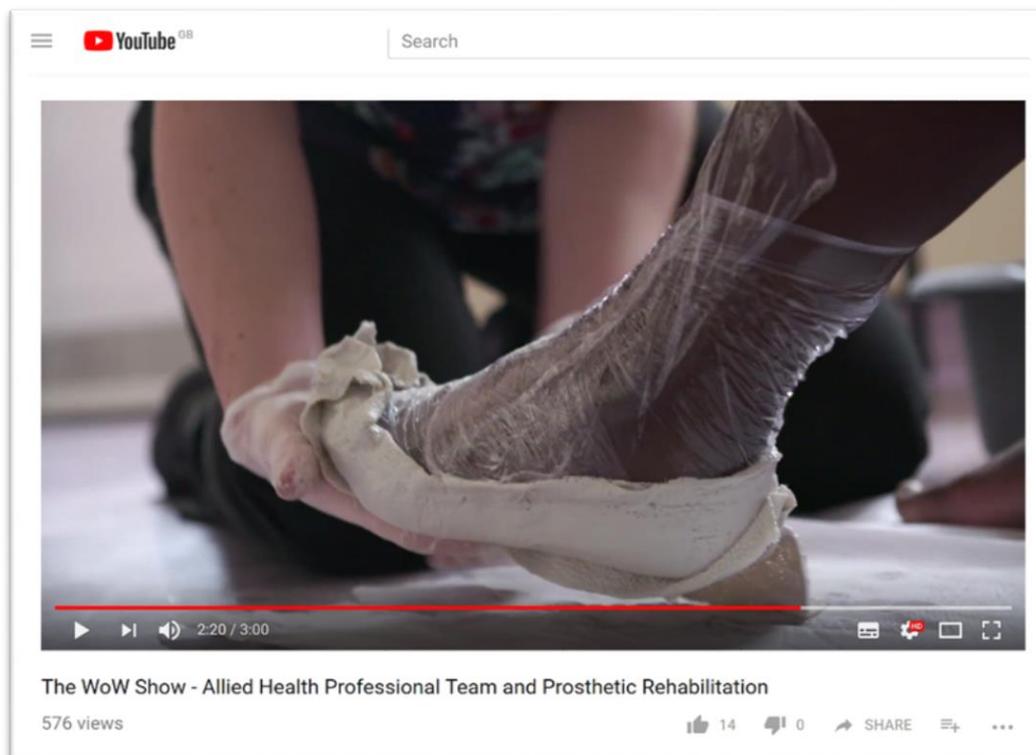


Many employers including those in health subjects like P and O, face real challenges in recruiting young people and this channel is aimed at breaking down the barriers between the classroom and the workplace in a way that excites students and encourages them to explore the opportunities for the future.

HEE has supported this project to promote the AHP, mental health and learning disability workforce. Prosthetists and orthotists are specifically featured within this film. The film features a bilateral lower limb young veteran amputee discussing his experiences of receiving both prosthetic and orthotic treatment. He talks about the value and difference it has made to his life.

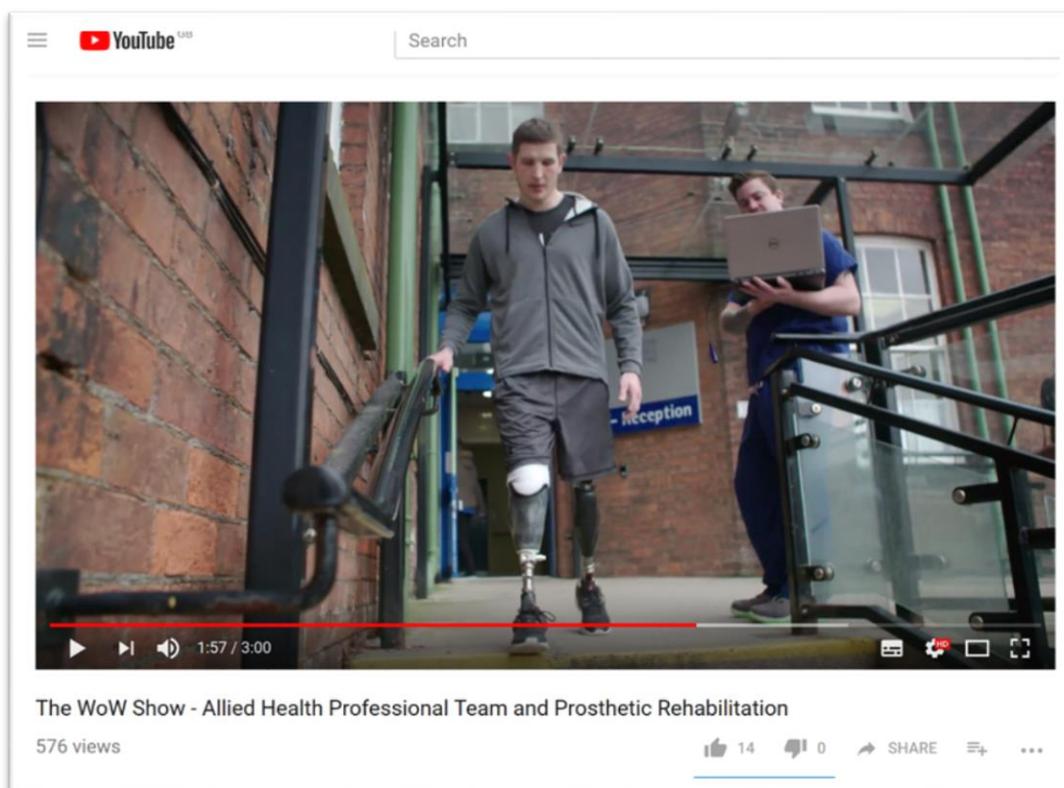
The programme aims to promote the profession to a younger audience to inspire them about aspects of the career such as care, compassion and making difference, whilst engaging with science and engineering concepts.

[View the video below.](#)



This pilot has included approximately 18,000 pupils in Cambridgeshire, Cornwall and London. The films and support materials are available online so can be accessed by the public, including those seeking careers advice, parents and professionals. It is being promoted by BAPO and other NHS and commercial organisations and schools.

Supporting information about P and O careers was provided as part of teachers' packs and lesson plans. A robust evaluation has been built around the world of work careers project which is planned for completion in June 2018. Specific Information from the pilot relating to P and O opportunities will be evaluated and used to inform future careers work.



If successful, the pilot may lead to future commissioned, full 30-minute career programmes and HEE will continue to work with WOW careers TV to scope opportunities for specialist programmes, focussing on health careers which could include P and O (as well as support and technical roles) and encompassing both traditional entry and apprenticeship routes.

### Further careers opportunities

HEE is working with 'The Medic Portal' (<https://www.themedicportal.com>) which is accessed by 750,000 people per year including young people, school leavers, parents, teachers and careers advisors who are specifically interested in understanding careers in medicine. HEE will work with stakeholders to create a specific page on the role of a P and O which will sit within a new dedicated web area on the medic portal website to promote AHP careers.

There is a great opportunity to promote wider health careers which may be better suited to some individuals. P and O careers will also be promoted as part of wider AHP careers at events hosted by the medic portal.

There remains a clear need to continue to focus on building and sharing visible and engaging careers information profile for P and O within the HEE health careers online presence and maximising its value. There are also opportunities to develop and capitalise on commercial sector and user perspective engagement work to promote P and O career routes including working with schools and colleges, charities and community groups.

There is an opportunity to develop resources that can be used by all P and Os to engage with local schools and colleges to maximise opportunities to promote P and O careers. Examples included 'Inspiring the future' ([www.inspiringthefuture.org](http://www.inspiringthefuture.org)) which provides opportunities for AHPs and P and Os to register to give one hour of time to talk in a local school about their career.



## Work Experience

It is acknowledged that there are limited opportunities for young people, as well as others wishing to enter the health professions, to gain quality work experience. This work experience needs to help give insight into the value and impact of the P and O practitioner and the support workforce. HEE is beginning work to identify work experience opportunities, both through direct working with service providers, as well as through specialist or simulated opportunities or events to expose individuals to the day to day life and work of P and Os and service user champions. Work experience needs to be provided at all levels for school students, and mature entrants. Work is planned with employers; university outreach and University Technical Colleges and careers engagement was highlighted as part of the Chief Allied Health Professions Officers Conference in June 2019.

## Strategic Interventions in Health Education Disciplines (SIHED) Programme

In March 2018, a £3 million programme of work was launched by what was the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) which is now the Office for Students (OFS), to support higher education in small, specialist healthcare disciplines that are having trouble in recruiting or retaining students including P and O. The SIHED programme is expected to run for three years, starting in 2017-18, with a budget of £1 million per year.

The SIHED programme aims to:

- increase awareness of allied health disciplines
- increase understanding of and demand for small specialist allied health disciplines including P and O
- strengthen and diversify the delivery of the small and specialist disciplines including P and O

In 2017-18, the priority activities of the programme include:

- Recruitment of a fixed-term role to increase capacity for **prosthetics and orthotics work placements, facilitating** more students to study P and O. This role will also coordinate the development of apprenticeship routes for prosthetics and orthotics, which should increase the candidate pool for this discipline
- Delivering a **marketing and communications campaign** to support student recruitment to small and specialist allied health professions, including P and O from June 2018 onwards
- Developing **marketing materials** to support recruitment to the disciplines in scope, from spring 2018 to early summer 2018
- Appointing a P and O **outreach and communications officer** to support the development and raise the profile of P and O as a career choice.
- Supporting a wider healthcare and allied health **professional recruitment campaign**.
- **Evaluating the project** and sharing outcomes from autumn 2018.

HEE is connected to this work to ensure it works in synergy with other HEE work and to maximise impact and avoid duplication.

## The Year of Engineering project

P and Os will be joining forces with government and industry to give thousands of young people inspiring experiences of engineering, as part of a year-long campaign to tackle the engineering skills gap and widen the pool of young people who join the profession.

In November 2017, the government announced that 2018 will be the Year of Engineering #YoE, a national campaign to increase awareness and understanding of what engineers do among young people aged 7-16, their parents and their teachers. The campaign is encouraging young people from all backgrounds to take a closer look at engineering, challenging stereotypes and showcasing the variety and creativity of this forward-looking and innovative sector. BAPO are supporting the campaign on social media focussing on the planned monthly themes. They have also worked with the consulting firm for #YoE. BAPO plan to continue to be involved in for the remainder of the year promoting P and O in the wider STEM area.

Year of Engineering partners are highlighting some of the different ways that individuals and organisations can #inspireanengineer on social media. The Year of Engineering launched in January 2018. Further information can be found at the Year of Engineering partner website or follow the Year of Engineering campaign on Twitter.

Further work needs to be undertaken with the commercial sector and service user representatives to maximise the profile of the year of engineering project.

## NEXT STEPS

To sustain a wider range of entry routes, it is essential that we raise the profile of P and O across the wider public population, promoting and championing the innovative and life-changing work P and Os do and the many opportunities it offers for a diverse and fulfilling career. Much work has been done to raise the profile of P and O as a career across young people and mature students through several ongoing projects. This needs to be continued and developed, through working with the Health Careers team, as well as with service user representatives and commercial sector organisations. We must capitalise on the drive to develop STEM subjects and the greater media coverage of para sport and veteran support such as the Para-Olympics, Para-Commonwealth games and the Invictus games.

We must also look to provide greater opportunities for individuals to gain access to high quality work experience, either directly within the NHS and commercial workforce, or through specific events and opportunities to expose and engage people to the roles and practices of P and Os in supporting people to live more fulfilling and independent lives.

Future Action	Responsibility	Timescale
To raise awareness of P and O as an opportunity within engineering and STEM settings	BAPO/Employers	April 2019
Explore value of developing impact stories from elite athletes/ Olympians / veterans to illustrate impact of P and O.	BAPO/Service users groups	Dec 2019
Explore the provision of quality work experience opportunities for potential entrants to P and O education.	HEE	April 2019
Create careers presentation materials which can be accessed and delivered by P and O professionals with schools, colleges and community groups to raise awareness of P and O careers	HEE/BAPO/ Stakeholders	April 2019

## Return to Practice (RTP)

Another route to increase workforce supply of P and Os is to encourage those who have left the profession to return to practice and seek re-registration.

In August 2017, the Government, in alliance with the Department of Health and Social Care and Health Education England (HEE), announced an initiative to support Allied Health Professions (AHP) and Healthcare Scientists (HCS) to return to work, including prosthetists and orthotists.

Following a successful pilot in the East Midlands by HEE, the programme has been expanded across all of England. The aim of the programme is to support AHPs and HCSs to return to the work place. The programme can support AHP and HCS whose HCPC registration has lapsed, or those who have not registered with the HCPC since qualifying over five years.

The programme allows individuals to return to the register. It is not open to overseas registrants who have not previously been registered with the HCPC or returnees with fitness/conditions which mean they cannot re-register. This programme is ideal for any prosthetists or orthotists looking to return to practice.

The programme is looking to signpost returnees with placements with potential clinical providers. This could lead to employment opportunities. Both returnees and providers have access to resources of financial support and advice.

Building upon what was learnt from the East Midland project, returnees are given access to past and present returners for support. The programme continues to look for providers/employers to support clinicians, with clinical placement days to allow them to update their skills and knowledge in line with the HCPC guidance of return to practice.

The RTP programme has a target to welcome 300 AHP and HCS returnees back on the HCPC register by March 2019. Currently there has been one P and O who has enquired to take part in the programme but no P and Os have registered on the return to practice project. BAPO are already working to promote the project, however more work must be done with service providers and key P and O stakeholders to promote the project widely, to identify potential individuals who would like support to return to practice and return onto the HCPC register.

Once P and Os have successfully returned to practice, a case study publication will be designed as per other AHP professions to further promote the RTP project. The RTP initiative must be disseminated overtly through new robust communications channels.

### NEXT STEPS

Return to practice is another route whereby we can increase workforce supply and continued work with the return to practice project (RTP). The BAPO, as well as employers will be crucial in identifying possible returnees and placement providers, and in nurturing and supporting individuals to upskill to re-join to the HCPC register. HEE will monitor numbers closely and will work with the HEE careers team and the BAPO to promote this project.

Future Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Ensure clear communication and promotion of the RTP programme across P and O workforce using robust communication plan	BAPO / Employers/ RTP project lead	April 2019.

**Workforce Developments Prior to Registration as a Prosthetist and Orthotist (pre-registration).**

**Core Curriculum Development**

Action	Owner	Completion date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BAPO will work in collaboration with employers, higher education institutes and the International Society of Prosthetics and Orthotics to review, and where appropriate, update and standardise the undergraduate core curriculum.</li> </ul>	BAPO	March 2018  ACHIEVED

In 2016 BAPO commissioned the development of a core curriculum for prosthetic and orthotic undergraduate courses, which was supported by HEE. The remit of the project was to develop a Scope of Practice document for new graduates entering the workplace and from that establish a core competencies framework which would clarify the key skills that those practitioners must possess. Following on from that work, a core curriculum has been developed which will address any skills gaps identified previously, thereby better equipping future graduates for the world of work.

Through a combination of telephone interviews, focus groups and questionnaires, over 40% of the new graduates from 2014 through to 2016 provided feedback on the areas of P and O practice that they felt were either not covered, or sufficiently covered on both their course and/or placement. In a similar way, feedback was also provided by a number of Practice Placement Educators. This information provided the basis for both the Scope of Practice document and also the Competency Framework document which were produced.

The Scope of Practice Document provides a benchmark for the knowledge, skill and attributes of a Level 5 Prosthetic and Orthotic Practitioner. It is essential that all new graduates ensure that they are working within their scope of practice in a way that meets the standards expected of them and that they do not pose any danger to the public or themselves.

The Competency Framework further expands on the knowledge, communication and clinical skills and professional attributes that are considered essential for their clinical practice.

Using these two documents as a foundation, work is currently underway to develop a core curriculum for all undergraduate Prosthetic and Orthotic courses and this will be published after Spring 2018.

## NEXT STEPS

The creation of a new core curriculum document should be used to underpin the education of P and Os across all routes, to ensure the development of a contemporary, safe and skilled workforce which is fit for future practice and delivery of modern and innovative P and O services across sectors.

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Development of a core curriculum for all pre-registration P AND O courses	BAPO	April 2019.

## Entry Routes; Level 6 (BSc) apprenticeships

Action	Owner	Completion Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health Education England have commissioned Skills for Health to work in collaboration with HEIs, employers and BAPO to support the submission of an expression of interest (EOI) to develop a Trailblazer for a Level 6 BSc Apprenticeship for Prosthetics and Orthotics.</li> </ul>	Employers via the Trailblazer chairs	EOI submitted 27 April 2017 Re-submission of amended EOI July 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of an apprenticeship standard, end-point assessment plan and costing schedule.</li> </ul>	Trailblazer Group	Development of a Degree Level Apprenticeship Standard for Prosthetics and Orthotics approved August 2017  ACHIEVED  Anticipated completion September 2018  ACHIEVED

## Level 6 degree apprenticeship

A trailblazer for the Degree Apprenticeship for Prosthetics and Orthotics was formed to explore the opportunities for a degree apprenticeship in Prosthetics and Orthotics at level 6.

In April 2017 an expression of interest was made for P and O to pursue the development of the apprenticeship. Skills for Health and the Institute for Apprenticeships (IFA) provided leadership throughout this process.

The trailblazer group represented both NHS and commercial sectors, patient representatives, HEIs and BAPO. An estimated 80% of the relevant workforce was represented on the trailblazer group. Commercial employer representation included Opcare, Steeper, Blatchford, Halo Medical, Crispins, Peacocks, Taycare, Trulife, Ortho Europe and NHS employer representation included Lancashire teaching hospital NHS Trust, Robert Jones Agnes Hunt NHS and Isle of Wight NHS.

The P and O Trailblazers patient representation was provided by Steve McNeice and Deborah Bent from the Limbless Association. Higher Education Institutions also contributed; including Salford University, Staffordshire University, Southbank University London, Strathclyde University and Glasgow Clyde College. Meetings with other HEI's were also ongoing to establish opportunities for pursuing the interest they expressed at the educational summit.

Level 6 Apprenticeship Development Milestones	
Aug 2017	Agreement between HEE and Skills for Health for agreement to develop the degree apprenticeship.
Oct 2017	Initial drafting of standard
Dec 2017	Final day of the consultation for the level 6 Degree Apprenticeship
Jan 2018	Further work to respond to consultation
	Submission and sign-off standard
May 2018	Submission of end-point assessment

The next steps include final sign off from Institute of Apprenticeships which is expected July 2018.

Implementation discussions are ongoing including to explore provision of programmes for both level 3 (technician) and level 6 (degree) apprenticeship programmes in partnership with UK universities. Courses will then be subject to HCPC approval.

## Level 3 and 5 apprenticeships.

Action	Owner	Completion Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health Education England will support BAPO to work in collaboration with employers to develop the strategic fit between the new P and O technician training programme starting in April 2017 and the current Level 5 Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeship Standard.</li> </ul>	BAPO	April 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following an AHP level 3 standard gap analysis workshop undertaken on 28 February 2017 between Health Education England, Skills for Health, BAPO and the other AHP professional bodies, it was agreed that the prosthetic and orthotic support worker roles would fit within the Level 3 Senior Health Care Support Worker (AHP Option) Apprenticeship Standard<sup>4</sup>. As a result of the decision made at this meeting BAPO agreed to formally respond to the Level 3 Diploma consultation (which ran from 6 February 2017 until the 6 March 2017) evidencing the training requirements for Level 3 prosthetic and orthotic support workers and offering expert support with the development of required content.</li> </ul>	BAPO	April 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BAPO will also support profession wide conversations on the broader opportunities that effective skill mix affords patients and employers.</li> </ul>	BAPO	March 2018

## Level 3 apprenticeship

In December 2017 an expression of interest was made by a P and O trailblazer group to explore the development of a P and O technician development at level 3. A standard has been developed, submitted and approved and the group are awaiting sign-off on the end-point assessment.

<sup>4</sup> HM Government (2016) *Apprenticeship standard: senior healthcare support worker*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-standard-senior-healthcare-support-worker>

## Level 5 apprenticeship

The level 5 Assistant Practitioner Apprenticeship Standard is already published and being implemented. No specific work has been undertaken at this stage to utilise this specifically for the P and O workforce or to develop a specific level 5 apprenticeship standard for P and O. It is anticipated that the level 3 apprenticeship will allow successful employees to access the level 6 apprenticeship to allow a career pathway for development of the P and O workforce.

*“As a patient with an array of lifelong conditions including double above knee, arm muscles and finger amputations coupled with severe hearing loss I welcome this constructive paper around the exciting workforce opportunities for the future of our much-needed specialised Prosthetic and Orthotic Workforces in England. I know from personal experience the benefits to patients of a sustainable, specialist and flexible workforce and so it is pleasing to see that our patient pathways are aspiring to work together collaboratively for the benefit of all patients.*

*“Patients with lifelong conditions need as a minimum to develop long-term but at best lifelong relationships with their caring clinicians and so it is encouraging to see that with the development of apprenticeships that young people in particular can be encouraged to consider such vital, specialist and often unseen professions as real career opportunities.”*

*Steve McNeice, Limb Loss Patient Advisor to the Westminster Cross Party Limb Loss Group*

## NEXT STEPS

Currently there is only one HEI training P and Os in England with no provision outside of the North West of England. This has significant implications for access for those individuals in other regions, particularly the south, in being able to fairly access training. Consequently, there may be a large untapped potential supply of individuals wishing to train as registered P and Os or develop as P and O support workers and technicians.

Supporting the development of alternative P and O education routes to provide a P and O programme would provide opportunities for wider social, cultural and geographical access, but this needs to be carried out in response to a clear plan to consolidate the existing HEI P and O provision. This may include the identification of a pool of potential individuals who are interested in pursuing P and O as a career, which includes both younger entrants and mature students.

Future Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Scope new routes for P and O education which provide wide geographical, cultural and social access across the population	BAPO/Trailblazer group/employers	April 2019

Apprenticeships offer a new and exciting route for young people and mature students to enter and develop within the P and O workforce as support staff, qualifying and post graduate levels. Apprenticeships offer an alternative route to those wanting to study a traditional HEI course and provide individuals with an opportunity to earn as they learn, developing and building skills and capabilities.

The signing off of both level 3 P and O technician, level 6 qualifying P and O and the level 7 Multi-professional Advanced practice apprenticeship standards provides new opportunities across the profession. We must now support providers (NHS and commercial sector) and HEIs to utilise these pathways effectively through the development of programmes, with input from service users, that are accessible and allow creation of a new skilled and flexible workforce.

Future Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Facilitate the meeting of employers and HEE to scope and develop apprenticeship programmes at level 3 and 6	HEE/ BAPO/ Trailblazer groups	April 2019

## Developing and supporting the learning environment

Action	Owner	Completion Date
Health Education England have commissioned the development an interactive e-learning resource for current learners to provide guidance for learners/supervisors to optimise student placement experience and to consider the anticipated challenges of delivering/undertaking orthotic and prosthetic apprenticeships within a such a unique and pressurized service environment. This work will be oversighted professionally by BAPO.	HEE	March 2018  ACHIEVED

### E-learning package

The development of an e-learning package was commissioned to support learners and educators, as well as those who are working within the preceptorship period for the traditional model of P and O education. This package was developed with involvement of prosthetists and orthotists in service.

Many clinicians currently provide placement opportunities for students on the traditional HEI training route and also support newly qualified graduates beginning their careers in prosthetic and/or orthotics. Training to support these roles historically has been through face to face programmes however the challenges faced by service and one programme for the country requires a remote form of learning to be available. Development of staff to provide high quality clinical supervision, assessment and facilitation of learning for students on placement and newly qualified staff was considered essential to ensuring a positive commitment to education.

It has been highlighted that other AHP programmes have recognised clinical educator programmes for certifying the quality of pre-registration clinical educators and to guide those in preceptorship roles for newly qualified staff and that these did not currently exist in prosthetics and orthotics but could be of great benefit to those currently acting in these roles.

The aim of this piece of work was to explore the development of an e-learning package to support P and Os in providing more effective pre- and post-registration mentorship within the current model of educational delivery. It is accepted that the apprenticeship route will require tailored support.

The objectives of the project were:

1. To identify the learning needs of P and O practitioners, prioritise content areas and determine the preferred method of delivery of future learning opportunities for mentorship of pre-registration and post registration practitioners working in prosthetics and orthotics.
2. To develop an e-learning package to support clinical educators that is fit for purpose, for both pre- and post-registration education.
3. To pilot the e-learning tool with the P and O profession prior to implementation.
4. To launch the tool via HEE communications strategy to relevant stakeholders and practitioners.
5. Monitor usage and feedback and make adjustments to tool as required at monthly intervals for the first 6 months.

Working with e-learning for Health and Salford University, an [e-learning package](#) was developed for P and O practitioners in relation to mentorship for students, junior colleagues and those returning to practice. Following a scoping exercise with P and Os, three 20-minute interactive e-learning resources were developed to support mentoring in clinical practice. These online sessions incorporate the learning needs that clinicians felt needed to be met as a priority and led to the development of three online sessions:

Session 1: Developing an effective mentor mentee relationship

Session 2: Providing effective feedback

Session 3: Supporting mentees in difficulty.

A pilot version of the sessions was developed and was opened for consultation which was promoted at the BAPO conference in March 2018. Due to a poor response at the pilot stage a more intensive approach to monitoring will be employed within the first six months post launch.

Users of the tool will be prompted to rate the tool and provide feedback on ease of navigation, functionality, clarity of learning objectives and clinical application. The developers will continue to monitor feedback and act on feedback when required to ensure the tool remains current and fit for purpose.

It is anticipated that as new routes for P and O education are developed, mentoring resources may need to be modified or developed to meet the needs of the emerging learning environments.

## NEXT STEPS

We must support P and Os to continually develop themselves throughout their education and career, and encourage them to nurture and mentor the next generation.

The P and O profession now has an e-learning resource to support the mentorship of students and newly qualified staff for use within the current education model. We must continue to evaluate, promote and respond to feedback of this package to ensure it is fit for purpose. The development team will continue to liaise with practitioners, responding to feedback where appropriate and liaising with BAPO and HEE. Alternative methods of mentorship support may need to be developed in response to the needs of clinicians in emerging education routes such as apprenticeships.

To facilitate the lifelong development of P and O's we must support employers and HEIs to provide accessible opportunities to develop P and O advanced practice through the development of ACP masters (level 7) programmes which meet the need of P and O clinicians.

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Evaluate the e-learning provision and ensure it is fit for purpose including for use within new emerging education routes.	HEE and BAPO	Dec 2019
Facilitate HEI's and employers to collaborate, to develop flexible, post graduate programmes to support educational and portfolio routes to develop and evidence advanced clinical practice in P and O roles.	HEE	April 2019

## Workforce development Post-Registration

### Preceptorship

Action	Owner	Completion Date
<p>Health Education England have commissioned the development of an interactive e-learning preceptorship resource for current learners and graduates, based upon the Preceptorship in Prosthetics and Orthotics Guide<sup>5</sup> with a specific focus on the service pressures identified in the NHS England orthotic report<sup>6</sup> which were reinforced at the Education summit.</p> <p>This work will be oversighted professionally by BAPO.</p>	HEE	<p>March 2018</p> <p>ACHIEVED</p>

The e-learning package outlined above was developed also to support development of the newly qualified P and O. The resource advocates and supports the mentoring process to facilitate ongoing learning and development in the early career of a P and O which can be a time when new graduates potentially feel isolated.

The development of mentor: mentee relationships for all new graduates is encouraged with benefits for both parties. The uptake of this e-learning resource and user feedback will be considered from both the students and the newly qualified P and O perspective.

<sup>5</sup> Health Education England North West and University of Salford (2013) *Preceptorship in Prosthetics and Orthotics*. Available at: <https://www.bapo.com/Framework/ResourceManagement/GetResourceObject.aspx?ResourceID=d28db7d3-b8b2-4680-8dd9-2853224f6de0>

<sup>6</sup> NHS England (2015) *Improving the Quality of Orthotic Services in England*. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2015/11/orthcs-final-rep.pdf>

## Utilising the wider workforce effectively

Action	Owner	Completion Date
<p>HEE, NHS England, NHS Improvement and BAPO, will work in collaboration to identify examples of best practice and innovative models of service delivery to develop case studies for dissemination across the profession.</p> <p>BAPO will undertake a scoping exercise to determine the range of courses that currently exist to train other professions in component orthotic and prosthetic skills and determine if there are gaps in the products available to support the developing models for good practice across the wider workforce. The scoping report will be held on their website as an information provider and will be circulated electronically to all employers and link across from HEE web pages on P and O wider workforce solutions. Any gaps highlighted will be discussed with HEE.</p>	<p>NHS Improvement</p> <p>BAPO</p>	<p>March 2018</p> <p>Ongoing within NHS Improvement</p> <p>December 2017</p> <p>ACHIEVED</p>

## Support for service delivery

NHSI are working with the NHS Providers Orthotic federation to support P and O service delivery within NHS provider organisations. They will support P and O services through an improvement journey including exploration of opportunities to collect service data and offer support through a potential improvement collaborative. NHSI will report separately on developments within orthotics service provision.

## Scoping exercise to explore the provision of P and O skills within other AHP professions

BAPO commissioned a report with the purpose of exploring whether other Allied Health Professions (AHP) entry-level programmes include appropriate knowledge and skills that would enable these professions to become involved in orthotic management.

The demand for orthotic management is likely to rise due to an aging population and increases in the prevalence of non-communicable diseases and in some areas other professions already provide some level of orthotic input.

Within the scoping report four key documents were evaluated: the Health and Care Professions Council's Standards of Proficiency; the NHS/QAA Subject Benchmarks for Health Professions; the AHP professional bodies' curriculum documents; and the programme documents for the prosthetics and orthotics degree programmes at the University of Salford and the University of Strathclyde.

These documents differ in their purpose but all contain relevant information relating to the content (knowledge and skills) and learning outcomes that can be expected in an entry-level AHP education programme.

The aim of this evaluation was to consider whether other allied health professions had the foundational knowledge and skills which could be built upon through professional development modules to enable them to be involved in orthotic management. It is important to note that this is a subjective evaluation of the descriptors and may differ to the actual practical delivery of education and services. The full report provides an overview of the core components, skills and knowledge, and maps areas of overlap and distinctions between the professions.

The analysis showed that there are many common skills and knowledge common to all allied health professions such as research skills, communication skills and clinical reasoning, which are contextualised to the profession.

Physiotherapy, podiatry and occupational therapy have some elements that may be relevant and could be built upon, however they are narrow and often only evident in one of the document sources reviewed. The podiatry documents vary in their focus, but this appears to be the profession that has the largest synergies with P and O skills. There are however considerable areas of knowledge and skills that are specific to prosthetics and orthotics including prosthetic and orthotic theory and practice, biomechanics of prosthesis and orthoses, and materials used in the manufacture of prostheses and orthoses.

Future work to explore and better understand where other professions can support the delivery of orthotics management is needed and, where appropriate, the development of educational programmes to support professional skills development. This must also include understanding the commissioning processes for those non-specialist orthotic services who deliver additional orthotic services. NHSI will report separately on work done to support P and O provider improvements.

The proposal of separating P and O as professions has been highlighted previously however it is not considered optimal timing to explore this further at this time as the professions remain vulnerable with reduction in numbers of graduates and potential changes to educational delivery models.

## NEXT STEPS

It must be acknowledged that the wider workforce may, in some cases provide supplementary orthotic management, however it must be highlighted that they are not working as orthotists which is a protected HCPC title. Podiatrists, physiotherapists and OTs have been identified as having some skills and knowledge which overlap and there may be scope to develop the skills of these other professional groups in specific contexts, to support the delivery of effective orthotic management.

Future Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Explore/ understand where other professions can support the delivery of P and O.	HEE	April 2019
Facilitate HEI's, employers and BAPO to collaborate, to develop flexible, post graduate education to support the upskilling of the wider workforce to provide safe and effective orthotic management in defined areas of clinical practice.	HEE	April 2019

## Advanced Clinical Practice

Action	Owner	Completion Date
Health Education England will work in collaboration with BAPO and employers to ensure they are linked in to the national work on advanced clinical practice and exploration of Level 7 apprenticeships to broaden skills mix and aid longer term retention of experienced clinicians.  All interested employers/HEIs are urged to get actively involved to register their interest to participate in the Level 7 advanced practice apprenticeship at <a href="mailto:healthcare.trailblazer@skillsforhealth.org.uk">healthcare.trailblazer@skillsforhealth.org.uk</a>	Employers via the Trailblazer chairs	Expression of Interest agreed and submitted April 2017.  ACHIEVED

In November 2017, HEE, in partnership with NHS Improvement and NHS England launched a National Framework for Multi-Professional Advanced Clinical Practice<sup>7</sup>, which includes a national definition and standards to underpin the multi-professional advanced level of practice.

As a result, there are for the first time, set entry requirements, a national definition and a framework for Advanced Clinical Practice. This will ensure that there is national consistency across the role and that advanced clinical practitioners, colleagues, employers and patients/service users clearly understand the role.

This will provide current and future ACPs including those within P and O, with guidance and principles that they should follow throughout their professional lives and clearly outlining a career pathway into and through the profession.

The framework draws on and consolidates existing frameworks of advanced clinical practice from across the UK and provides current and future healthcare professionals working at advanced clinical practice level with guidance and principles that they should follow throughout their professional lives.

This resource will facilitate transformation of the workforce by promoting inter-professional working, across traditional professional boundaries and provides a sound basis for development of advanced roles within P and O careers. It can be used within P and O and other AHP professions to support the delivery of excellent healthcare for local people by ensuring that the P and O workforce of today and tomorrow has the right numbers, skills, values and behaviours – at the right time and in the right place.

This framework will now need to become part of practice and workforce planning. Further work is needed to ensure it is used within workforce development and delivery in order to facilitate advanced practice roles and co-produce work on levels of practice for P and O.

---

<sup>7</sup> HEE (2017) Multi-professional framework for advanced practice for England. Can be accessed at <https://hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Multi-professional%20framework%20for%20advanced%20clinical%20practice%20in%20England.pdf>

## Level 7 Apprenticeship

Alongside the multi-professional framework development, a trailblazer group was formed which led the development of a level 7 apprenticeship standard for Advanced Practice in conjunction with skills for health. This is now ready for delivery.

HEI programmes now need to be co-produced between employer organisations and HEI's to provide work-based ACP roles with educational elements to meet the ACP standard at post graduate level (level 7). BAPO continue to support and facilitate apprenticeship development and are working with several HEI's to support the development apprenticeship routes. HEE will support employers, in both the NHS and commercial sectors, to work with HEIs to procure nationally, an MSc Advanced Clinical Practice apprenticeship programme

## Workforce planning

Action	Owner	Completion Date
HEE will work with NHS Digital to develop unique occupation codes for the prosthetics and orthotics workforce for inclusion in the updated version of the <i>NHS Occupation Codes Manual</i> <sup>8</sup>	HEE	Completed and anticipated publication in December 2017.
HEE will support BAPO to work collaboratively with both commercial and NHS providers to develop the workforce data across the profession and to ensure that the workforce minimum data set (wMDS) <sup>9</sup> is uploaded to NHS Digital by all providers of NHS commissioned services (this is a requirement of the NHS standard contract) to allow effective workforce planning in the future.	HEE/BAPO	ACHIEVED June 2018  ACHIEVED

The updated version of the NHS occupation codes manual will be published in Summer 2018 and now includes an electronic staff register (ESR) code for prosthetists and orthotists which will allow NHS providers to accurately record numbers of P and O staff working within their NHS organisations. It is anticipated this may take 1-2 years to generate meaningful P and O workforce data and it will rely on NHS providers accurately inputting data. This new coding will provide detail around workforce numbers within the NHS which was not possible prior to the publication of this new code.

<sup>8</sup> NHS Digital (2017) NHS Occupation Codes Manual. Available at: [http://content.digital.nhs.uk/media/22133/NHS-Occupation-Code-Manual-Version-14/pdf/NHS\\_Occupation\\_Code\\_Manual\\_Version\\_14.0\\_Final.pdf](http://content.digital.nhs.uk/media/22133/NHS-Occupation-Code-Manual-Version-14/pdf/NHS_Occupation_Code_Manual_Version_14.0_Final.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> NHS Digital (2017) *Workforce Minimum Data Set*. Available at: <http://content.digital.nhs.uk/wMDS>

HEE understands that there is still uncertainty in recording an accurate picture of those P and Os who work for multiple NHS trusts, or those providing NHS services who are employed in the commercial or third sector. Further work to understand P and O staffing and vacancies is needed across both the NHS and commercial sectors. A data sharing agreement is being developed which will require all providers of NHS commissioned services to provide accurate workforce data.

**NEXT STEPS**

All providers of P and O services across the NHS, commercial and third sectors services must work to ensure that workforce data is accurately completed locally. Workforce data must be captured in a timely way in order to get an up to date and accurate picture of P and O staffing and vacancies across England, as this will inform developments in workforce supply and demand.

It is anticipated that in the current settings it will take 1-2 years to begin to see improved visibility of P and O staff within NHS electronic staff records (ESR) data unless there is a strong a push to ensure that all P and O providers record data in an accurate and timely way. There must also be progress to ensure that P and Os working in the commercial sector can provide data to allow an accurate picture of where P and Os work and their vacancy rates. This will be supported by an enhanced communications plan.

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Facilitate the urgent use of new ESR codes across all sectors of P and O to understand workforce distribution and vacancy rates.	HEE, BAPO/ and Commercial sector	April 2019
Seek to explore with HCPC if HEE can get a more detailed understanding P and O workforce from HCPC data.	HEE	Dec 2018

**Acknowledgements**

Sincere thanks go to all those have contributed to the development and creation of this work including: Lynne Rowley, Jane McAdam, Michael O’Byrne, Juliet Sturgess, Sophie Hill, Rebecca Loo, Steve McNeice, Andy Sharman, Office for Students, Mike Harrison-Blount and the team at Salford University, the apprenticeship trailblazer group, Darren Aldrich, Health Careers, Paul Chapman, BAPO representatives, NHS Orthotics Federation, Orthotics campaign, NHS Improvement and NHS England.

Thanks also to HEE for funding this work.

## Appendix 1. Summary of Future Actions

Future Action	Responsibility	Timescale
HEE will work collaboratively with the office for students to monitor course uptake and the continued impact post CSR and the impact of the apprenticeship over time.	HEE, OFS	Ongoing 6 monthly review

Future Action	Responsibility	Timescale
HEE will work with BAPO and commercial, service user and NHS representatives to ensure a clear communication strategy is in place to disseminate information in a comprehensive and structured way.	HEE, NHS representatives, BAPO, Service user and commercial sector	Oct 2018

Future Action	Responsibility	Timescale
To raise awareness of P and O as an opportunity within engineering and STEM settings.	BAPO/Employers	April 2019.
Explore value of developing impact stories from elite athletes/Olympians/veterans to illustrate impact of P and O.	BAPO/Service users groups	Dec 2019.
Explore the provision of quality work experience opportunities for potential entrants to P and O education.	HEE	April 2019
Create careers presentation materials which can be accessed and delivered by P and O professionals with schools, colleges and community groups to raise awareness of P and O careers.	HEE/BAPO/ Stakeholders	April 2019.

Future Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Ensure clear communication and promotion of the RTP programme across P and O workforce using robust communication plan.	BAPO/Employers/RTP project lead	April 2019

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Development of a core curriculum for all pre-registration P and O courses.	BAPO	April 2019

Future Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Scope new routes for P and O education which provide wide geographical, cultural and social access across the population.	BAPO/Trailblazer group/ employers	April 2019

Future Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Facilitate the meeting of employers and HEE to scope and develop apprenticeship programmes at level 3 and 6.	HEE/BAPO/Trailblazer groups	April 2019

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Evaluate the e-learning provision and ensure it is fit for purpose including for use within new emerging education routes.	HEE and BAPO	Dec 2019.
Facilitate HEI's and employers to collaborate, to develop flexible, post graduate programmes to support educational and portfolio routes to develop and evidence advanced clinical practice in P and O roles.	HEE	April 2019

Future Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Explore/ understand where other professions can support the delivery of P and O.	HEE	April 2019
Facilitate HEIs, employers and BAPO to collaborate, to develop flexible, post graduate education to support the upskilling of the wider workforce to provide safe and effective orthotic management in defined areas of clinical practice.	HEE	April 2019

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Facilitate the urgent use of new ESR codes across all sectors of P and O to understand workforce distribution and vacancy rates.	HEE, BAPO/ and Commercial sector	April 2019.
Seek to explore with HCPC if HEE can get a more detailed understanding P and O workforce from HCPC data.	HEE	Dec 2018

© Health Education England July 2018

**Developing people  
for health and  
healthcare**

[www.hee.nhs.uk](http://www.hee.nhs.uk)