



Birmingham and Solihull  
Mental Health  
NHS Foundation Trust

# BSMHFT Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) Strategic Priorities 2020–2023



## Introduction

Our Trust's vision is to improve people's mental wellbeing by making a positive difference to their lives. As allied health professionals (AHPs) working within the Trust, we are delighted to contribute to this by presenting our strategic priorities. These will ensure we are providing recovery focused care which supports our service users, their carers' and families to live fulfilling lives, with hope, meaning, purpose and opportunity. As a family of professions working together we will deliver these priorities through:

- providing high quality recovery focused AHP services
- delivered by an exceptional and valued workforce
- designed in collaboration with Experts by Experience.

## What we mean by our AHP services

Did you know? Allied health professionals (AHPs) are the third largest staff group across the NHS. AHPs are professionals that are registered and regulated under the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). The title is protected in law and includes dietetics, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech and language therapy covered by this strategy, alongside others within the organisation, such as art psychotherapy.

We also have members of staff who work with AHPs who are not themselves registered or accredited as AHPs who are a vital and integral part of delivering our services, such as health instructors, technical instructors, activity workers and assistant staff.

Lastly, we also have professionals such as spiritual care practitioners, and chaplains who are not AHPs, however, nonetheless make a specific contribution to the care we offer.

Whilst we recognise that it is important to maintain correct use of terms, we also know that for our service users, their families and carers' it is the care that we provide for their recovery journeys that matters most.

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The AHP  
family strategy  
development

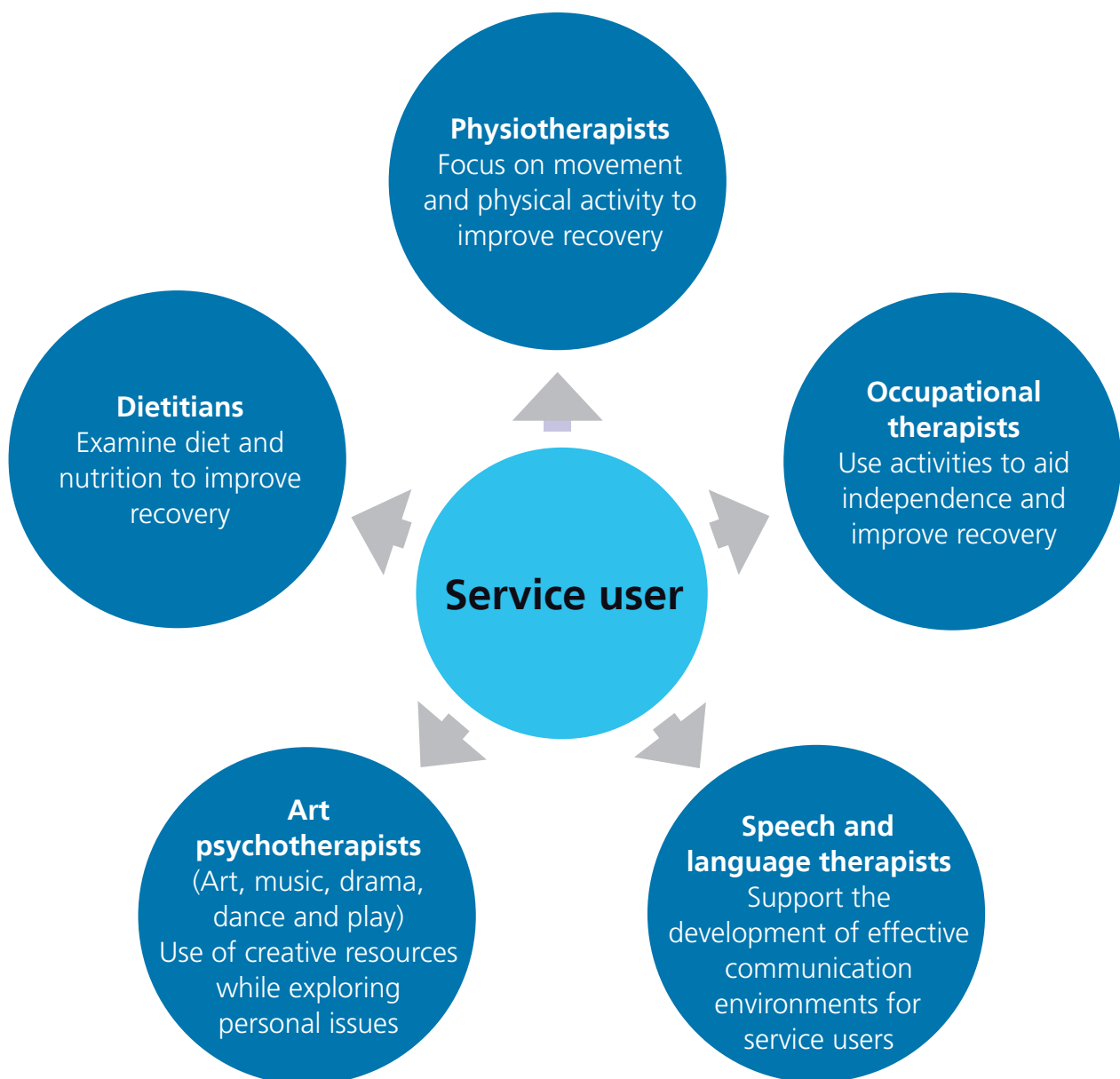


## AHPs: a holistic approach

We will work with others, whether within the organisation or outside it, to ensure that our service users get the care that will help them recover and maintain their wellbeing in body, mind and spirit. We are mindful of the Recovery for All strategy that underpins the way in which we co-design, co-produce and co-deliver all services.

Allied health practitioners are trained in both physical and mental health. As such we are able to make a key contribution to the delivery of the physical healthcare strategy.

## How do AHPs aid recovery?





## Which allied health professions are employed within our Trust?

Within Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust, allied health professionals cover seven professions who carry out a wide range of roles and interventions in a range of care settings across the service areas within the Trust. The professions included within this document are:

- **Art psychotherapists** facilitate creative, non-verbal focused psychotherapy intervention with service users who have been unable to access more traditional, verbal focused interventions. We work with adults and children experiencing distress, which can either present as emotional, psychological or behavioural difficulties but struggle to find the words to understand or explore their experiences. Alternatively, people may oververbalise and use language as a way of avoiding connecting with their emotional experiences. We offer both individual and group interventions and work across community, acute and specialist services. [www.baat.org](http://www.baat.org)
- **Dietitians** assess, diagnose and treat dietary and nutritional 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. We also work within specialist services providing clinical management of acute and long term conditions. [www.bda.com](http://www.bda.com)
- **Occupational therapists** assess social, physical and psychological, function and use specific purposeful occupation to reduce the impact of mental illness and disability to promote social inclusion and independence. We work across all areas of the Trust including inpatient wards, community and specialist services. [www.rcot.co.uk](http://www.rcot.co.uk)
- **Physiotherapists** assess function and movement to maximize the potential of patients. We use physical approaches to promote, maintain and restore physical, psychological and social wellbeing taking into account variations in health status. Interventions include exercise, movement, massage, manipulation, electrotherapy and other therapies, e.g. acupuncture. Physiotherapists have a key role in the reduction of falls.
- **Speech and language therapists** provide life-changing treatment, support and care for young people and adults who have difficulties with communication, or with eating, drinking and swallowing. We help people who, for physical, neurological or psychological reasons, have problems speaking and communicating or those who have difficulty with eating or swallowing.



We work directly and indirectly with service users, carers and families to overcome communication difficulties and reduce physical health risks associated with swallowing difficulties across a wide variety of settings.

[www.rcslt.org](http://www.rcslt.org)

Alongside our allied health practitioners, we also have our:

- **Health instructors** assess and provide support, information and practical application of physical activity and health promotion recommendations to service users. We are qualified exercise professionals with a comprehensive understanding of the indications and contraindications for exercise in both a clinical and public health environment. We also work alongside physiotherapists and occupational therapists to co-deliver therapeutic interventions.
- **Occupational therapy technical instructors or assistants** work collaboratively with and under the supervision of the occupational therapists to deliver purposeful occupations to service users in both inpatient and community settings.
- **Spiritual care practitioners and chaplains** offer compassionate pastoral and spiritual support for service users, carers and staff within recovery focused care. Spirituality is unique to each person and is closely linked to core values in what gives people a sense of meaning and purpose in life. For some people this includes the practice of a faith or belief, for others it would be more closely connected with culture, tradition or a personal sense of vocation or spiritual belief. Our team includes staff from a wide range of faith traditions and those working from a non-religious perspective. The service is fully inclusive and is led by the needs of the individual. Support includes assessment and care planning for spiritual needs, alongside ensuring access to support from different world faith traditions.

[www.healthcarechaplains.org](http://www.healthcarechaplains.org)

### Numbers of AHPs in BSMHFT (figures correct as of June 2019)

Professional groups	Full-time equivalent posts	Percentage of workforce
Art psychotherapists	8.0	0.22%
Dietitians	4.6	0.13%
Health instructors	5.8	0.16%
Occupational therapists	135.0	3.7%
Physiotherapists	8.9	0.24%
Speech and language therapists	2.5	0.07%
Spiritual care practitioners	8.31	0.23%
Healthcare assistants	661.53	18%
Registered nurses	1151.80	31.5%
<b>Total workforce</b>	<b>3657.28</b>	<b>100%</b>



**“We have an occupational therapist (OT) working within our Spiritual Care Team, helping us to increase our reach by sharing her skills with both other OTs and with our chaplains and spiritual care practitioners.”**

## How we work alongside others

As with other professions in the Trust, we have an advisory committee (AHPAC). We meet to review clinical practice, consider professional development, share ideas and provide support to each other. Clinical Senate brings these advisory committees together to consider best practice, research and the impact on developing our clinical services. On a day-to-day basis AHPs deliver their service as part of multiprofessional teams throughout the operational areas of the organisation. Line management arrangements vary, however, all AHP staff receive professional supervision either as part of their line management or in addition, if their line manager is not an AHP.

## Allied health professionals: The national context

In 2017, AHPs into Action: Using Allied Health Professionals 2016/17–2020/2021 ([www.england.nhs.uk/ahp/ahps-into-action](http://www.england.nhs.uk/ahp/ahps-into-action)) was published. This document sets out how AHPs can be key contributors to deliver future health, care and wellbeing services. It described the transformative potential of the AHP workforce and includes innovative examples where AHP staff can address challenges within the five year forward view and the 10 year Plan. Key impacts of the effective use of AHPs were identified:

- Improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and populations.
- Support and provide solutions to general practice and urgent and emergency services to address demand.
- Support integration, addressing historical service boundaries to reduce duplication and fragmentation.
- Deliver evidence based/informed practice to address unexplained variances in service quality and efficiency.

# How allied health professions will transform care – an emerging mandate for change

Four commitments, four impacts and four areas to focus on to achieve this.

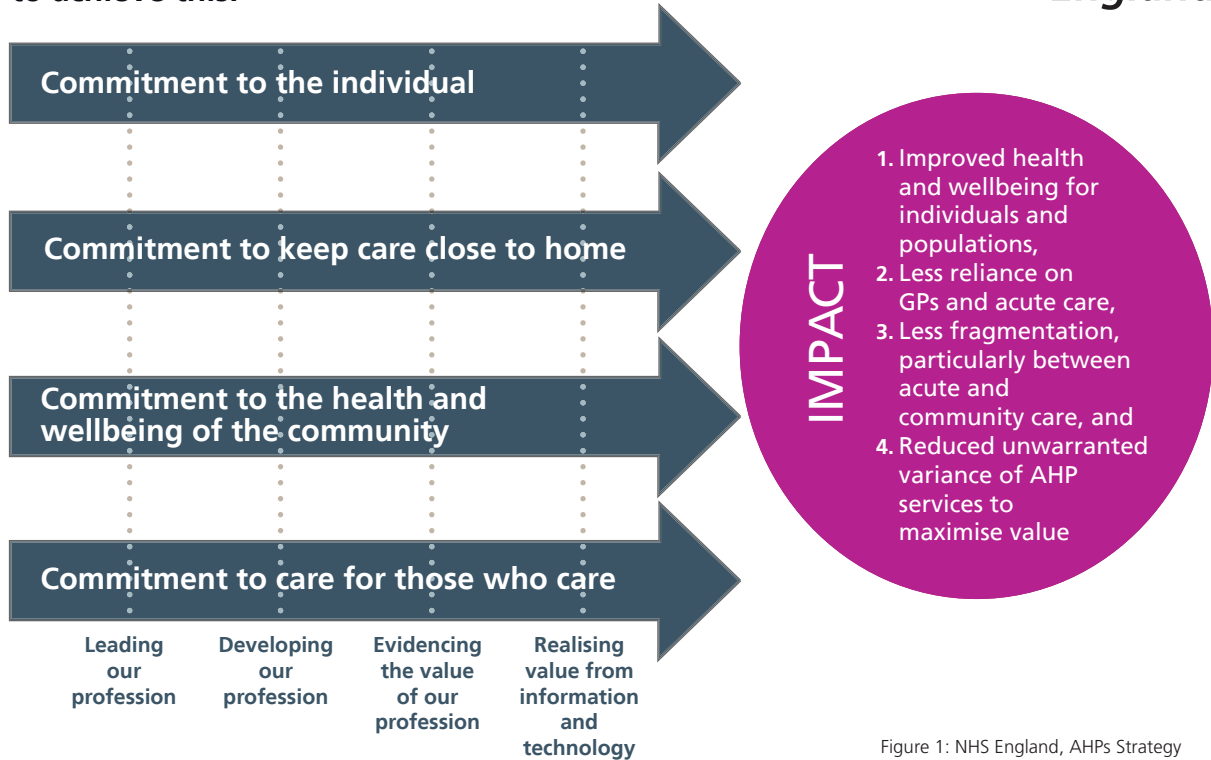


Figure 1: NHS England, AHPs Strategy



**"A new physiotherapy service for functional neuropsychiatry has been successful in improving health and wellbeing for over 94 per cent of service users. One service user said: "It's been brilliant it was like learning to walk again...I feel really positive about the future...I have been struggling with my condition for years I wish I'd come here first."**

## **BSMHFT AHP strategic priorities**

### **To deliver a high quality, recovery focused AHP service in all areas of the Trust**

We will do this by:

- defining outcomes and using outcome measures, where appropriate to ensure that our services are effective
- using clinical audit and engaging in research to provide opportunities for staff to develop skill and competence in building the evidence for best practice
- providing AHPs with regular continuing professional development opportunities to increase our knowledge, skills and competencies
- ensuring that we are effectively communicating the key contribution that AHPs make to our multidisciplinary teams (MDT)
- working proactively to support transitions from our services to community and other providers
- engaging effectively with STP partners in the development of services that focus on prevention.

### **To support and achieve an exceptional and valued workforce**

We will do this by:

- attracting and retaining great staff through the development of a culture that treats people well and encourages engagement for all people regardless of background or circumstance
- working with higher education institutes to support AHP education



- reaching out to young people to show them the wide range of exciting opportunities AHP training can offer, in collaboration with our widening participation programme for schools and colleges
- continuing to engage in emerging national initiatives for apprenticeship routes into allied health professions
- using creative approaches to job planning that includes opportunities for professional and leadership development
- working across traditional professional boundaries to offer AHPs career development which recognises the value of their core skills and finds innovative ways of applying them in our recovery focused services.

### **To collaborate with Experts by Experience**

We will do this by:

- listening to and working with Experts by Experience consistently to co-design, co-produce and where appropriate co-deliver our services
- creating a consistent method to gather service user feedback across all our AHP services
- ensuring we have meaningful participation of Experts by Experience in recruitment, training, and development of new programmes.
- putting the recovery approach at the forefront of all of our services
- embedding the use of the family and carer pathway within AHP work
- proactively engaging with our Recovery College for All to offer co-designed, co-produced and co-delivered sessions which develop both skills and knowledge for a healthy body, mind and spirit.

**“As an occupational therapist it has been fantastic to work with service users and their families to provide a personal health budget. The smallest amount of money is able to empower people in their recovery.”**

**“As a dietitian working in the eating disorder service I am proud that my specialist clinical skills are valued and respected. The team works closely together, respecting each other’s professional contributions with the common aim of promoting recovery for our service users”**

## Summary

This document is very much a living document that will be reviewed and updated as we learn together about having a shared vision and direction as allied health professions. The clearly identified priorities will allow us to work effectively together to develop and maximise the contribution we are able to make to service users and families. We have included many examples of good practice and innovation to share and celebrate the positive impact that our AHP staff have as our service users build and maintain their recovery.

It is intended to help our colleagues from other professions across the trust to understand the role, priorities and work of AHP staff so that we can maximise opportunities to work together to provide recovery focused care to our service users alongside their families, carers and friends.

We are excited by the opportunities that will open up in the coming years and look forward to continuing to work with both internal and external partners as part of a rich and diverse service. Together we will deliver truly recovery focused, best practice evidenced care which supports our service users, their carers’ and families to live fulfilling lives, with hope, meaning, purpose and opportunity.



Art Psychotherapy  
Team and some of  
the service users'  
work displayed

"As part of an Occupational Therapy Team in a dementia service, I'm working with service users to create personalised music play lists and undertaking research called Life Echoes. These are ways of capturing sounds and songs that remind people of precious moments in their lives. Talking to Lucy about her happy memories, and playing the sounds and music associated with them, her face lit up and she was able to enjoy the happy feeling all over again."



“As health instructors we have worked in collaboration with Solihull BeActive and Everyone Active to create a supported, safe and effective community exercise programme ‘Mind and Body’. Service users are able to use staff facilities at community fitness centres at reduced cost, with continued support from the team. Together we’re encouraging long term use, increasing physical activity, promoting recovery for a healthier future.”



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

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