

The Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
39 Victoria St
London
SW1H 0EU

25 September 2020

By email: matt.hancock.mp@parliament.uk

Dear Secretary of State

Testing and PPE for Allied Health Professionals

I am writing as Chair of the Allied Health Professions Federation to express the serious concern of our professions regarding the lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) and Covid-19 testing for NHS and social care staff. The AHPF has written to you twice about testing and PPE (on 24 and 26 March) but received no reply and Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) are still reporting to us a lack of available testing kits and appropriate equipment.

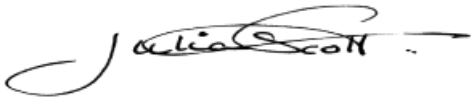
AHPs are frontline staff and the third largest workforce in the NHS. Many AHPs are currently supporting and helping patients manage and recover from Covid-19. I see you have recently announced that the Government will prioritise the NHS and care homes for testing. Testing for health and social care workers is an absolute must. Our members need this in order to do their job while keeping themselves, and their patients, safe. Can the AHPF have your assurance that this will include AHPs in the frontline and care homes?

In addition, we remain concerned about access to appropriate PPE. In particular, there is still no clear guidance for Trusts about FFP3 masks for aerosolised generating procedures (AGP) which a number of AHPs undertake and will put them at risk if they are not properly protected. It is even more important as Covid-19 continues to spread. As more AHPs are infected or required to isolate in the absence of testing this reduces the workforce's capability to respond in a timely manner to patient need. It is critical that Trusts' infection prevention and control teams consider the range of AHP assessments and interventions that may expose staff to risk, including when caring for COVID-19 suspected cases.

AHPS are also working in community settings or in peoples' homes ensuring successful discharge from hospital, rehabilitation and community based rapid response services. The distribution and supply of PPE must include this workforce alongside GPs and practice or community nursing.

I look forward to seeing your reply. I am also letting you know that we will be sharing this letter with the media and professional bodies' members.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julia Scott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Julia Scott
Chair
Allied Health Professions Federation

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):

- 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 College of Podiatry (CoPoD)
- 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.