

# Evidence Brief: Orthoptics

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Produced by the Knowledge Management team Evidence Briefs offer an overview of the published reports, research, and evidence on a workforce-related topic.

**Date of publication:** January 2025

Please acknowledge this work in any resulting paper or presentation as:  
Evidence Brief: Orthoptics. Hannah Wood and Katy Greenfield. (2025). UK: Workforce, Training and Education Knowledge Management Team

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### Key publications – the big picture

#### [NHS Long Term Workforce Plan](#)

NHS England, 2023 (updated 2024)

(No direct mention of orthoptists, but the British and Irish Orthoptic Society contributed to the LTWP.)

Increase AHP training places to 17,000 by 2028/29, putting us on the path to increasing places overall by a quarter to more than 18,800 by 2031/32. (Page 19) With full implementation over the longer term, the NHS total workforce would grow by around 2.6–2.9% a year, with an expansion of the NHS permanent workforce from 1.4 million in 2021/22 to 2.2–2.3 million in 2036/37, including an extra 60,000–74,000 doctors, 170,000–190,000 nurses, 71,000–76,000 allied health professionals (AHPs), and 210,000–240,000 support workers alongside the expansion of new roles such as 22 | NHS Long Term Workforce Plan physician associates and nursing associates, and greater use of apprenticeships. (Page 21) Education and training places for the AHP workforce are estimated to need to grow by 19–25% by 2030/31. This Plan sets out an ambition to increase AHP training places by 25% to over 18,800 by 2031/32. To support this level of ambition and work towards this level of expansion, AHP training places will increase by 13% to 17,000 by 2028/29, with an increase of 8% by 2024/25. (Page 45) More than a third of AHPs could train through apprenticeships, compared to 6% now, but this would vary by professional group. The Plan sets out the following assessment for proportion of entrants joining the AHP workforce via an apprenticeship route by 2031/32. (Page 45)

#### [Revised standards of conduct, performance and ethics](#)

Health & Care Professions Council, 2024

The revised standards of conduct, performance and ethics came into effect on 1 September 2024. Our [guidance on social media](#), which sits alongside the standards, has also been revised.

#### [Approved programmes](#)

Health & Care Professions Council, 2024

A database of approved education programmes for Allied Health Professionals.

#### [Recruitment of overseas allied health professionals](#)

NHS Employers, 2024

How overseas allied health professionals (AHPs) can enter the UK for work.

#### [National profiles for Orthoptists & Optometrists](#)

NHS Staff Council Job Evaluation Group, 2023

A national profile of job roles and responsibilities.

#### [Innovation and collaboration: supporting Allied Health Professions Return to Practice](#)

NHS England, 2023

It is well recognised that there are significant challenges in AHP workforce supply, retention, and growth across all sectors of health and care. Returning Allied Health Professions are a vital element of the Health Education England (HEE) workforce plan and are essential in re-directing knowledge, skills and experience back into health and care sectors.

#### [AHP Educator Career Framework](#)

Council of Deans of Health, 2023

The AHP Educator Career Framework is an outcome-based career framework that describes the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to be an effective teacher, learning facilitator, supervisor and role model in AHP education in practice and formal education settings. First and foremost, it promotes the education pillar of AHP professional practice, recognising that education is everyone's responsibility.

### [Genomics for allied health professionals: Survey results](#)

NHS England WT&E, Genomics Education Programme, 2023  
Overall, your responses showed that a good majority of you feel you don't have a good understanding of genomics.

### [Your future allied health professionals](#)

NHS Employers, 2023  
This infographic sets out the different routes available for organisations to train allied health professionals.

### [A guide to ESR coding for Advanced Practitioner roles](#)

NHS England WT&E, 2022  
To ensure that advanced practitioners' skills are consistently recognised, and better enable those skills to be deployed across healthcare settings we must now ensure that the NHS workforce accurately reflects the breadth of the modern clinical workforce.

### [The Allied Health Professions \(AHP\) for England: 2022 to 2027](#)

NHS England, 2022  
This strategy is a catalyst for change. Wherever you work, every member of our AHP community has a part in realising our collective ambitions through its delivery. I therefore encourage you to take a moment to consider how the AHP community can enable the change required to deliver future care today.

### [Allied Health Professions' Research and Innovation Strategy for England](#)

NHS England WT&E, 2022  
This Strategy comprises a definitive collective national reference statement that encompasses and supports the existing research and innovation strategies of all the Allied Health professional associations.

### [What can AHPs offer in mental health settings?](#)

Health Education England, 2021  
AHPs are the key to transforming health, care, and wellbeing. Working at the top of their competencies and skills, AHPs lead mental health teams to new ways of working. Their expertise in rehabilitation and enablement is vital to move away from over-reliance on hospitals and towards professional interventions across health and social care settings.

### [My role in tackling health inequalities: a framework for allied health professionals](#)

The King's Fund, 2021  
This framework builds on our commitments in the UK allied health professions public health strategic framework 2019–2024 (Allied Health Professions Federation 2019) and we hope AHPs across the UK will find it useful. It aims to help you to consider your own unique contribution to tackling health inequalities and to help maximise this through a series of lenses and questions.

### [What is advanced clinical practice?](#)

NHS England WT&E, no date (estimated post-2020)  
Advanced clinical practitioners come from a range of professional backgrounds such as nursing, pharmacy, paramedics and occupational therapy. They are healthcare professionals educated to Master's level and have developed the skills and knowledge to allow them to take on expanded roles and scope of practice caring for patients.

### [Standards of education and training](#)

Health & Care Professions Council, 2017  
In line with the way our education quality assurance model functions, we have split our standards of education and training along institution and programme levels.

See also: [Review of the standards of education and training \(2024\)](#)

# British and Irish Orthoptic Society

## [Orthoptic Workforce Development Programme](#)

BIOS, 2024

The Workforce Development Programme is a programme funded by NHS England covering a number of projects aimed at developing and securing the orthoptic workforce throughout the UK both now and in the future.

## [Advanced Clinical Practice](#)

BIOS, 2023

Advanced practice, while initially driven within nursing and then physiotherapy, has now been on the agenda for over a decade. Recently, there has been increasing enthusiasm for AHPs to upskill as ACPs.

## [Revised Curriculum Framework for Orthoptics](#)

BIOS, 2023

The new framework adds in content covering sustainability, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), quality assurance, and personal health and wellbeing. It has been aligned to [Advanced Practice 'pillars'](#) – around clinical practice, education, research, and leadership and management. This will allow newly-qualified Orthoptists to see where their knowledge and skills sit, and plan more effectively in shaping their careers.

## [Workforce Development Projects 2022-23](#)

BIOS, 2023

The Workforce Development Programme was a programme funded by Health Education England which enhanced BIOS's current initiatives in place for developing and securing the orthoptic workforce throughout the UK both now and in the future. Read our full final report [here](#).

## [Clinical leadership – a framework](#)

BIOS, 2020

It is encouraging to see recognition of some of the major barriers to Orthoptists progressing to leadership positions and that steps being taken to tackle this. The framework has been developed through discussions with clinicians exploring some of the barriers and enablers they identify when moving into senior leadership positions, such as unhelpful career structures and lower expectations of clinicians making this step. See also [British and Irish Orthoptic Society definition of professional leadership](#).

## [BIOS Workforce Development Programme – Driving improvements in equality, diversity and inclusion \(EDI\) within pre-registration education](#)

BIOS, 2020

BIOS, along with all Professional Bodies are working to provide information on their webpages regarding Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) and ensuring EDI is a golden thread through all of the work we do.

## Case Studies

### [Orthoptics case study](#)

We Care Together

Hear from Sarah, head Orthoptist at James Paget University Hospital

## The Star for workforce redesign

More resources and tools are available in the AHP Quick Reference Guides Upskilling section of the [Star](#). Alternatively, search for 'Allied Health' in the search bar.

### Statistics

You can find relevant statistics on the [Health and Care Statistics Landscape](#).

#### [Registrant data and statistics](#)

Health & Care Professions Council, 2024

These factsheets provide a breakdown for each of the professions we regulate.

#### [Key statistics on education and training for HCPC professions](#)

Health & Care Professions Council, 2024

We have provided key statistics as a summary of the picture of education and training for the professions we regulate, and how that picture is changing.

#### [Retention rates of first time HCPC registrants, 2013 to 2018](#)

Health & Care Professions Council, 2023

The HCPC embarked upon this analysis to inform our work on preceptorship. We consider that the findings are of wider value. They have particularly important implications for providers and funders of training, and for workforce planners. They are also likely to be of great interest to other stakeholders including professional bodies.

#### [Diversity data: orthoptists - October 2023](#)

Health & Care Professions Council, 2023

This factsheet provides key EDI information for orthoptists and how the demographics of this group compare to the demographics of HCPC registrants overall.

#### [Orthoptic Workforce Survey 2023](#)

BIOS, 2023

**Below you will find summary data for the BIOS Workforce Survey 2023**

- 139 departments returned data, including 112 from England, 14 from Scotland, 8 from Wales and 5 from Northern Ireland.
- This covered 1,212 Orthoptic staff and a WTE of 1012.
- The survey was carried out in April 2023.

### National Data Programme

Workforce, Training and Education staff can look at the [WT&E Data and Analytics Service](#) resources including the National Data Warehouse SharePoint site to find out more about datasets and Tableau products.

### Published Peer Reviewed Research

#### Community, Primary Care, Social Care

##### [Qualification of non-pediatric ophthalmologists in examining children](#)

European Journal of Ophthalmology 33(1), 2023

This study is aimed to evaluate the clinical approach of non-pediatric ophthalmologists, working in community-based clinics towards Pediatric Patients and their management including referral rates to Pediatric Ophthalmologists and Orthoptists. [...] These findings suggest that more pediatric-specific training is needed to improve the physician's skills to perform a comprehensive evaluation of pediatric patients in order to reduce the referral burden.

##### [The cost-effectiveness of different visual acuity screening strategies in three European countries: A microsimulation study](#)

Preventive Medicine Reports 28, 2022

Vision screening by measurement of VA can be cost-effective, however, the predictions strongly depend on the assumed utility loss for unilateral visual impairment. Therefore more research is needed to determine the effect of persistent unilateral amblyopia on quality of life. We found for all countries in this study that if only one screen is performed, it can best be done around age 5 years, provided that the attendance is high (for example at schools). Adding a screen at age 4 years is a reasonable option and will increase the QALYs gained by a large amount. Adding more screens generally is less cost-effective.

### Digital

[Using artificial intelligence to improve human performance: efficient retinal disease detection training with synthetic images](#)

British Journal of Ophthalmology 108(10), 2024

Synthetic images can be used effectively in medical education. We also found that humans are more robust to novel situations than AI models, thus showcasing human judgement's essential role in medical diagnosis.

[Online survey and interview evaluation to explore the use of video consulting among Allied Health Professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

BMJ Open 13(5), 2023

Integrating the traditional methods of service delivery (face-to-face), and novel, innovative ways, such as video consultations, can motivate positive transformations for the efficiency and efficacy of health and social care.

[A Quality Assurance Audit of an Orthoptic-Led Virtual Neuro-Ophthalmology Clinic](#)

British and Irish Orthoptic Journal 19, 2023

In conclusion, the demands on the neuro-ophthalmology sub-speciality mean that we need to explore new ways of working. Non-medical led (virtual) clinics are well documented in other ophthalmic sub-specialities, and these models of service delivery are crucial to ensuring the safe and effective delivery of care to patients in a timely manner. Our outcomes demonstrate a high level of agreement between orthoptists and ophthalmologists, and excellent patient satisfaction outcomes. This shows that select neuro-ophthalmic patients can safely be monitored by orthoptists in a shared care model with a clear escalation protocol.

[Barriers to Video Call-Based Telehealth in Allied Health Professions and Nursing: Scoping Review and Mapping Process](#)

Journal of Medical Internet Research 25, 2023

This review identified key barriers to video call-based telehealth use by allied health professionals and nurses, which can foster the development of stable infrastructure, education, training, guidelines, policies, and support systems to improve telehealth services. Further research is necessary to identify potential solutions to the identified barriers.

[Utilising Virtual Clinics and Orthoptists to Aid COVID-19 Service Recovery in Adult Strabismus](#)

British and Irish Orthoptic Journal 18, 2022

Virtual strabismus services offer flexible, safe and effective ways to meet fluctuating referral patterns and maximise limited time and resources. Orthoptists are uniquely essential and highly valued keyworkers to conservatively manage non-surgical strabismus.

### Diversity and inclusion

[Do Socioeconomic Inequalities Exist Within Ophthalmology and Orthoptics in the UK?: A Scoping Review](#)

British and Irish Orthoptic Journal 20, 2024

There is limited evidence of amblyopia, visual impairment, and glaucoma being more prevalent in socioeconomically underserved individuals. There is also evidence of barriers to orthoptic and ophthalmic treatment for the same group, such as delayed presentation, reduced attendance at eye-care appointments, and reduced concordance with therapy. These findings suggest health inequalities within ophthalmology and orthoptics, so research is warranted to explore the reasons behind them and identify methods of reducing them.

[“Raising the curtain on the equality theatre”: a study of recruitment to first healthcare job post-qualification in the UK National Health Service](#)

Human Resources for Health 20, 2022

The Healthcare Workforce Equity + Diversity Lens we have developed can help to ‘raise the curtain on the equality theatre’ and inform more inclusive approaches to recruitment such as contextualised recruitment or effective allyship between employers and universities.

[The challenge of diversity in the allied health professionals](#)

The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, 2020

Although the Allied Health Professions (AHPs) are a diverse range of professions in terms of their skill set. The workforce which makes up the professions lacks diversity, having been shaped by a set of distinct social forces, relics of a post-industrial era.

### Education and curriculum

[Comparative educational effectiveness of AI generated images and traditional lectures for diagnosing chalazion and sebaceous carcinoma](#)

Scientific Reports 14, 2024

Students from Orthoptics, Optometry, and Vision Research (n = 55) were randomly assigned to either an AI-generated image training group or a traditional video lecture group. Diagnostic performance was assessed using a 50-image quiz before and after the intervention. Both groups showed significant improvement in overall diagnostic accuracy ( $p < 0.001$ ), with no significant difference between groups ( $p = 0.124$ ). In the AI group, all 25 chalazion images showed improvement, while only 6 out of 25 sebaceous carcinoma images improved.

[UK Optometrists’ Professional Learning Needs Toward Engaging with Myopia Control Interventions](#)

British and Irish Orthoptic Journal 20, 2024

In conclusion, the optometrists who participated in this survey reported they receive information about myopia control interventions primarily at continuous education conferences that offered continuous professional development (CPD) points. They preferred online learning, and they needed training to improve their knowledge of myopia control in all areas of myopia management, from practical clinical skills to prescribing the chosen myopia control interventions.

[The impact of game play on dementia knowledge: A student evaluation of the Dementia Inequalities Game](#)

Dementia, 2024

What does this article contribute to the wider global clinical community?

- Game play can be an effective educational tool to increase knowledge about dementia and inequalities in health, allied health, nursing and psychology students
- Playing the Dementia Inequalities Game has the potential to improve knowledge about dementia in the existing workforce

### Leadership, coaching and supervision

[Inequitable barriers and opportunities for leadership and professional development, identified by early-career to mid-career allied health professionals](#) Full text available with NHS OpenAthens account\*  
BMJ leader 8(3), 2024

Thematic analysis (TA) generated four themes, including the barriers and opportunities for AHP leadership development and career progression. Further TA identified three overarching themes: equitable and interprofessional leadership development; an equitable and structured AHP career pathway; and having AHP leaders at a strategical and/or very senior level. These overarching themes were subsumed under the umbrella category: equity of opportunity and voice. The AHPs, who were interviewed, reported inequitable access to both career and leadership development, compared with other professions, such as nurses, doctors and pharmacists.

[The Impact of Preceptorship for Newly Graduated Orthoptists on Clinical Confidence and Attitudes towards Public Health](#)  
British and Irish Orthoptic Journal 18, 2023

The preceptorship document promoted structure, reflection, and engagement all of which contributed to effective transition for the mentees. However, document navigation, lack of preceptorship exposure at undergraduate level and leadership engagement were potential barriers to using the programme. The programme encouraged public health engagement among new graduates but barriers such as time pressure, lack of experience and patient understanding were challenges that often prevented the adoption of public health skills and behaviours within their practice.

[Development of a learning game for ophthalmic technicians: "Orthoptist Simulator"](#) Abstract only\*

Journal Francais D'ophtalmologie 45(10), 2022

To our knowledge, we have set up the first learning game for the training of future ophthalmic technicians, which is an innovative educational tool and complementary to traditional training. This game could also be used to train ophthalmology residents in ocular motility examination. This new instrument will require future evaluation to determine its real impact on training.

[Evaluation of eye animations developed to aid undergraduate student orthoptists](#)

Developing Academic Practice, 2022

Results showed that students responded positively, valuing the visual element of the animation resource, the user friendliness and the flexible accessibility. The themes identified during exploratory analysis were similar from the questionnaires and the focus group. These themes highlighted that the students positively evaluated the animations and would like to continue utilising them further, commenting positively on the formatting and the ease of use of the animations.

[Orthoptist-led glaucoma monitoring: A pilot quality assurance audit of the reliability of orthoptists in glaucoma management decisions](#)

Australian Orthoptic Journal 53, 2021

Substantial agreement was found between orthoptists and an ophthalmologist in the management of patients who were suspected of glaucoma or diagnosed with stable primary open angle glaucoma or ocular hypertension. This suggests that there may be a role for trained orthoptists in the screening and monitoring of glaucoma patients.

[A qualitative study exploring experiences and challenges of combining clinical academic training with family life](#)

BMC Medical Education 21, 2021



Although people manage to find ways to successfully combine clinical academic roles with family life, findings highlight a need to identify ways of supporting and encouraging trainees with caring responsibilities to ensure that they remain on the clinical academic pathway.

### [Who Coaches the Coaches? The Development of a Coaching Model for Experiential Learning](#)

Innovative Higher Education 46, 2021

We recommend practices for coaching that can support gains for students and faculty in experiential, project-based, interdisciplinary courses.

### [Students' Perception of E-Lectures from an Undergraduate Health Sciences Programme](#)

Journal of Pedagogical Research 4(2), 2020

The key findings highlighted an unexpected perception that e-lectures are not valued as highly as face-to-face lectures.

## Mental health

### [Joining the workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic: views of Allied Health Profession students](#)

Journal of Interprofessional Care 36(5), 2022

Although the transition from student to practitioner continues to be a stressful period, only a minority of participants reported COVID-19 as an explicit stressor.

### [Wellbeing and coping of UK nurses, midwives and allied health professionals during COVID-19-a cross-sectional study](#)

PLoS One 17(9), 2022

This workforce would benefit from additional support/services to prevent further deterioration in mental health and wellbeing and optimise workforce retention.

## Role progression and development

### [Enhancing Paediatric and Strabismus Ophthalmology Departments in Spain Through the Inclusion of Orthoptists: Insights from a Nationwide Survey](#)

British and Irish Orthoptic Journal 20, 2024

The results underscore the urgent need for recognising, supporting, and promoting the orthoptics profession within Spanish medical societies and associations. The survey also highlights critical insights, including the call for enhanced infrastructure and resources for orthoptists in hospital settings and the importance of distinguishing the orthoptics profession from behavioural visual therapies or behavioural optometry.

### [20/20: Where are Orthoptists Going?](#) Abstract only\*

Journal of Binocular Vision and Ocular Motility 73(3), 2023

The challenges of the present hint at an optimistic future for orthoptists, expanding their role as physician extenders to help ease the medical access inequalities in the world. Finally, I introduce the patron saint of the blind and those with vision impairment.

### [Cost Analysis of Orthoptist-Led Neurofibromatosis Type 1 Screening Clinics](#)

British and Irish Orthoptic Journal 19, 2023

Our study demonstrates that from a health care perspective the orthoptist-led clinic resulted in a mean reduction in costs per appointment compared to the consultant-led clinic. The difference in cost was driven by the labour costs involved in each clinic.

### [The need for research for the development of orthoptic visual rehabilitation](#)

Journal of Optometry 15(4), 2022

The application of Evidence-Based Optometry also allows us to identify and ban from clinical practice those procedures and techniques that have been used without scientific basis and that have not been able to demonstrate it. It is mandatory for a health professional not to recommend and even condemn this type of action, which also appears as the greatest threat to the progress of a scientific discipline and a robust professional body.

### [AHPs in non-traditional and diverse roles](#)

The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, 2022

The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust (RWT) employs nine of the AHP groups (Chiropodists/podiatrists, Dietitians, Occupational therapists, Operating Department Practitioners, Orthoptists, Physiotherapists, Prosthetists and Orthotists, Radiographers, Speech and language therapists) totalling almost 600 members of staff. Although AHPs are allied to one another they are separate and diverse professions requiring a range of skills and providing a diverse range of opportunities.

### [The Impact of Preceptorship for Newly Graduated Orthoptists on Clinical Confidence and Attitudes towards Public Health](#)

British and Irish Orthoptic Journal 18(1), 2022

The programme encouraged public health engagement among new graduates but barriers such as time pressure, lack of experience and patient understanding were challenges that often prevented the adoption of public health skills and behaviours within their practice.

### [Bouncing off Each Other: Experiencing Interprofessional Collaboration Through Simulation](#) Abstract only\*

Clinical Simulation in Nursing 65, 2022

Three key themes emerged from participant narratives: (a) Learning to Speak the Same language: Working Together to Understand the Healthcare Team, (b) Progressing from Uncertainty to Collaborative Practice: Reflecting on Practice and

Transition, and (c) Lessons Learned in Developing the Simulation: Barriers and Enablers to Learning.

### [East of England Eyecare Workforce Transformation through increasing capacity and capability, integrating advancing practice initiatives and the Ophthalmic Practitioner Training programme \(OPT\):Phase 1: Final Report](#)

University of East Anglia, 2022

A three phased project aims to address the integration of eyecare workforce development within wider initiatives (across population groups/specialties) and strengthen workforce capability and capacity to deliver eyecare on a whole-system basis across East of England. Phase 1 aimed to 1) build the foundation for growing capability and capability of the whole workforce across different contexts to meet the needs of people with actual/potential eye conditions to optimise existing workforce 'assets', while taking a supportive approach to identifying and addressing learning needs and 2) make recommendations for Health Education England (Eastern); Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) and Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) to inform subsequent stages.

### [Enablers and barriers to progressing a clinical academic career in nursing, midwifery and allied health professions: A cross-sectional survey](#)

Journal of Clinical Nursing 31(3-4), 2022

Nearly three quarters pursuing a clinical academic career indicated 'clearer career paths' and 'greater integration across clinical and academic departments' were desirable. Most common barriers related to research roles, availability of positions and funding.

### [Utilising the Orthoptic Skill Set to Improve Access to Eye Care for Adults with Severe/Profound Learning Disabilities—A Service Evaluation](#)

British and Irish Orthoptic Journal 17, 2021

It is hoped that this service model will inspire other orthoptists to work proactively to identify areas of health inequality and raise awareness with stakeholders, in order to establish local initiatives. Potentially these could then be integrated into any future national framework proposal to ensure access to eye care is truly equitable for those people with the most complex needs.

### [Characterising the outcomes, impacts and implementation challenges of advanced clinical practice roles in the UK: a scoping review](#)

BMJ Open 11(8), 2021

This review suggests a need for educational and role standardisation and a supported career pathway for advanced clinical practitioners (ACPs) in the UK. Future research should: (i) adopt more robust study designs, (ii) investigate the full scope of the ACP role and (iii) include a wider range of professions and sectors.

### [Changing practice for the non-medical ophthalmic hospital workforce in the UK—a snapshot survey](#)

Eye 35, 2020

Ophthalmology is developing many innovative roles for the non-medical workforce and, with the launch of the OCCC training, this is likely to increase. Terminology is confusing and a categorisation suitable for ophthalmology is proposed.

### [Capitalising on the transformational opportunities of early clinical academic career training for nurses, midwives and allied health professionals](#)

BMC Medical Education 20, 2020

The findings suggest that individuals, funders, and organisations may need to relinquish the notion that training is purely or largely a transactional exchange in order to establish collaborative initiatives.

### [Relationship between labour force satisfaction, wages and retention within the UK National Health Service: a systematic review of the literature](#)

BMJ Open 10, 2020

Pay was found to influence satisfaction, which in turn affected retention. An increase in wages alone is unlikely to be sufficient to ameliorate the concerns of NHS workers.

### [Developing a consolidated research framework for clinical allied health professionals practising in the UK](#)

BMC Health Services Research 20, 2020

The consolidated framework was entitled 'Shaping Better Practice Through Research: A Practitioner Framework' by stakeholders, thus emphasising its ambition to embed research activity into practice.

## Secondary and tertiary care

### [Ophthalmology inpatient consultations: an Irish tertiary hospital experience](#) Abstract only\*

Eye 38(18), 2024

Our study found a high proportion of ophthalmology inpatient consultations had normal eye exams and required no intervention. The quality of referrals was variable suggesting that clearer guidelines and more ophthalmology education is needed for referring teams.

### [Low Vision Services Provision throughout NHS Trusts in the UK](#)

British and Irish Orthoptic Journal 19, 2023

Significant variation was found in low vision service provision throughout the UK, with some regions having no NHS-delivered provision for either children, adults, or both. This calls for further research to gain a more comprehensive understanding of low

vision service provision and remove inequalities in provision, access and resourcing, aiming to ensure equitable access for all.

### [Integration of hospital and community care for paediatric ophthalmology: A mixed-methods study](#)

Ophthalmic and Physiological Optics 43(5), 2023

#### Key points

- While integration of community and hospital paediatric eyecare could streamline services and ease access blocks, this consultation found significant barriers to change.
- Inter-professional distrust was identified as a barrier to implementation, thus educational meetings and inter-professional training are recommended to support new models of care.
- Standardisation of care through evidence-based guidelines and formal protocols is required to ensure quality of care and successful implementation of new models which feature task sharing.

### [Utilising the Orthoptic Skill Set to Improve Access to Eye Care for Adults with Severe/Profound Learning Disabilities—A Service Evaluation](#)

British and Irish Orthoptic Journal 17(1), 2021

This service model has identified a clearly defined unmet need and illustrates the unique skill set orthoptists can offer to address this health inequality. Requiring minimal financial outlay and flexible enough to be integrated into any future national eye care framework, this service has ensured that access to eye care is truly equitable for all people with LD.

### [The Accuracy of GP Referrals into Manchester Royal Eye Hospital Orthoptic Department](#)

British and Irish Orthoptic Journal 17(1), 2021

This study found orthoptic referral accuracy for GPs in Manchester to be similar to other areas of medicine. While acceptable compared to other areas of medicine, improving referral accuracy is essential to improve NHS spending, service delivery, and patient experience.

### [Orthoptic Services in the UK and Ireland During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

British and Irish Orthoptic Journal 16, 2021

We have reported information on the changing face of orthoptic clinical practice during the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey has highlighted emerging tele-consultation practice and the importance of centralised profession-specific guidelines.

## Workforce perspectives and experiences

### [Perspectives of Orthoptists Working with Patients with Communication Impairments](#)

British and Irish Orthoptic Journal 20, 2024

Orthoptists have adopted some communication strategies to improve their interactions with patients with communication impairments, despite limited resources. With proper resources, such as training in supportive communication techniques, they can provide optimal patient care, making it essential to identify what kind of resources would be most appropriate.

### [An Investigation Into the Orthoptist Experience of Instilling Eye Drops in Children Attending the Eye Clinic](#)

British and Irish Orthoptic Journal 20, 2024

The study reiterates the importance of verbal and non-verbal communication. The results may facilitate recommendations for change such as encouraging the study of medical exemptions and help support a case for play specialist support regularly, and the encouragement to develop a pre-procedural information

video to improve quality of care. This is currently inconsistent across different Trusts in the UK.

### [Evaluating the Use of Contrast Sensitivity Tests By Orthoptists in the UK](#)

British and Irish Orthoptic Journal 20, 2024

The result of the survey demonstrates the variability of CS testing currently in orthoptic practice in the UK. It also highlights the limited tests available currently for children for CS testing, which may be addressed by the addition of the new DH CS test. There is a need for increased knowledge of CS testing and current literature of CS tests to impact on clinical practice.

### [‘He just looked like he couldn’t learn, whereas he just couldn’t see’: exploring clinician experiences working with people who have co-occurring communication and visual impairment](#)

Abstract only\*

Speech, Language and Hearing, 2024

Individuals with concurrent visual and communication impairments necessitate specialized, multidisciplinary care, yet the adequacy of orthoptists' and speech pathologists' skills and resources remains underexplored. [...] Theme 1, positive impacts of interprofessional care, reflected the value of collaboration, dual knowledge and addressing both disabilities in improving client outcomes. Theme 2 highlighted barriers to effective clinical management, including limited communication between professions, lack of interprofessional knowledge, poor role awareness, orthoptists use of objective measures, and resource barriers. Theme 3 related to participants' lack of formal and informal training experiences, and theme 4 included enablers to improving clinical competency.

### [Having the conversation about vision for safe driving with older adults: an exploratory study of eyecare professional experiences in England and Australia](#) Abstract only\*

Clinical & Experimental Optometry 106(6), 2023

Eyecare professionals prefer to have early and regular conversations with older adults about their vision for driving. Acute visual field/acuity loss or onset of double vision, necessitating rapid changes to driving behaviour, were both identified as major challenges for eyecare professionals. Improved access to resources and training would be beneficial, to help eyecare professionals navigate these especially difficult conversations and signpost older drivers to appropriate support.

## Competency Frameworks

### [The standards of proficiency for orthoptists](#)

Health & Care Professions Council, 2023

These standards set out safe and effective practice in the professions we regulate. They are the threshold standards we consider necessary to protect members of the public.

### [The Ophthalmic Common Clinical Competency Framework](#)

NHS England WT&E, no date (estimated 2019)

The Ophthalmic Common Clinical Competency Framework (OCCCF) provides standards and guidance for the knowledge and skills required for non-medical eye healthcare professionals to deliver patient care. It is well known that there is a need for a systematic patient-centred approach to multi-disciplinary education and training in order to ensure standardised and recognised competences across all ophthalmic secondary care locations in the UK.

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