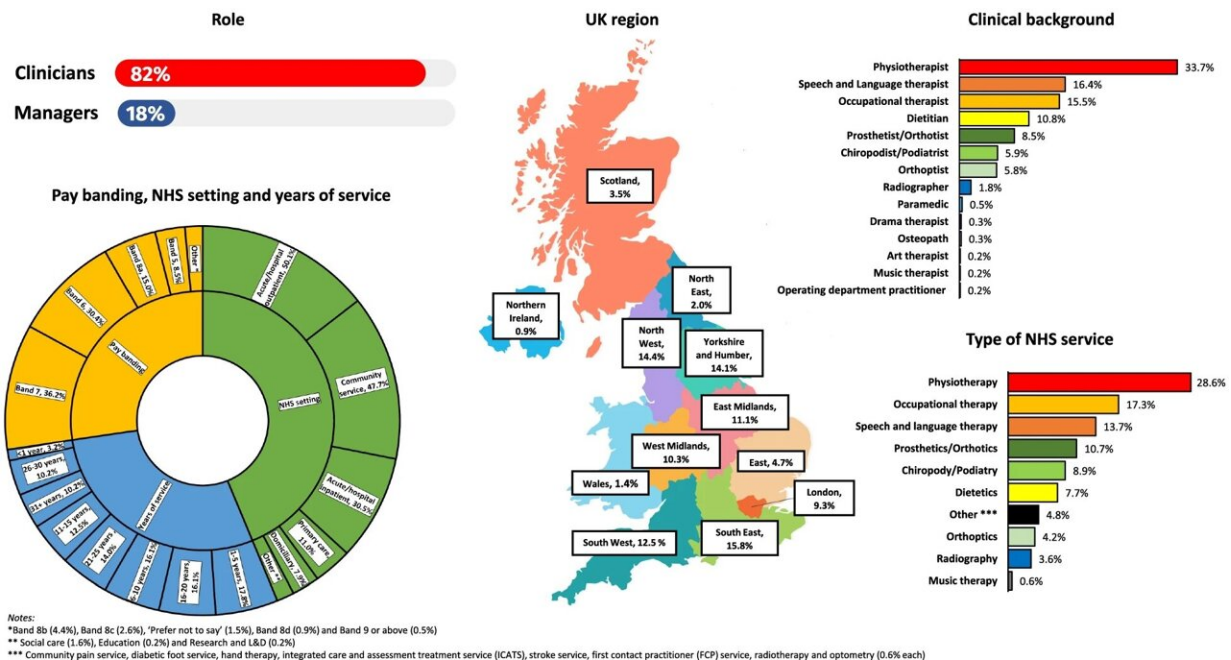


New policy framework for telehealth unveiled by researchers

January 17 2023



Demographic characteristics of survey participants. Credit: *International Journal for Equity in Health* (2022). DOI: 10.1186/s12939-022-01689-2

Staffordshire University has today launched a new policy brief to guide the creation of national telehealth patient consultation guidelines and training.

The [framework](#), developed in partnership with Allied Health Professions (AHPs), is being presented to professional body representatives,

managers and [policy makers](#) in the UK and overseas.

It follows on from research conducted by a team at Staffordshire University which found that many Allied Health Professionals are not adequately supported in the delivery of remote patient consultations.

The COVID-19 pandemic saw an unprecedented expansion of [telehealth](#) with a shift to remote patient consultations across the professions which includes prosthetics and orthotists, physiotherapy, podiatry, orthoptists, [occupational therapists](#), dieticians and osteopathy. The 14 AHPs make up the third largest healthcare workforce in the UK's National Health Service and play a vital role in the health and care of patients.

However a study, led by Staffordshire University, demonstrated that current telehealth guidelines and training programs for AHPs were not sufficiently comprehensive and lack information on key telehealth aspects.

Lead researcher Dr. Aoife Healy, said, "Based on our research, we recommend that telehealth guidelines and training should include information on patient privacy, [data security](#), and the use of technology which is consistent across the professions."

Dr. Nicky Eddison, a practicing orthotist and a key member of the team added, "Telehealth training should be mandatory for all AHPs, alongside access to ongoing professional development opportunities."

The new framework highlights the importance of investing in telehealth infrastructure and training to ensure that AHPs can continue to provide high-quality care to patients, even in the face of a pandemic.

Professor Nachi Chockalingam, Director of the Centre for Biomechanics and Rehabilitation Technologies at Staffordshire

University, said, "This work is a shining example of research that has successfully translated into real-world policy. The Allied Health Professions Federation and 13 UK AHP professional bodies have endorsed our work and they have been involved as stakeholders. We believe many of them will now adopt this framework which they can adapt for their use."

"It's essential that all our [healthcare professionals](#) are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to provide high-quality care to patients remotely."

More information: The studies informing the policy:

Enza Leone et al, Exploration of implementation, financial and technical considerations within allied health professional (AHP) telehealth consultation guidance: a scoping review including UK AHP professional bodies' guidance, *BMJ Open* (2021). [DOI: 10.1136/bmjopen-2021-055823](#)

Nicola Eddison et al, The potential impact of allied health professional telehealth consultations on health inequities and the burden of treatment, *International Journal for Equity in Health* (2022). [DOI: 10.1186/s12939-022-01689-2](#)

Enza Leone et al, Do UK Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) have sufficient guidelines and training to provide telehealth patient consultations?, *Human Resources for Health* (2022). [DOI: 10.1186/s12960-022-00778-1](#)

Nicola Eddison et al, Telehealth provision across allied health professions (AHP): An investigation of reimbursement considerations for its successful implementation in England, *Health Science Reports* (2022). [DOI: 10.1002/hsr2.991](#)

Provided by Staffordshire University

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