

Making the most of advanced practice

A short guide for employers

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Introduction

This document provides an overview of advanced practice for employers of prosthetists and orthotists, with links to further resources at the end.

This document is primarily for employers of prosthetists and orthotists in England. However, we have provided some information about advanced practice in the other UK countries at the end of this document.

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Author

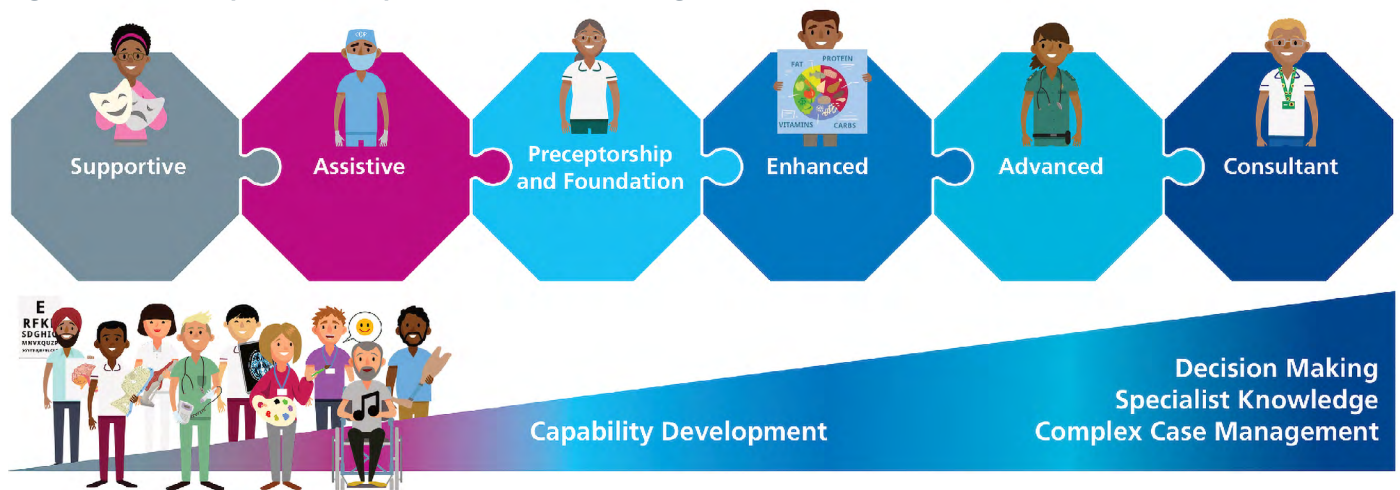
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What is advanced practice?

Advanced is a level of professional practice – see Figure 1 below – which sits between enhanced practice and consultant practice. **This level of practice is characterised by a high degree of autonomy and designated responsibility for complex decision making.** At this level, health and care professionals will have completed a post-registration Master's level award or equivalent that encompasses all four pillars of clinical practice, leadership and management, education, and research. They normally work as part of a multi-disciplinary team to manage and take responsibility for whole episodes of a person's care.

Figure 1: Levels of professional practice (Source: NHS England)



What does advanced practice look like in prosthetics and orthotics?

Advanced practice is in its relative infancy in prosthetics and orthotics and, at the time of writing, there were relatively few practitioners working at this level of practice.

At this level of practice, prosthetists and orthotists will be able to handle complex patient presentations from start to finish, with the ability and authority to make critical decisions in patient care, order investigations and create comprehensive management plans. They will often work with medical consultants and other senior health and care professionals but will practise with high levels of clinical autonomy.

Across the allied health professions, most advanced practice roles will be within the primary scope of practice of each profession – the care pathways and areas of practice typically associated with each profession. Other roles will cut across pathways and professional boundaries and utilise the knowledge and skills of practitioners from a range of different professional backgrounds.

Advanced practice is a level of practice and not a job role, title or salary band. However, to help in understanding what advanced practice might look like in the profession, Table 1 below gives some indicative job titles, qualifications and bandings for advanced practice in prosthetics and orthotics.

Table 1: Advanced practice in prosthetics and orthotics

Indicative job titles	Qualifications (from)	Indicative NHS Agenda for Change band (from)
Advanced prosthetist Advanced orthotist Advanced practitioner Advanced clinical practitioner	Master's degree in advanced practice (or equivalent), addressing all four pillars of practice	7 (trainee) 8a (qualified)

Please note that Agenda for Change bandings are indicative only and may vary between different employers and the UK countries.

What is the business case for advanced practice in prosthetics and orthotics?

Drawing on early innovation in prosthetics and orthotics and the experience of other professions and clinical services, the following are the benefits of advanced practice:

- Advanced practice roles, where effectively utilised, can help services transform clinical services to better meet the needs of patients and address service challenges.
- Prosthetists and orthotists benefit from more career development opportunities, improving job satisfaction and retention in the workforce.
- Advanced practice roles can benefit patients, carers and the public by improving access to high quality, timely and inclusive care.

Employers and commissioners should actively consider how advanced practice roles can enable them to redesign their services to better meet patient demand, helping to build fulfilling professional careers and improving the recruitment, retention and productivity of their workforces.

How can employers make the most of advanced practice?

Employers can make the most of the opportunity of advanced practice by:

DEVELOPING ADVANCED PRACTICE ROLES BASED ON SERVICE NEED

To develop advanced practice roles in prosthetics and orthotics, an important first step is to identify a service need. The following are some key questions to help employers and commissioning organisations think about whether and how advanced practice roles can meet service needs.

- **What is the current demand for prosthetic and orthotic services and what are the challenges in meeting those demands?**
- **How might advanced practice roles in prosthetics and orthotics help address those demands and needs and, as part of the multi-professional team, contribute to the delivery of high quality, timely, inclusive care for patients and carers?**
- **How might advanced practice roles in prosthetics and orthotics help enable redesigned services which optimise the contribution of the whole workforce and more efficiently meet service demand?**

Employers and commissioners are encouraged to learn from other professions such as physiotherapy where advanced practice roles are already well established. As advanced practitioners often work most effectively as part of a wider multi-disciplinary team, the involvement and support of other professional colleagues is crucial – in both identifying service needs and in implementing new roles.

Once a service need has been identified, the next step is to develop a job description for an advanced practice role which clearly defines the role and its responsibilities.

How can employers make the most of advanced practice?

UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING THE PATHWAY TO BECOMING AN ADVANCED PRACTITIONER

Employers play a crucial role in the training and practice of advanced practitioners.

The first step to training in advanced practice is to be appointed to a trainee advanced practitioner role. The typical training pathway involves the following steps:

- The employer identifies the need and requirements for a prospective advanced practitioner role, and has funding in place.
- The employer recruits / appoints a health and care professional into a trainee advanced practitioner position.
- The employer supports the trainee advanced practitioner to complete an accredited Master's programme in advanced practice, which addresses the required capabilities for advanced practice across all four pillars of practice. Master's programmes are delivered by universities, with some being degree apprenticeship programmes. These programmes are normally three years in duration. The Master's programme includes both academic preparation and preparation in the workplace.
- On successful completion of the Master's programme, the health and care professional is equipped with the capabilities required to practise at an advanced level. The employer employs the health and care professional as a qualified advanced practitioner.

Advanced practice education and training has developed over time and as a result, some existing advanced practitioners will have followed a variety of different education, training and development routes into advanced practice roles.

During education and training in advanced practice, employers need to make sure effective supervision of trainees' clinical practice is in place. Once education and training are completed, continued support and supervision remain important to ensure that the advanced practitioner continues to develop their knowledge and skills and can practise safely and effectively. This supervision and support could come from other practitioners in the profession, but could also come from other experienced clinicians in the multi-professional team.

UTILISING AVAILABLE FUNDING

NHS England's Centre for Advancing Practice and Regional Faculties for Advancing practice play a crucial role in supporting the development of the advanced practice workforce.

The Regional Faculties provide funding to eligible employers to pay for course fees for trainees to complete Master's programmes in advanced practice (if not already paid via the apprenticeship levy) and funding to support employers to provide workplace supervision. Funding is available for both NHS delivered services and services delivered under contract to the NHS. Specific eligibility criteria and arrangements for funding may vary, but there must always be a funded role for each trainee at the completion of their education and training.

Employers interested in exploring this area and with questions about implementing advanced practice roles, education and training, or accessing funding, are encouraged to get in contact with their local faculty.

Advanced practice in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

Although there are some differences, the overall approach of each of the four countries of the UK to advanced practice is very similar, including arrangements for education and training.

Employers and commissioners in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are encouraged to actively consider how advanced practice roles can enable them to redesign their services to better meet patient demand, helping to build fulfilling professional careers and improving the recruitment, retention and productivity of their workforces.



Resources

What is advanced practice?

- [Multi-professional framework for advanced practice in England](#) – includes a definition and explanation of advanced practice including required capabilities across all four pillars of practice
- [Centre for advancing practice and Regional Faculties for Advancing practice](#) – includes information and resources for advanced practice, as well as for enhanced and consultant practice

What does advanced practice look like in prosthetics and orthotics?

- [Advanced practice in prosthetics and orthotics](#) – includes information about challenges for prosthetics and orthotics, identifying the service need for advanced practice roles, and case studies

Education and training in advanced practice

- [List of accredited advanced practice programmes](#)

Resources for employers – include:

- [Governance maturity matrix](#) – a tool to support employers to develop their governance arrangements for their advanced practice workforce
- [Advanced practice workplace supervision](#) – resources to support supervision of trainees in the workplace
- [Information about regional faculty funding criteria and processes](#) – available from each regional faculty
- [How do I pay for apprenticeship training?](#) – relevant to advanced practice degree apprenticeship programmes

Advanced practice in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

WALES

- [Professional framework for enhanced, advanced and consultant clinical practice](#)

SCOTLAND

- [Advanced practice toolkit](#) – includes information about education and training programmes in Scotland
- [Nursing, midwifery and allied health professionals \(NMAHP\) development framework - post-registration framework](#)

NORTHERN IRELAND

- [Advanced AHP practice framework](#)



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