

# Supporting AHP Advanced Practice Roles in Scotland: Current Landscape and Future Directions

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## Aim

To identify how AHP advanced practice (AP) is supported, recognised and evaluated within NHS Boards in Scotland and scope the characteristics of the current workforce.

## Methods

MS Forms was used to develop **3 surveys** targeting:

- Board representatives who could provide an overview of support available for AHP AP
- Service Leads who support AHPs at this level
- AHPs who self-identify as advanced practitioners

Surveys were shared via AHP Directors, NES groups, Practice Education Leads and social media posts.

## Results

### Board Representatives and Service Leads

Responses from **15 Boards** and **86 Service Leads**

#### Support within Boards

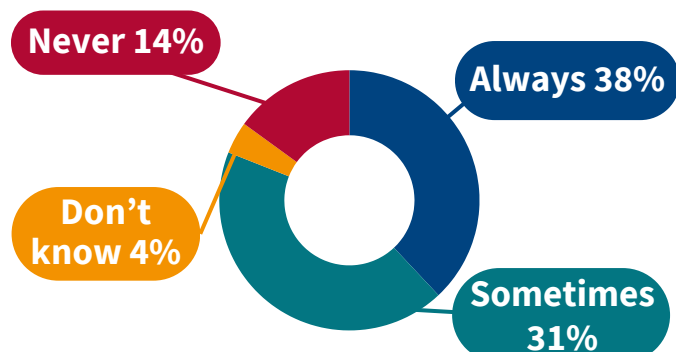
50% of Boards have a Lead for AHP advanced practice

50% of Boards have documents to support AHP advanced practice

87% of Boards have local networks or support groups

**Only 1 Board** registers all AHP AP roles on an electronic workforce system

Workforce planning for AHP AP roles undertaken by Service Leads



#### Evaluation of impact

Most services (75%) evaluate the impact of AP roles, using a variety of outcome measures:

- Patient related
- Demand
- Impact on staff
- Financial

Where evaluation is not undertaken, a lack of evaluation tools and no agreed outcome measures are the most common barriers.

#### Attracting to roles

Attracting to roles is done by a number of methods including:

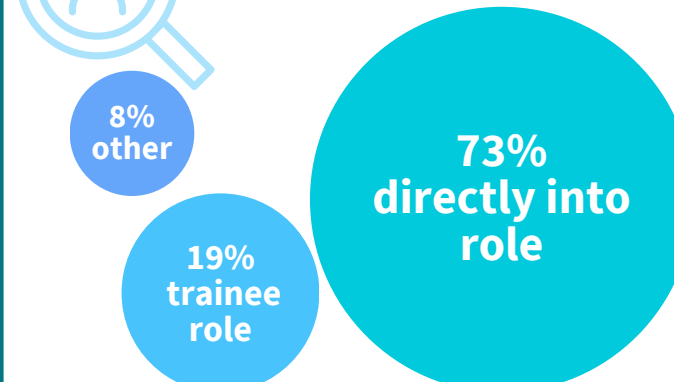
- Use of trainee positions
- Funding for training
- Peer support
- In-house and external training
- Shadowing/secondment opportunities

### AHP Advanced Practitioners

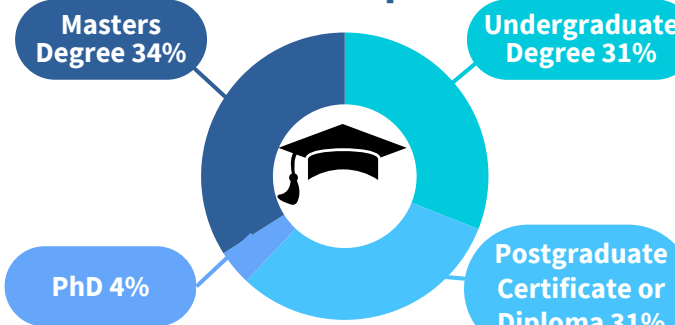
**250 responses** from AHPs who self-identify as working at AP level **40%** have been in role for over **5 years**

**44 variations of job title used**  
**Most common:**  
Advanced [name of profession] Practitioner +/- Specialty

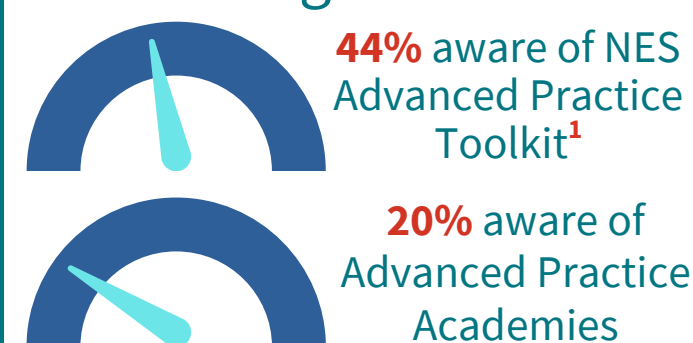
How were they recruited to their AP role?



Highest level of qualification



**Low** awareness of existing resources



**43% of APs from the 6 AHP professions** that are currently eligible to complete courses in prescribing indicated that prescribing is part of their role

**30%** have had their AP competencies formally signed off

**68%** had training fully funded by employer



## Conclusion

The findings revealed encouraging support for AHP AP roles within some NHS Boards but also identified several key challenges. In response to these findings and the AHP Education and Workforce Policy Review<sup>2</sup>, the Scottish Government commissioned NES, in collaboration with the Scottish Directors of AHPs, to support the development of AHP AP roles. Key deliverables include establishing a national definition and consistent role titles for AHP AP, developing a Transforming Roles paper and establishing robust oversight arrangements and processes for developing frameworks in priority areas. This work is underway and is expected to report in September 2025.

### References

<sup>1</sup>NHS Education for Scotland Advanced practice toolkit.

<sup>2</sup>Scottish Government Allied Health Professions Education and Workforce Policy Review Recommendations.