

The role of Specialist Allied Health Professionals (AHP) in upskilling the AHP rehabilitation workforce

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Specialist Allied Health Professionals (AHP) within the Greater Manchester Neuro-oncology service offer regular training for acute inpatient and community rehabilitation teams, as well as Hospice and Intermediate Care facilities.

Neuro-oncology includes the highly specialist treatment and care of brain and spinal tumours. These conditions are rare compared to other cancer groups but are found to have complex rehabilitation needs. The rehabilitation needs are complex because there is an interface of neuro and palliative care rehabilitation needs which is individual to each patient and their stage on the treatment pathway.

Patients with brain and spinal tumours have therapy intervention from AHPs throughout their treatment, though therapists may have limited experience with Neuro-oncology. Specialist AHPs from the central Neuro-oncology service based at Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust and The Christie NHS Foundation Trust provide regular and individualised training for the AHP rehabilitation workforce within Greater Manchester which has provided effective and been well received.

What is the role of the Specialist AHP within Neuro-oncology?

- Input in Neuro-oncology Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) and Best Supportive Care MDT
- AHP assessment/ support/ advice/ signposting/ referrals from oncology clinics and radiotherapy clinic
- Patient and family support
- Support complex discharge from hospitals
- Liaison with acute and community therapy teams – Neuro and Palliative care
- Provision of education and supervision for clinicians
- Rehabilitation access

In 2023, the Specialist AHP team delivered 36 training sessions across 22 teams. The team provide training to:



The training sessions enable the Specialist AHPs to share their expertise in supporting patients with brain and spinal tumours. The sessions include an overview of the Neuro-oncology service, brain tumour incidence and anatomy, types of tumours, imaging, the patient pathway and the neuro-rehabilitation pathway, neuro-surgery, diagnosis and imaging, oncology treatments and support for the workforce in further education and training.

Feedback has been extremely positive with:

- 100% of attendees finding the training interesting
- 70% of attendees finding the training thought provoking and useful



The focus for 2024 – 2025 is to expand teaching for community therapy and hospice teams across Greater Manchester and develop a sustainable workforce education plan.