

Speech and Language Therapists

Speech and language therapy changes lives. The 11, 500 practising speech and language therapists (SLTs) in the UK work with children and adults to help them overcome or adapt to a vast array of disorders of speech, language, communication and swallowing. These include helping young children to access education, working with young offenders to enable them to access the programmes designed to reduce reoffending, reducing life-threatening swallowing problems in the early days after stroke and providing essential support to adults with a range of acquired neurological communication difficulties to help them return to work, and their roles in their family and society. Appropriate early intervention can lead to considerable long-term financial savings. Whether in acute hospital and community settings, mainstream and special schools, or increasingly in the secure estate, SLTs make a huge difference to individuals and their families.

Radiographers

Diagnostic radiographers employ a range of techniques to produce high quality images to diagnose an injury or disease. They are responsible for providing safe and accurate imaging examinations and increasingly also the resultant report. Diagnostic imaging is a component of the majority of care pathways. Radiographers are also key team members in Breast Screening and Ultrasound monitoring of pregnancy.

Therapeutic radiographers play a vital role in the treatment of cancer. They are also responsible as the only health professionals qualified to plan and deliver radiotherapy. Radiotherapy is used either on its own or in combination with surgery and/or chemotherapy. Therapeutic radiographers manage the patient pathway through the many radiotherapy processes, providing care and support for patients throughout their radiotherapy treatment.

Prosthetists and Orthotists

Prosthetists are autonomous registered practitioners who provide gait analysis and engineering solutions to patients with limb loss. They are extensively trained at undergraduate level in mechanics, bio-mechanics, and material science along with anatomy, physiology and pathophysiology. Their qualifications make them competent to design and provide prostheses that replicate the structural or functional characteristics of the patients absent limb. They are also qualified to modify CE marked prostheses or componentry taking responsibility for the impact of any changes. They treat patients with congenital loss as well as loss due to diabetes, reduced vascularity, infection and trauma. Military personnel are forming an increasing part of their caseload. Whilst they are autonomous practitioners they usually work closely with physiotherapists and occupational therapists as part of multidisciplinary amputee rehabilitation teams.

Orthotists are autonomous registered practitioners who provide gait analysis and engineering solutions to patients with problems of the neuro, muscular and skeletal systems. They are extensively trained at undergraduate level in mechanics, bio-mechanics, and material science along with anatomy, physiology and pathophysiology. Their qualifications make them competent to design and provide orthoses that modify the structural or functional characteristics of the patients' neuro-muscular and skeletal systems enabling patients to mobilise, eliminate gait deviations, reduce falls, reduce pain, prevent and facilitate healing of ulcers. They are also qualified to modify CE marked orthoses or componentry taking responsibility for the impact of any changes. They treat patients with a wide range of conditions including diabetes, arthritis, cerebral palsy, stroke, spina bifida, scoliosis, MSK, sports injuries and trauma. Whilst they often work as autonomous

practitioners they increasingly often form part of multidisciplinary teams such as within the diabetic foot team or neuro-rehabilitation team.

Podiatrists

Podiatrists provide essential assessment, evaluation and foot care for a wide range of patients with a variety of conditions both long term and acute. Many of these fall into high risk categories such as patients with diabetes, cerebral palsy, peripheral arterial disease and peripheral nerve damage where podiatric care is of vital importance. Many podiatrists have become further specialised into either the area of biomechanics or surgery. Biomechanics is often associated with treating sports related injuries but spans across a wide range of conditions including children and the elderly. Podiatric surgeons offer surgical interventions in all aspects of foot health management. Podiatrists work in both the community and acute settings and while many are employees of the NHS many podiatrists now provide healthcare services in the private sector.

Paramedics

Paramedics are the senior ambulance service healthcare professionals at an accident or a medical emergency. Often working by themselves, paramedics are responsible for assessing the patient's condition and then giving essential treatment. They use high-tech equipment such as defibrillators, spinal and traction splints and intravenous drips, as well as administering oxygen and drugs.

Physiotherapists

Physiotherapy uses physical approaches to promote, maintain and restore physical, psychological and social well-being, working through partnership and negotiation with individuals to optimise their functional ability and potential. Physiotherapists address problems of impairment, activity and participation and manage recovering, stable and deteriorating conditions - particularly those associated with the neuro-muscular, musculo-skeletal, cardio-vascular and respiratory systems - through advice, treatment, rehabilitation, health promotion and supporting behavioural change. Physiotherapy uses manual therapy, therapeutic exercise, the application of electro-physical modalities and other physical approaches in response to individual need. Physiotherapists work across sectors and settings, including acute, community and workplace settings, and with a large number of population and patient groups including children, the working population, and older people at all points of an individual's health care journey.

Orthoptists

Orthoptic clinical practice encompasses both diagnosis and treatment and is wide ranging. Orthoptists help premature infants with retinopathy of prematurity, children with reduced vision due to squint, adults and children with eye movement defects due to diabetes, hypertension, endocrine dysfunction, cancer, trauma and stroke. Extended scope orthoptic practitioners now work in high volume ophthalmic specialities such as glaucoma, cataract and age related macular degeneration. Orthoptists undertake the diagnostic and therapeutic roles formally provided solely by medical staff leading to the potential for major financial savings while continuing to deliver highest quality patient care. They work in acute hospital and community settings in health and education often as part of a multi disciplinary medical, nursing and AHP team.

Occupational Therapists

Over 28,000 occupational therapists (OTs) work in the NHS, local authority social care services, housing, schools, prisons, voluntary and independent sectors, and vocational and employment rehabilitation services as well as in education and research. Occupational therapists work with people of all ages with a wide range of problems resulting from physical, mental, social or developmental difficulties. OTs support people with a range of interventions to enable them to return to or optimise participation in all the things that people do; for example, caring for themselves and others, working, learning, playing and interacting with others. Being deprived of or having limited access to any or all of these occupations can affect physical and psychological health and hence OTs positively impact upon the well being and rehabilitation of patients in most care pathways and in the broader public health and social care environment.

Dietitians

Dietitians are the only qualified health professionals who assess, diagnose and treat diet and nutrition problems at an individual and wider public health level. Uniquely, dietitians use the most up-to-date public health and scientific research on food, health and disease, which they translate into practical guidance to enable people to make appropriate lifestyle and food choices. With a commitment to enhancing public health, the dietetic workforce is essential to making change happen in hospitals, care homes and the wider community.

Arts Therapists

Arts Therapists (Art, Music and Drama) work with all age groups and utilise both the psychological and social potentials of the arts to support people with a wide range of physical, communication and mental health issues. Arts Therapists work in a community, hospital, education and early year's settings and as such are well placed to integrate pathways from acute services into the community thus creating wide ranging efficiency savings. Looking at the wider public health agenda, Arts Therapists contribute to the overall well-being of communities and reduce the social stigma that often accompanies mental health issues.