

PRESS NOTICE

MPs call for greater skills diversity in the NHS 28/2/19

A cross-party group of MPs today tabled an Early Day Motion in Parliament urging the government to consider a law change, to allow for greater diversity of leadership at the top of the NHS.

Proposer of the motion Norman Lamb MP (Lib Dem) said; "Not many people will be aware that in many hospitals up and down the land today, skilled professionals who are not doctors or nurses, known as Allied Health Professionals (AHPs), are effectively banned from being Executive Clinical Directors on Trust Boards. If we want more creative thinking, and the voices of physios, OTs, radiographers and many other therapists to be heard in NHS boardrooms, then we need a law change. The current rules are holding us back."

Parmjit Dhanda, Chair of the Allied Health Professions Federation (AHPF) said: "We're delighted that MPs have laid this motion before the House today and recognised the importance of AHPs in senior NHS roles. It is a reminder that our health service values all of its workforce. Doctors and nurses are crucial, but diversity of skills delivers better services. This motion reminds us all of the benefits that could be gained if a wider group of skilled professionals were allowed to take up Medical and/or Nursing Director roles on Foundation Trusts. But it does require the lifting of a legal restriction by the government."

The EDM states:

"That this House shares the view of the Allied Health Professions Federation (AHPF) that greater diversity of talent in leadership posts in hospitals can boost multi-disciplinary working, reduce pressure on emergency departments and hence improve outcomes for patients; agrees with the AHPF that the rules governing NHS Foundation Trust hospitals which limit Medical Director roles to doctors and Nursing Director roles to nurses, is outdated and excludes over 150,000 Allied Health Professionals from these leadership roles; urges the Government to remove this unnecessary restriction in law, and broaden its diversity of talent in senior roles."

AHPs are the 3rd largest sector in the NHS. There are 158,000 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 Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 that established Foundation Trusts specified that Boards had to have a Medical and Nursing Directors with medical or nursing qualifications. While there may be some AHPs who are also Board Directors, historically these are often subsidiary to nursing directors, so AHPs don't fill the most senior posts.

'It is an established fact that throughout all sectors and industries, the most successful Boards are those with the greatest diversity. The NHS needs to do everything it can to ensure Boards access the widest talent possible and limiting the executive clinical roles to only two professions is out-dated and exclusive when we should be looking to simply recruit the very best clinicians to these senior positions.'

Karen Middleton CBE
CEO, Chartered Society of Physiotherapy

Note for editors

The AHPF

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

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

AHPs focus on consistent, person-centred, preventative and therapeutic care for children and adults. They are accredited 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

For further information:

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To follow developments please follow the AHPF on Twitter: @AHPFederation and through the website: ahpf.org.uk