

**Enhanced practice for employers
of prosthetists and orthotists**

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Introduction

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

This document is primarily for employers in England. However, we have provided some information about enhanced practice in the other UK countries at the end.

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Author

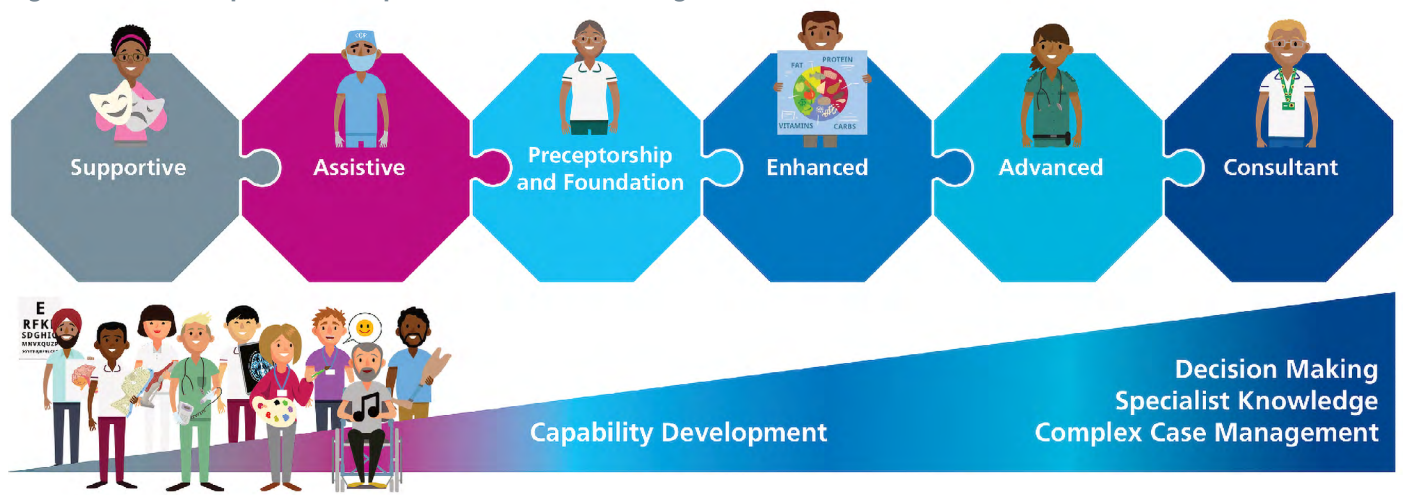
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What is enhanced practice?

Enhanced practice is a level of professional practice – see Figure 1 below – which sits between entry to practice and advanced-level practice. **This level of practice describes experienced, knowledgeable health and care professionals who are able to manage a level of complexity of work and risk which is beyond entry to practice.** A health and care professional working at this level of practice will typically have undertaken post-registration and/or postgraduate education and training relevant to their area of practice and role. They usually work as part of a multi-disciplinary team to manage discrete episodes of care within an area of practice.

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



What does enhanced practice look like in prosthetics and orthotics?

Whilst the language will be new for many, enhanced practice as a level of practice is not new and already exists in prosthetics and orthotics.

At this level of practice, prosthetists and orthotists will have undertaken post-registration and/or postgraduate education and training to develop their knowledge and skills in particular clinical areas or in carrying out particular clinical interventions. At this level, they are likely to act as clinical leads and have responsibility for mentoring more junior colleagues. They are likely to have expertise to manage the care of more complex clinical presentations and patient groups, sometimes in specialist clinics. They might have developed focused knowledge and skills related to particular conditions and groups of patients.

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

Table 1: Enhanced practice in prosthetics and orthotics

| Indicative job titles | Qualifications (from) | Indicative NHS Agenda for Change band (from) |
|--|---|--|
| Specialist prosthetist Specialist orthotist Senior prosthetist Senior orthotist | Post-registration and/or postgraduate qualifications and experience | 6 |

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 enhanced practice in prosthetics and orthotics?

Enhanced practice already exists in prosthetics and orthotics, but prosthetists and orthotists working at this level of practice have not always had the recognition they deserve.

We know that employers have challenges in recruiting and retaining prosthetists and orthotists with the knowledge and skills they need. By investing in the career development of prosthetists and orthotists, including at the enhanced level of practice, employers can build fulfilling careers. This can:

- **Improve recruitment** – by demonstrating the employer's commitment to developing their workforce, making them more attractive to candidates in a competitive market place.
- **Improve retention** – by putting in place clear career development pathways, which help create happy and satisfied staff who want to stay.
- **Improve productivity** – by equipping staff with the knowledge, skills and experience needed to more efficiently manage service demand and provide high quality, timely, inclusive care for patients and carers.

How can employers make the most of enhanced practice?

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

PLANNING THE ENHANCED PRACTICE WORKFORCE

Employers need to understand their existing workforce, their service needs and the role that enhanced practice plays and can play in service delivery.

What do I already have?

The first step is to **identify and understand the current levels of practice within your existing workforce**, including at enhanced practice level. Some questions might include:

- What does enhanced level practice look like in my workforce?
- What are the job roles, titles and career levels of prosthetists and orthotists working at enhanced practice level?

What do I need?

After assessing the current levels of practice in your workforce, you can **identify the service requirement for enhanced practice**. Some questions might include:

- Does my service require some staff to undertake complex decision making and skills within their current scope of practice to enhance service provision? Do I have sufficient numbers of staff able to do this?
- How might enhanced practice roles enable me to redesign services which make the most of the contribution of the whole workforce and more efficiently meet service demand?

How can I grow and develop my workforce to meet service needs?

Once you have identified what you have and what you need, you can **think about how you can grow and develop your enhanced practice workforce**. Some questions include:

- What career progression pathways do I have or do I need which will develop my staff to practise at enhanced practice level?
- What arrangements do I have or do I need to put in place to support and develop staff who are already practising at enhanced practice level?

How can employers make the most of enhanced practice?

USING THE ENHANCED CLINICAL PRACTITIONER APPRENTICESHIP

There is no single career development pathway for enhanced practice. Many prosthetists and orthotists will gain post-registration and/or postgraduate education and training relevant to their practice, together with substantial experience, to enable them to work at the level of enhanced practice.

There is now an 'Enhanced Clinical Practitioner' apprenticeship, which provides an additional development pathway for enhanced practice.

The apprenticeship is most likely to suit prosthetists and orthotists who have completed their pre-registration education and training and preceptorship period. They will either be newly promoted, or working towards a job role (normally at Band 6) that requires them to develop the complex knowledge and expertise required to handle more complex patient presentations.

The apprenticeship programme is around 18 months in duration and is made up of a mixture of taught content (often delivered online) and work-based learning. A prosthetist and orthotist would normally complete the apprenticeship at level 7 (Master's level).

Some universities are already offering apprenticeship programmes and many programmes are open to a range of different professions. However, the apprenticeship is relatively new and employers are encouraged to speak with universities about how they might best meet their needs.

Employers who pay into the apprenticeship levy will be able to use these funds to pay for their employees to complete the apprenticeship. For other employers, government funding is available which will cover almost all of the cost.

DEVELOPING THE EXISTING WORKFORCE

There will be some prosthetists and orthotists who have significant experience and knowledge underpinned by post-registration and/or postgraduate education and training who are already working in enhanced practice roles. Completing the apprenticeship might not be necessary or helpful for this group because it would not provide them with significant additional skills and knowledge.

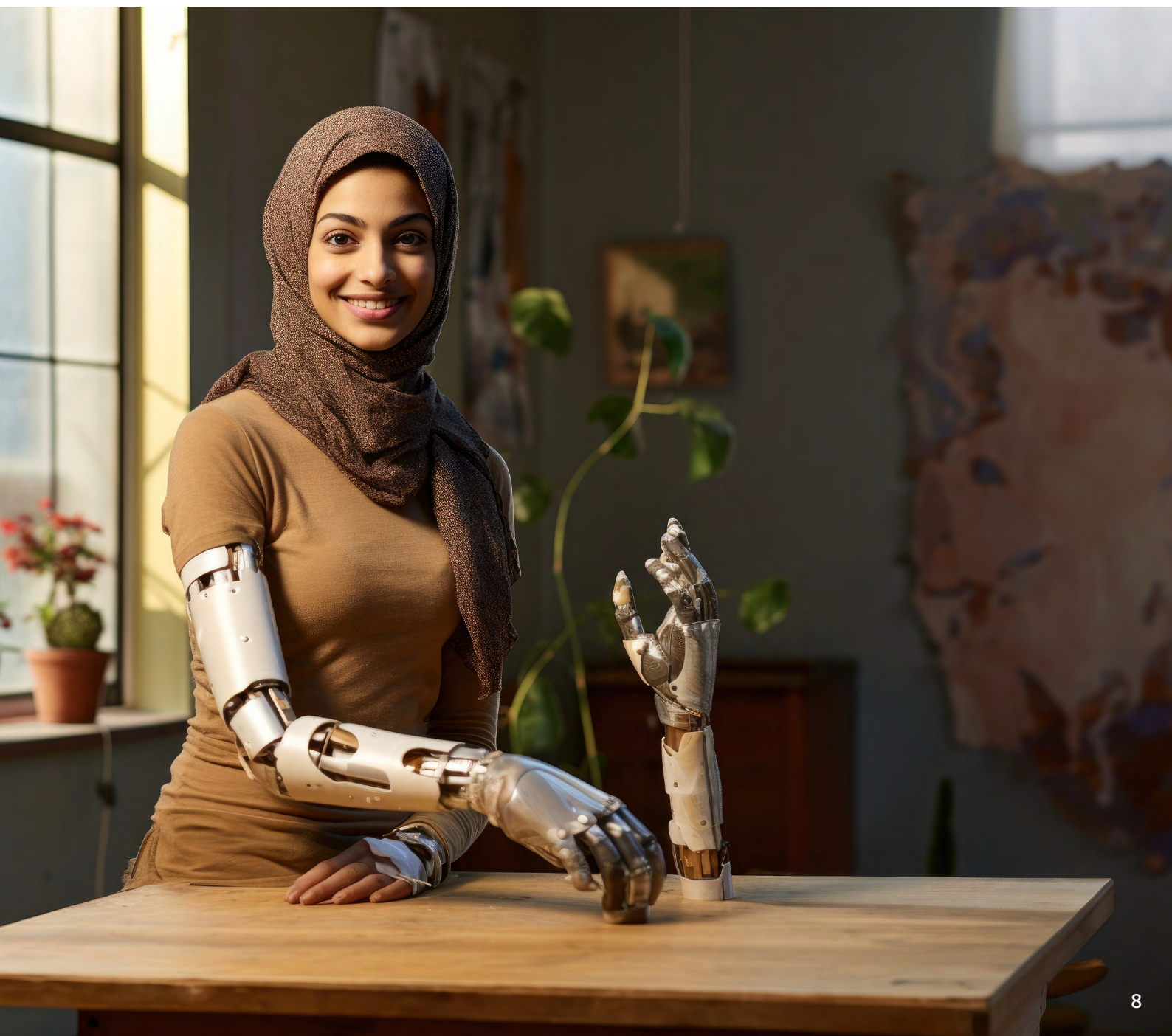
Employers should not forget about the needs of this group. These knowledgeable and experienced prosthetists and orthotists must be recognised and valued for the work they do and provided with access to appropriate development opportunities such as short courses, CPD and opportunities to participate in quality improvement activities. This might also include opportunities to train to become advanced practitioners.

For all prosthetists and orthotists, good career conversations between employers and employees are crucial to understanding individuals' career aspirations and development needs and how they might best be met.

Enhanced practice in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

Language for enhanced practice varies in the other countries of the UK. In Scotland and Northern Ireland 'specialist' is used to describe the same level of practice.

Whilst Enhanced Clinical Practitioner apprenticeship programmes are only available in England, employers in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are encouraged to think about how they can improve the recruitment, retention and productivity of their workforces by investing in the career development of prosthetists and orthotists at this level of practice.



Resources

What is enhanced practice?

- [Principles of enhanced practice](#)
- [Enhanced practice on the NHS England website](#)

What does enhanced practice look like in prosthetics and orthotics?

- [Advanced practice in prosthetics and orthotics](#) – includes information about enhanced, advanced and consultant level practice
- [Enhanced level practice Schemas with Model Curricula](#) – includes descriptors for enhanced practice in the profession, primarily for education providers but can be helpful in understanding what enhanced practice looks like in different areas of practice

The Enhanced Clinical Practitioner apprenticeship

- [Employer's guide to the apprenticeship](#) – includes information to help decide which staff might be suitable and describes how enhanced practice contrasts to advanced practice
- [Enhanced Clinical Practitioner apprenticeship information pack](#)
- [Apprenticeship standard](#)
- [How do I pay for apprenticeship training?](#)
- [Guidance for apprenticeship funding](#)
- [List of university apprenticeship programmes](#)

Developing the existing workforce

- [AHP career conversations based on growth](#)

Enhanced/specialist practice in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

- [Wales](#)
- [Scotland](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)



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