

AHPF statement on the Health and Care Bill

The Allied Health Professions Federation (AHPF) welcomes the announcement of the Health and Care Bill in the Queen's Speech. Particularly welcome are the commitments to bring forward proposals to reform social care and the emphasis on integration, "levelling up" and joining up. The establishment of Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) as statutory bodies and the new dual structure which should help improve integration within the NHS and with local government are welcome developments in the health system.

Allied Health Professions are the third largest workforce in the NHS and will play a crucial role in delivering the aims of the Bill. AHPs have a wide range of unique skills and expertise and will be a core part of the multidisciplinary response required by integration. AHPs are currently delivering during the Covid-19 pandemic and will need to deliver in the recovery phase and beyond, in key areas highlighted by the Bill such as obesity, rehabilitation, prevention and mental health.

The AHPF would like to see in the Bill a mandate that every ICS should have an AHP lead. It is important that this should be a stand-alone role and not an add-on to an existing role to ensure effective integration.

How the move from competition towards a new model of collaboration, partnership and integration is implemented is important, and we look forward to seeing the detail. We would also like to see in debates, supplementary legislation or notes, how the purchaser provider mechanism will work, including the implications for non-NHS activity and supporting children and young people. Private healthcare providers will require a rigorous process as there is a risk they will be commissioned with reduced scrutiny, which could lead to local monopolies. Direct awards will need greater transparency throughout the whole process.

Note for editors: The AHPF

The AHPF's Vision is that; "The AHP workforce is positioned to improve the mental and physical 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):

- The 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 Royal College of Podiatry (RCPod)
- Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT)
- Society and College of Radiographers (SCoR)

AHPs are the 3rd largest workforce in the NHS (after doctors and nurses) and deliver high quality services across health and social care. 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.

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.

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