

# Building Neonatal Allied Health Professional and Psychology (AHPP) Services across the South West

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## Background

Since 2019, national drivers have supported the development of the neonatal AHP and psychology (AHPP) workforce ( Figure 1). Network lead AHPPs were appointed in 2021/2022 as part of the NHS Long Term Plan and have supported the recruitment of neonatal AHPPs onto units as per GIRFT recommendations. The South West Neonatal Network AHPP team delivered a face-to-face away day for established and new Ockenden funded AHPP groups working on neonatal units within the South West Neonatal Network with mixed and profession specific focus groups. Forty five attendees, all AHPP groups represented , contributed to focus groups to determine the challenges and successes relating to delivering new services and working in neonatal units across the network.

Figure 1



## Embedding AHPPs into a neonatal team - challenges and successes



### Challenges

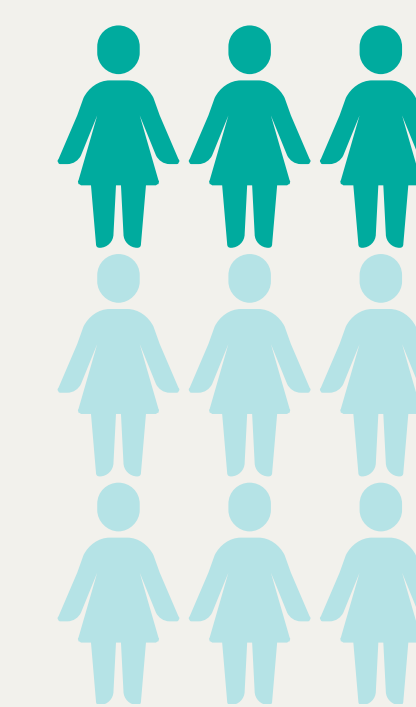
- Embedding new roles within established neonatal multi-disciplinary teams
- Role awareness - families and the MDT in commencing new posts
- Defining the individual strengths and specialty of each individual AHPP role
- Minimal time contracts inhibiting service provision and development (see Figures 3 and 4)
- Communicating with neonatal teams when AHPP staff are on NNUs for short periods of time
- Recognition of the importance of being involved in unit working and specialist interest groups e.g. FICare, developmental care and the individual skill sets AHPPs can bring
- Lack of formal clinical supervision structures for neonatal AHPPs (see Figure2)
- Variation in provision of, and involvement in, follow up and outreach provision
- Lack of office space

### Successes



- Increase in AHPP workforce provision (Figure 3)
- Improving AHPP support to families
- Positive feedback from families and staff
- Increasing awareness of benefits of roles of AHPPs on units
- Network provision of peer support and non clinical supervision
- Workforce development / upskilling via education opportunities and signposting
- Modelling good practice and observations of change in practice to others
- AHPP teams working across the region and sharing of good practice

Figure 2 Neonatal Clinical Supervision



Only 1/3 of AHPPs working on neonatal units in the SW Neonatal Network receive formal, neonatal specific, clinical supervision from an experienced neonatal clinician

## Benchmarking services

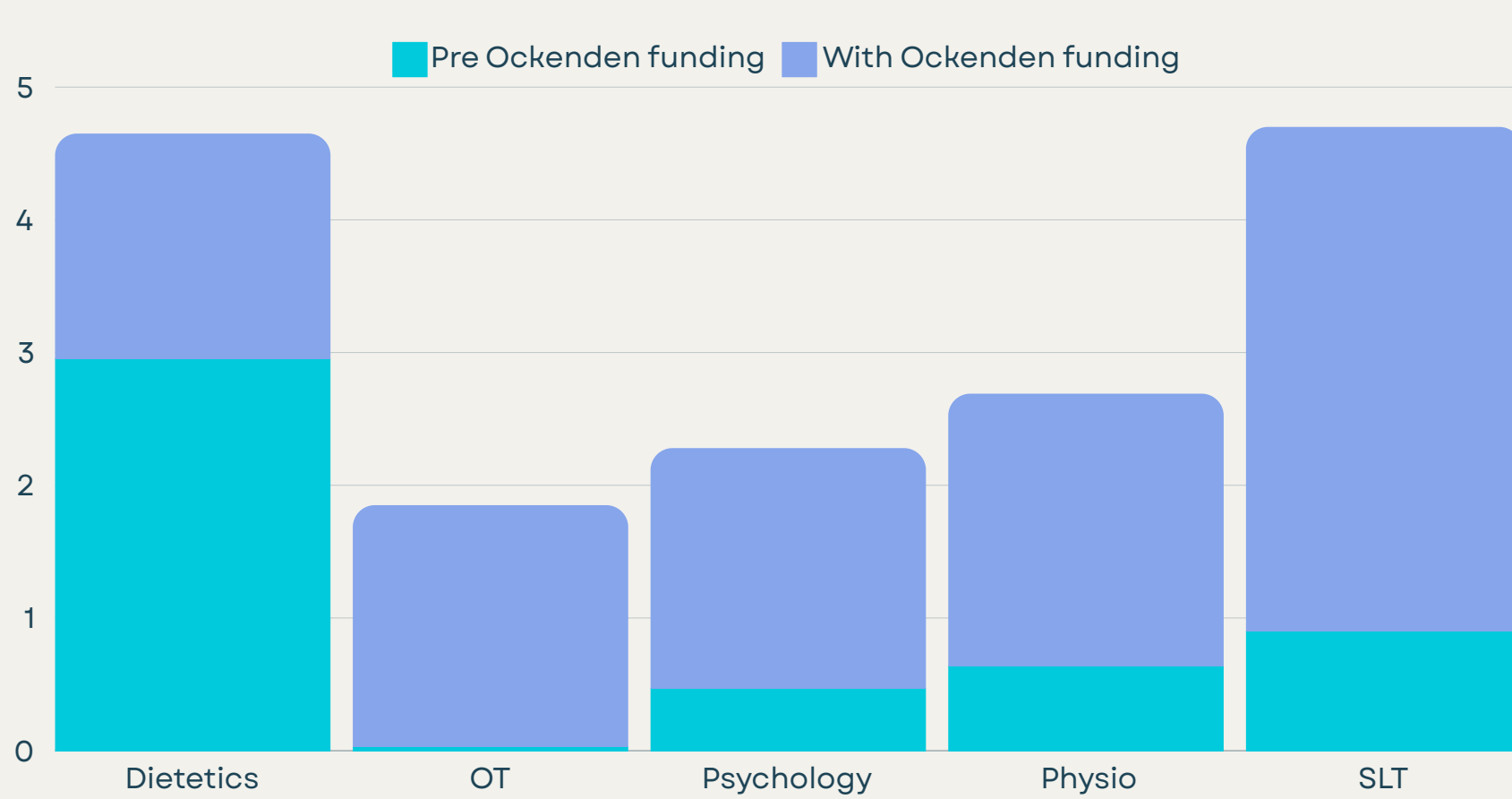


Figure 3 Benchmarking has been carried out for all AHPP services with data recorded prior to and with Ockenden funding (WTE)

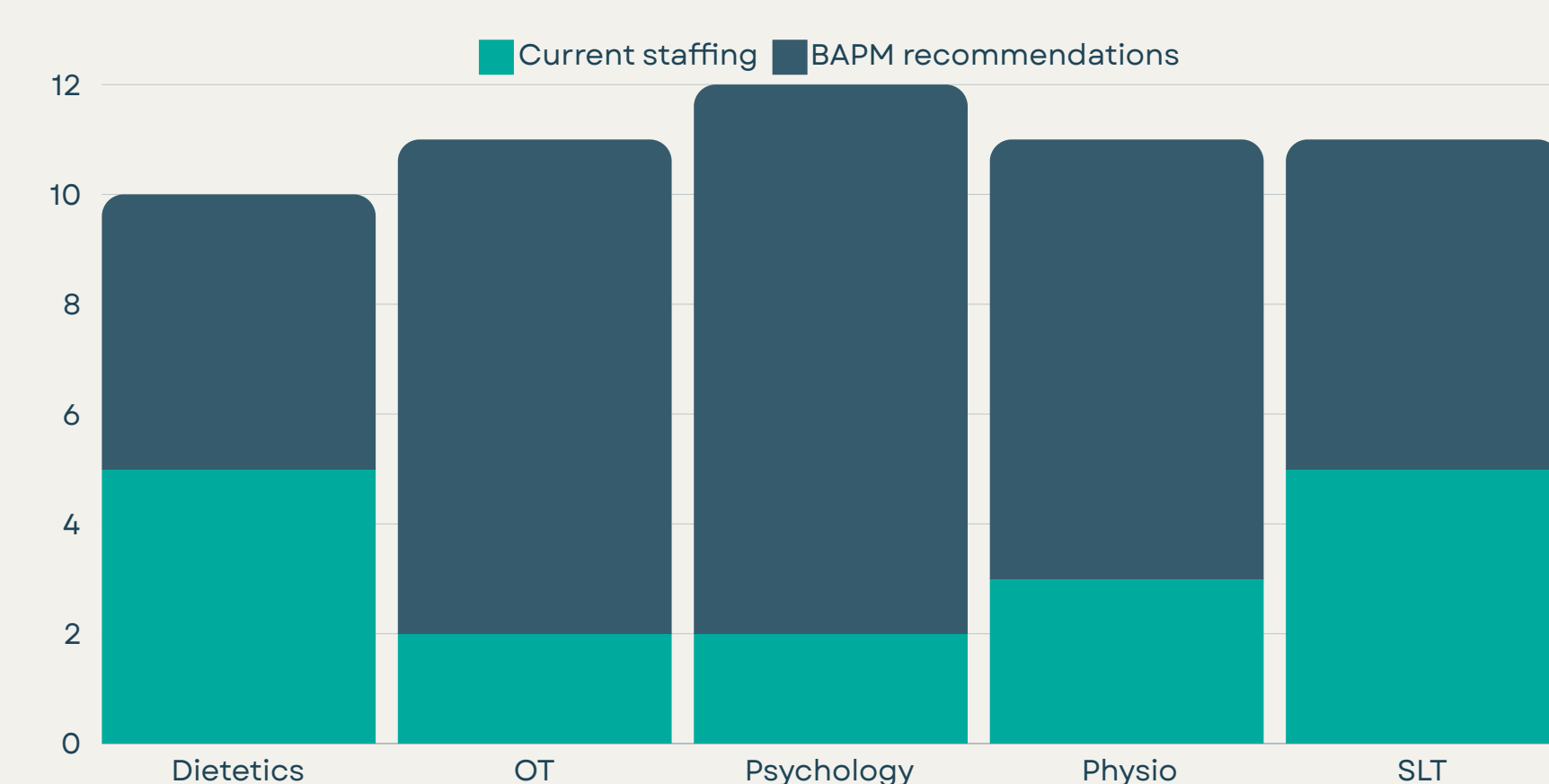


Fig 4 Gap analysis (WTE) against current funding and BAPM recommendations

## The Future

- Embedding AHPP teams in NNUs equally across the network and ensuring they are core team members
- Implementing new knowledge and skills gained into practice
- Supporting an increase in the neonatal AHPP workforce by assisting NHS Trusts in the development of business cases
- Working towards meeting BAPM staffing recommendations and shortfall - see Fig 4 (<https://www.bapm.org/pages/198-neonatal-specialties>)
- Promoting appropriate supervision models ( see Fig 2)
- Promoting equity of AHPP provision across the network for babies and their families
- Delivering consistency of practice across the network aligning to national professional drivers
- Supporting the development of multi-disciplinary outreach and follow up services

## Conclusion

The development of the neonatal AHPP workforce within the SWODN has enabled improvement in services to babies and their families and supported neonatal unit staff.

However, inadequate AHPP staffing levels still impact on the ability to provide an appropriate service.

Further work is needed to embed the AHPP teams within units and to maximise the benefits of these roles.

Furthermore, additional funding is required to fully staff units to meet BAPM recommendations and to support neonatal outreach and follow up services



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