

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Home Secretary

28 April 2020

By email: public.enquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk

Dear Home Secretary

Visa extensions for Allied Health Professionals

The AHPF was pleased to see the announcement of the automatic one-year visa extension. We have also seen the Chair of the Home Affairs Committee's letter requesting further details on to whom, and how this will be applied. This is of particular importance to Allied Health Professionals (AHPs), as many AHPs working in the NHS have come from overseas, but are not yet clear whether this extension would apply to them.

AHPs are the third largest workforce in the NHS after doctors and nurses. There are over 150,000 AHPs working within a range of surroundings including hospitals, people's homes, clinics, surgeries, the justice system, local authorities, private and voluntary sectors and primary, secondary and tertiary education. As such, there are many AHPs currently working in the front-line, supporting and helping patients manage and recover from COVID-19, as well as a high proportion of returners to these professions and final year students volunteering to work.

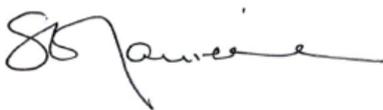
AHPs are also working in community settings or in peoples' homes ensuring successful discharge from hospital, rehabilitation and community based rapid response services. Furthermore, the NHS has subcontracted AHP services in some areas to social enterprises or private providers. Overseas AHPs working for hospices and other charitable providers must not be left behind by the announcement.

The AHPF is therefore calling on all allied health professionals and their families to be included in the government's automatic visa extension scheme and that the scheme should be longer than a year. This will protect staffing levels across health and social care and allow staff to focus on patient care and rehabilitation during the height of and as result of the Covid-19 crisis.

I have included further information about the AHPF and AHPs as an annex to this letter.

Many thanks for your attention at this difficult time

Yours sincerely



Steve Jamieson
Chair
Allied Health Professions Federation

cc: Kevin Foster MP, Minister for Immigration

Annex: The Allied Health Professions Federation (AHPF)

The AHPF's Vision is that; "The AHP workforce is positioned to improve the health and well-being of the population". Our mission is; The Federation provides collective AHP leadership and representation to influence national policy and guidance at a strategic level". In all areas, the AHPF promotes parity between mental and physical health.

The Allied Health Professions Federation (AHPF) is made up of twelve professional bodies representing Allied Health Professionals (AHPs):

- British Association for Music Therapy (BAMT)
- The British Association of Art Therapists (BAAT)
- British Association of Dramatherapists (BADth)
- The British Dietetic Association (BDA)
- British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists (BAPO)
- British and Irish Orthoptic Society (BIOS)
- Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT)
- Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP)
- The College of Paramedics (CoP)
- The College of Podiatry (CoP)
- Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT)
- Society and College of Radiographers (SCoR)

AHPs focus on consistent, person-centred, preventative and therapeutic care for children and adults. They are registered, regulated and trustworthy professionals performing a crucial function in the NHS and social care. The breadth and depth of AHP skills and reach make them ideally placed to lead and support transformative changes.