

AHPF response to the NHS Workforce Plan

The Allied Health Professions Federation (AHPF) welcomes the publication of the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan.

The plan has the right vision and the AHPF was pleased to see that Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) were considered. AHPs are the third 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.

The AHPF welcomes the plan's focus on flexible working and a proposed roll-out of NHS terms and conditions to primary care. The increase in advanced practitioners, apprenticeships and support staff and assistants, and opportunities for AHPs to become approved clinicians is positive. We also welcome the commitment to improving access to mental healthcare and rehabilitation and focus on prevention, all of which AHPs are well placed to deliver.

Unfortunately, the plan doesn't have the right steps in place to make that vision happen. The £2.4 billion aimed at new training doesn't cover increased salaries or additional needs. Nor is it clear how the additional training places will translate into actual additional posts in the NHS and the funding for these posts. While we welcome the additional 60-74,000 AHPs to be recruited, these numbers will become a smaller percentage of the overall workforce increase once the increase in doctors and nurses is taken into account.

The plan does not address accountability to ensure its aims are achieved, nor the need for culture change within the NHS for these plans to land meaningfully.

The AHPF would like to see:

- Information on collective priorities for AHPs, such as increasing roles for Band 5s, increasing the visibility of AHPs in a significantly increased workforce, ensuring AHPs are well represented in the additional 3000 advanced practitioner pathway places each year and independent prescribing.
- Retention addressed – if people keep leaving the workforce at the rate they currently are, new recruitment won't make enough of a difference.
- The link with social care so that people are getting integrated care, which could allow them to leave hospital sooner and free up capacity in the NHS.

- To ensure increased diversity within the professions, all pre-registration students should have equitable access to the Learning Support Fund.
- To support best possible training, all placement providers should be included in support from the NHS placement tariff.
- Information on implementation including accountability, innovation and how to ensure AHPs are not left behind given the focus on increasing the number of doctors and nurses.

The AHPF looks forward to working with NHS E to help deliver this plan for AHPs and ultimately provide a better, prompter, and more efficient service to their many clients and service users.

Steve Ford, AHPF Chair and Chief Executive of the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (RCOT), said:

‘While there are aspects of the plan for allied health professionals to celebrate, there are also too many missed opportunities. With too much of a focus on doctors and nurses and not enough on allied health professionals, patients may not get the holistic support and follow-up they need to prevent them returning to NHS frontline and emergency services. We’re concerned that the plan hasn’t been properly funded, and that key aspects of the problems the workforce is experiencing, such as staff retention, haven’t been addressed. It’s also hugely disappointing to see no reference at all to social care as a critical part of integrated care for patients. It’s essential to get this right to improve people’s health and overall wellbeing, helping people live well for longer.’

Note for Editors:

The Allied Health Professions Federation (AHPF)

The AHPF's vision is that the Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) workforce is positioned to improve the physical and mental health and well-being of the population.

Our mission is that Federation provides collective AHP leadership and representation to influence national policy and guidance at a strategic level.

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

- British Association for Music Therapy (BAMT)
- The British Association of Art Therapists (BAAT)
- The 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)
- College of Paramedics (CoP)
- Royal College of Podiatry (RCPoD)
- Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT)
- The Society and College of Radiographers (SCoR)

AHPs are the third 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.

For further information and contacts, please contact: Nicolette Divecha. AHPF Co-ordinator,
Nicolette.Divecha@ahpf.org.uk 0207 378 3037