

Step to Work Implementation Guide



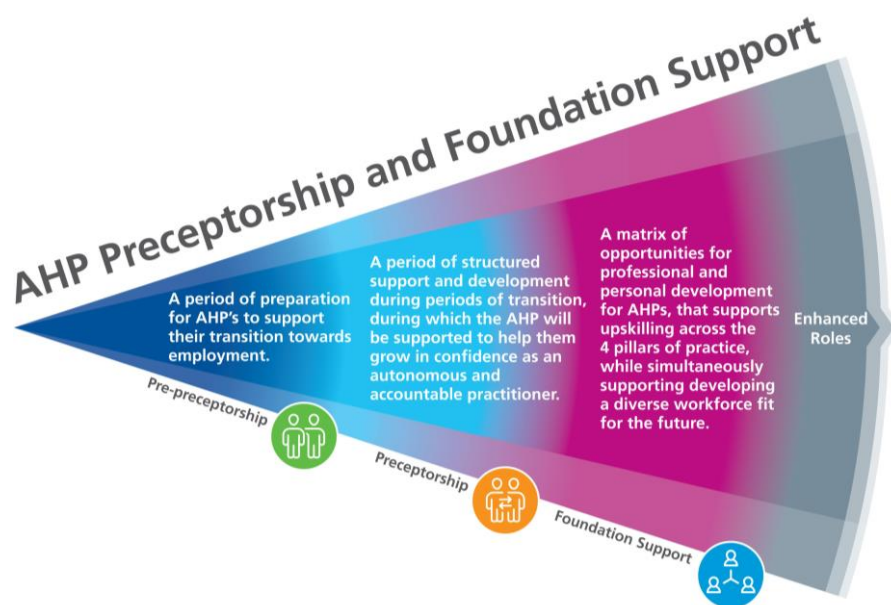
Step to Work: Implementation Guide (2022)



Background

The NHS long-term plan¹ states that Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) can significantly support the demand healthcare services are currently experiencing and aid patient flow across a whole system. However, national trends suggest significant shortages exist in several AHP professions, including but not limited to paramedics, podiatry, radiography and speech and language therapy². The AHP Strategy for England³ highlights the need to secure the future supply of AHPs and retain existing staff to ensure the systems have the right workforce, with the right skills, in the right place to deliver high-quality care. Bridging the gap between education and work is fundamental in optimising the confidence and capability of students and new registrants which will support an effective supply of AHPs for the future.

The National AHP Preceptorship and Foundation Support Programme has been established to ensure that AHPs receive high quality early career support. This is in the form of pre-preceptorship, preceptorship, and foundation support.



Pre-preceptorship refers to a period of preparation for AHPs to support their transition towards employment. Step to Work has been created to ease AHPs transition during the pre-preceptorship phase and serves to compliment high-quality preceptorship that follows it.

Step to Work is an online programme consisting of 8 units, hosted on eLearning for healthcare (e-lfh). This programme has been produced to support AHPs during their pre-preceptorship period before they begin their transition into employment. However, it will also be beneficial for AHPs who are 'new to role' which include, but is not limited, to those returning to practice and those internationally educated. The aim of Step to Work is to provide AHPs who are 'new to role' with guidance, support, and practical tools to help them reflect on the experiences and knowledge they have already gained to help them in their future roles. The programme will compliment but not replace the need for high-quality preceptorship. This guide is intended to support employers, higher education institutes (HEIs), systems and individuals implementing or completing 'step to work'.

However, it is important to note that the implementation of step to work is agile and flexible. Therefore, the delivery of this programme can be tailored to individual needs or organisational processes that are already in place.

Benefits

Benefits to participants:

- Accessible online via sign up with any email and available on mobile devices
- Completed at a time convenient to the learner
- Completed prior to and in preparation for transition to employment
- Increased confidence for transition into role
- Improved understanding of the healthcare system
- Builds on skills and experiences already acquired through reflection
- Greater understanding of self
- Improved readiness for preceptorship
- Certificate upon completion of all 8 units

Benefits to employers, HEI's and systems:

- Provide additional support for transition into roles including and not limited to newly qualified, internationally educated and returning to practice.
- Can be completed prior to application/commencement of role
- Improves readiness and supports preparation for preceptorship
- Improve retention and recruitment of workforce by having the appropriate support in place

Implementation Recommendations

Programme

This programme is hosted by eLearning for healthcare (e-LfH) and will be fully accessible to all AHPs regardless of employer or email address. The implementation of the programme into provider organisations is agile and flexible depending on individual or organisational needs. Due to the flexible nature of the programme, there is not a specific duration or timescale for when this should be completed. However, we recommend it would be most appropriate and beneficial to complete the programme before commencing employment and as preparation for preceptorship.

Examples of how this could be achieved include:

- HEIs sign posting final year AHP students to step to work on e-lfh
- HEIs encourage or incorporate step to work content into professional development or employability sessions.
- Service providers can include step to work in job advertisements to aid recruitment.
- Sign posting during the recruitment process.
- Advice to newly employed AHPs to commence the programme whilst waiting for completion of pre-employment checks.

- Encourage completion as part of CPD (participant will receive a certificate upon completion of all 8 units).
- Internationally educated AHPs will be able to access this resource as part of the NHS England AHP international recruitment transition programme.
- AHPs returning to practice will be able to access this resource as part of their return to practice programme.

Tasks and Reflections

At the end of each unit there is a reflective task to complete. These tasks can be completed individually as part of a reflection process. Also, these tasks can be completed with a supervisor, mentor, preceptor, peer, or colleague. If possible, an effective way of completing these tasks would be as part of an action learning set or coaching style group session. To help record your reflections, there is Step to Work worksheet embedded in the programme.

Examples of how to implement the tasks and reflections include:

- Set up action learning sets across the organisation(s) for the reflective tasks.
- Embed the reflective task into already existing preceptorship action learning sets.
- Discuss reflective task in clinical supervision sessions or monthly 1:1s.
- Protective time for the newly qualified employee to carry out the reflective task.

Resources

Step to Work Programme Webpage: <https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/step-to-work/>

National AHP Preceptorship and Foundation Support Webpage: <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/allied-health-professions/education-employment/national-ahp-preceptorship-foundation-support>

Reducing Pre-registration Attrition and Improving Retention: <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/reducing-pre-registration-attrition-improving-retention>

Supporting International Recruitment of AHP's: <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/allied-health-professions/increase-capacity/supporting-international-recruitment-ahp%E2%80%99s>

Return to Practice: allied health professionals, healthcare scientists and practising psychologists: <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/allied-health-professions/return-practice-allied-health-professionals-healthcare-scientists-practising-psychologists>

References

1. NHS England (2019) Interim NHS People Plan: The future allied health professions and psychological professions workforce: https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/IPP-future-AHP-workforce_2june.pdf
2. NHS England (2019) The NHS Long Term Plan: <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/nhs-long-term-plan-version-1.2.pdf>
3. NHS England (2022) The Allied Health Professions (AHPs) Strategy for England: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/allied-health-professions-strategy-for-england-ahps-deliver.pdf>