



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

1st May 2025

To: **Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care**

E: CabSecHSC@gov.scot

Dear Mr Gray,

At our meeting in September 2024, we raised our concern over the lack of representation of AHPs at a board level across both health boards and integration joint boards. Following our conversation, we submitted an FOI to all health boards and Integration Joint Boards (IJB) and asked them the following questions:

- Do you have an AHP on your health board?
- If yes, does the AHP have voting rights on the Health Board?
- Do you have an AHP on your Integration Joint Board?
- If yes, does the AHP have voting rights on the IJB?

The results are disappointing. No health boards had an AHP on their board. 13 of the 31 HSCPs has an AHP on their Integrated Joint Board (IJB) however, none of these AHPs have voting rights. As such, their involvement in the board is limited and not meaningful or impactful.

We recognise that current statutory guidance mandates nursing and medical representation on Health Boards and IJBs. No equivalent opportunity exists for AHPs.

Nevertheless, AHPs are the third largest clinical workforce in Scotland and their underrepresentation is deeply concerning. There are over 13,000 working across various settings from acute to community to social care and it's essential AHPs have the opportunity to advise, collaborate, and innovate with the same powers to influence change as medics and nurses in health boards.

However, our concern is not merely over representation. If the Scottish Government is serious about shifting the balance of care moving services upstream, embedding preventative care, and a community-based approach to health and social care, then AHPs must be included at the decision-making table. Their unique expertise and experience align with the Scottish government's ambitions, and without an inclusive strategic decision making their potential to help deliver this vision cannot be fully realised. This was demonstrated by Mr Swinney's response to my question during his speech on improving public services in January. Mr Swinney stated he was determined to get the right voices around the table to work with government adding that practical steps and actions need to be taken to address this.

This concern is echoed in the [Blueprint for Good Governance in NHS Scotland](#), which highlights the importance of diversity, skills, and experience at board level to drive cultural change in healthcare

settings. Yet currently, only nursing and medical directors are mandated as executive members on territorial boards. Given the transformative role AHPs will need to play in the future of Scotland's health and social care systems, there must also be provision for a Director of AHPs at the executive level.

We are therefore calling for the following:

1. **Updated statutory guidance for IJBs to ensure AHP Board representation** — the current framework has not been revised since 2015. The ambitions of the National Care Service Bill provide a timely opportunity to modernise and reinvigorate integrated health and social care governance.
2. **Review of required Health Board membership** — to include AHP representation alongside nursing and medical leadership.

We would be delighted to host you and your team for a visit, to demonstrate how AHPs are already delivering against national priorities and driving innovation across health and social care.

We believe these changes are not only reasonable but necessary if the Scottish Government's aspirations for innovation, prevention, and a rebalanced model of care are to be achieved.

We welcome your interest in the innovative and transformative potential of allied health professionals and thank you for your continued engagement and support on this issue. We look forward to your response and to working together to ensure AHPs are appropriately represented at the strategic level.

Yours sincerely,



Hilary Munro
Chair | Allied Health Professions Federation Scotland (AHPFS)