



British Association for Music Therapy
British Association of Art Therapists
British Association of Dramatherapists
The British Dietetic Association
British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists
British and Irish Orthoptic Society
Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
College of Paramedics
Royal College of Podiatry
Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists
Royal College of Occupational Therapists
Society and College of Radiographers



It is my great pleasure to be with you all tonight.

Thank you to Carol Mochan and her office for supporting this evening and to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, Mr Humza Yousaf for joining us... and thank you to you all for joining us to help us raise awareness of the vital role of Allied Health Professions in Scotland.

For me this evening has been long time coming... postponed a few times now due to covid and for me it feels fair to quote Burns our national bard and as he said in a letter to a friend ***“suspense is worse than disappointment”***. I am delighted we are finally here.

So why are we here? We are here to applaud the 12 Allied Health Professions that are the Allied Health Professions Federation Scotland. Let me remind you of who we are and how in a modern health and care system in Scotland we make a difference. Collectively AHPs are the third biggest workforce in the NHS and with that we bring breadth, passion, knowledge, and the skills to drive and support change.

We are arts therapists, dramatherapists and music therapists, orthoptics, dieticians, radiographer, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, orthotists and prosthetists, occupational therapists, paramedics, and radiographers. We work with people of all ages; we diagnose; we prevent, we treat; we help people live their best lives.

AHPs are leaders and advocates for change. Utilising us to our maximum effect impacts and delivers true transformational change across health, social care, public health, education, the third sector and beyond. We bring different solutions to incredibly tricky problems across the sectors and across the life journey.

Let me give you a whistle stop tour “a snap shot” of some of the work we do.

We are challenging and transforming traditional service provision and making a real difference for the service users we support:

- Speech and Language Therapists work in educational establishments to improve the spoken language of all children to maximise attainment, wellbeing, and future life chances.
- Podiatric surgeons are leading services, championing day surgery, improving outcomes for people and saving money.
- Diagnostic radiographers use advanced tec to produce images of the body as a core requirement of clinical decision. Radiotherapy radiographers use tec to treat and care for people with cancer and other conditions who cannot be treated by surgery – this involves them seeing almost half of all people diagnosed with cancer
- Paramedics are most well known for their work in ambulances but increasingly work in other areas of health care such as GP, Hospital EDs or policy custodial suites. For some paramedics are saving lives, in other areas they are part of the MDT -helping people to live their best life possible
- Physiotherapists are first contract practitioners in GP surgeries reducing the GP workload and reducing referrals to orthopaedics by 2%.
- Art Therapy is giving people a voice - to quote a service user ...” I was very unwell with an eating disorder in a cycle of hospital admission, and I am now recovering and through art therapy I have found my voice... Art therapy helped me build my shelter in a storm”
- In prosthetics state of the art technology is used for our war veterans to allow them to return to as close to a normal life as possible and in many cases enable them to participate in high level sporting activity. In orthotics we are utilising the emergence of new technology such as computer aided design and manufacture and 3D printing to enable us to design the best custom-made solutions.
- Music Therapy has a vital role to play in staff wellbeing. A staff choir set up for staff stress and burnout is a huge success. Staff describe it as my “me” time and as “all round brilliant for physical and mental wellbeing”
- Orthoptists are working in adult services work in stroke rehabilitation and help people with eye movement disorders get back to driving and to lead a normal life.
- In Dramatherapy –feedback from one referrer tells of the value of their work: Dramatherapy has offered new insights into behaviours and difficulties and permits people to explore new ways of interacting with others. I am delighted say that we now have a new masters training programme for Dramatherapy in Scotland
- Dietitians are supporting people to live longer healthier lives both within the health care system and beyond through advice on individual actions we can take, and actions we can take as a society.
- Occupational Therapists are supporting people with dementia through “home-based memory rehabilitation” and through peer supported “journey through dementia” – to enable people with dementia to live their best lives - as is their right.

We are modern highly trained workforce that is key to transformational change.

We promote early intervention and prehabilitation to help people maximise their ability to keep well and to keep doing. By working with people at an earlier point we can prevent the need for acute interventions or the need longer periods of support.

AHPs are experts in rehabilitation, in supporting people to gain or regain their skills to achieve their maximum level of independence. We help people live their best lives and reduce dependence of services. We commend the vision of Feeley when he said social care should be *“a spring board and not a safety net.”* Enablement is core to AHPs and Allied Health Professionals are crucial to the successful deliver of the National Care Service. We understand the importance of rehabilitation to help people regain function after illness of injury, whether physical or mental health, or after a long period of covid isolation which has led to deconditioning – this is what we do.... as that Gandi said

“ it is health that is the is real wealth not pieces of gold and silver”.

We are working with Scottish Government to consider a workforce for the future and commend the current AHP education and workforce review. We await the recommendations, and we must collectively support workforce planning to optimise the AHP offer for our current workforce and for our future workforce coming through our HEIs. Although we are together tonight as a collective of AHPs we also need to understand the different challenges of each profession and consider workforce need, per profession, to ensure we have the best future workforce to meet Scotland needs.

We are living and working in challenging times and times are difficult for those who have the privilege of supporting in our clinical roles. However, the optimal utilisation of our AHP workforce is about enabling people to be their best self – to focus on prevention and self-management and to optimise function to reduce dependence on other people or other services.

Tonight, is an opportunity to chat, network, and find out more and to challenge assumptions about what we offer as Allied Health Professionals.

So, before I hand over to Mr Yousaf - let me finish where I began and go back to Robert Burns.

*Oh, would some power the giftie give us,
to see ourselves as others see us!*