



# Interim NHS People Plan: the future allied health professions and psychological professions workforce

## Our vision

The 14 allied health professions<sup>1</sup> (AHPs) form the third largest clinical workforce in health and social care. Alongside 12 distinct psychological professions,<sup>2</sup> they work across physical and mental health services and beyond. The breadth of skills and their reach across people's lives and organisations make them ideally placed to lead and support improvement.

AHPs and psychological professions are central to meeting the changing demand the NHS faces from our growing and ageing population and the expanding frontiers of science and innovation. They are instrumental in delivering person-centred, evidence-based care as clinical leaders and practitioners. Their expertise is key to the shift from over-reliance on hospitals and unnecessary care costs, which is vital to ensuring the sustainability of future services. AHPs make a crucial contribution as first-point-of-contact practitioners to faster diagnostics, living well both with and beyond cancer, earlier interventions in primary care, and dissolving the historic divide between primary and community health services.

Meanwhile psychological professionals deliver effective psychological therapy to over a million people a year with anxiety and depression, including increasing numbers of children and young people and those with long term physical health conditions.

We will develop further the interim plans below as part of the full People Plan later this year.

## Supporting the AHP and psychological professions workforce

The national AHP workforce programme will set out the action needed to improve supply and retention of AHPs and their deployment and development across professions and geography. This will ensure that by 2024 we have the right AHP workforce with the right skills in the right place to deliver high quality care. The programme will focus on three key themes: increasing future supply, bridging the gap between education and employment, and enabling the workforce to deliver and grow. In 2019/20, we will complete a programme of actions to further develop the national AHP strategy, focusing on implementation of the *NHS Long Term Plan*. We will establish a national AHP workforce group to support this work and make recommendations for AHPs, including for those professions in short supply and those where new roles and advanced practice opportunities will be essential.

The national psychological professions workforce programme will set out the necessary actions to complete implementation of the expansion requirements in *Stepping Forward to 2020/21: The mental health workforce plan for England*. It will also set out four new themes for action to deliver the even faster expansion of psychological professions required by the *NHS Long Term Plan*: creating and implementing a national psychological professions strategy, developing a national workforce programme for all psychological professions, enhancing training and career paths for psychological professionals, and delivering the right leadership for the psychological professions at local, system, regional and national level. The national psychological professions workforce group will lead on the workforce programme for the psychological professions.

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<sup>1</sup> Art therapists, drama therapists, music therapists, podiatrists, dietitians, occupational therapists, operating department practitioners, orthoptists, osteopaths, prosthetists and orthotists, paramedics, physiotherapists, diagnostic radiographers, therapeutic radiographers, speech and language therapists.

<sup>2</sup> Practitioner psychologists: clinical psychologists, counselling psychologists, forensic psychologists, health psychologists. Psychological therapists: cognitive behavioural therapists, counsellors, child and adolescent psychotherapists, adult psychotherapists, systemic family therapists. Other practitioners: psychological wellbeing practitioners, children's wellbeing practitioners (emerging new role), education mental health practitioners (emerging new role).