

Allied Health Professions Education and Workforce Policy Review Recommendations

February 2023

1. Background

The Programme for Government 2021 made a commitment to review Allied Health Professions (AHP) Education in 2022. The aim of the review was to consider what actions are necessary to ensure that policy for AHP education provision is congruent to the current and future needs of our students and the future health needs of the people of Scotland. The scope of the review was extended in December 2021 to include workforce considerations.

The review considered the actions necessary to deliver a national education and workforce plan for AHPs, giving full consideration of all aspects of workforce measurement, planning and education needs for the future. The review was led by a National AHP Strategic Oversight Group ensuring collaborative working across the AHP education and workforce sectors through five thematic subgroups (Workforce and Recruitment, Education Solutions, Advancing Practice, Practice Based Learning and Research, Innovation and Relationships). The outputs of these groups were used to form recommendations for the review.

The National Strategic Oversight Group met to agree a suite of recommendations to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care, Mr Yousaf that focused on key thematic areas. Mr Yousaf, has now agreed the recommendations and has instructed Scottish Government officials to work at pace to develop an implementation plan. Mr Yousaf has expressed his gratitude to all stakeholders involved in the review.

The recommendations are set out in **Annex A** and a full list of stakeholders involved are included at **Annex B**.

2. Message on behalf of Professor Carolyn McDonald, Chief Allied Health Professions Officer

I want to thank everyone who has engaged with the AHP Education and Workforce Review for their hard work getting us to this position. Thank you to all chairs of the subgroups and the broad range of strategic stakeholders who brought invaluable knowledge and expertise to this work. I know that the work carried out, in addition to your day jobs, has been incredible and without your commitment and participation, we would not have been able to reach this milestone of producing the well-received range of recommendations.

I am delighted that the Cabinet Secretary has agreed the recommendations and am encouraged by his ask for us to work at pace on an implementation plan. The policy team will now develop this to outline the timescales and actions necessary to deliver on the review's recommendations and it is likely that we will call on members of this group to assist us with that work.

What I now ask of you, is a commitment to show your leadership in relation to these recommendations. You are in the best position to promote them, to lead by example and continue to collaborate with Scottish Government officials and others to implement them. Your continued support in the next crucial stage towards

implementation is paramount to successfully see the changes we know will make a difference.

I want to reiterate my thanks again to all of you and for your hard work during this review. We really could not have done it without each and every one of you.

3. Next steps

The Scottish Government AHP Education policy team will now work with stakeholders in the development of an implementation plan that will outline the timelines and actions necessary to deliver on the review's recommendations.

You can follow the progress of the AHP Education and Workforce Policy Review here - [Allied Health Professions Education and Workforce Policy Review: National Strategic Oversight Group - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/Topics/health/ahp/education-and-workforce-policy-review).

4. Annex A
5. National Oversight Group Subgroup Recommendations
- 5.1 Timeframes

The review allocated timeframes to each recommendation to reflect time, financial and resource constraints. These are outlined below:

- **Short** – as soon as practicably possible - actions that do not require additional funding and perhaps are close to being implemented.
- **Medium** – 1 to 3 years – these are recommendations that require further consideration and will need to be considered within the wider financial landscape.
- **Long** – 3 years plus – these recommendations are likely to require additional funding in order to be implemented.

5.2 Workforce & Recruitment

Recommendation	S/M/L Term
1. AHP data should be a central consideration of the ongoing national workforce projection modelling. This will serve to better align current and future population needs and individual AHP workforce, pre-registration education and Practice Based Learning requirements	Short/Medium
2. National job planning for individual AHP groups should be undertaken learning from work in other professional groups. Additional support should be available to AHP leaders to enable this work to be undertaken	Short/Medium
3. A collaborative and multi-dimensional analysis is undertaken which details specific challenges to AHP workforce in ensuring sustainable recruitment and retention by profession, area of work and geographical area and provides recommendations on what actions need to be taken	Short/Medium
4. Action should be taken to improve the availability and use of up to date comprehensive student data that allows course length and intake numbers, attrition and destination data to robustly inform subsequent workforce planning and supply including long term projections that allow education intakes to be calculated for each profession, learning from other areas where this previously has been delivered. This will facilitate sustainable collaborative planning of workforce requirements by education and service providers	Short/Medium
5. Workload measurement tools for AHPs should be developed alongside National job plans that allow workload and workforce (demand) calculations to be made. Workload tools must be inclusive of the Four Pillars and encompass the entirety of AHP workload including public health, universal, targeted and individualised approaches	Short/Medium

5.3 Education Solutions

Recommendation

S/M/L Term

1. Collaboratively develop sustainable (step on/step off) "earn and learn" routes for the AHP professions in Scotland, aligned to the NHS Career Framework which increases the number of AHPs, improves access and increases diversity of the health and social care workforce in Scotland

Short

2. Urgently implement innovative, sustainable solutions to fund earn and learn routes to increase the numbers in the AHP workforce in health and social care whilst increasing diversity and ensuring improved accessibility to AHP careers

Short

3. Co-ordinate and align strategies to market a career as an allied health professional across governmental, professional, and educational organisations including the sharing of resources, data and audiences

Short/Medium

5.4 Practice Based Learning

Recommendation	S/M/L Term
1. As a priority, develop a central digital data system, hosted by a neutral organisation, that captures, monitors and co-ordinates the supply and demand for AHP practice-based learning opportunities across Scotland. Initially this will ensure the proportionally equitable distribution of NHS-based practice-based learning opportunities between HEIs and NHS Boards and will be extended to other sectors in the future	Short/Medium
2. A central digital quality management system is developed to support the efficient and effective governance and quality management of practice-based learning, minimising the workload associated to all parties. To ensure this, any system should be conversant between HEIs and NHS board systems and plan to include other sectors in the future	Short/Medium
3. Build on current and previous work to embed, transform and further develop modern, inclusive and sustainable practice-based learning models into practice through a learning culture, process changes and collaboration between NHS Boards, other sectors and HEIs	Short
4. Recognition of the value and importance by leaders and at all career levels to ensure Practice Based Learning is embedded as a core element of everyone's practice. This includes inclusion of Practice Based Learning in individual career conversations, career pathways/framework, national and local AHP job plans and service models and through enhancing AHP education structures within NHS Boards and other sectors	Short/Medium
5. Collaboration and co-ordination between HEIs, NHS Boards and NES to ensure all AHPs workforce are supported in developing and advancing knowledge and skills to implement practice based learning and wider practice learning objectives, including a formalised framework for all career levels	Short/Medium
6. To facilitate the use of a full practice-based learning system capacity throughout Scotland and ensure practice-based learning does not exclude those unable to pay, funding is available for students to attend and engage with required practice-based learning opportunities necessary for their qualification as registered practitioners.	Short/Medium

5.5 Advancing Practice

Recommendations	S/M/L Term
1. Advancing Practice and skill maximisation for AHPs should be developed using a consistent national approach through a consistently named and applied career framework and educational pathway	Short/Medium
2. Service specifications and Service Needs Analyses should be undertaken within AHP services across Scotland to identify the workforce requirement across all levels of the career framework	Short/Medium
3. Consistent National Learning Needs Analysis is undertaken for AHPs linked to the career framework to create a collaborative AHP National Learning Framework/Plan and clear career pathways across all levels	Short/Medium
4. Using appropriate frameworks and building on The Scottish Radiology Transformation Programme (SRTP) learning, advancing practice (skills maximisation) across all levels of the career framework for each profession is defined through knowledge, skills and behaviours and linked with service and other professions as necessary	Short/Medium
5. Explore sustainable mechanisms for recognising and/or accrediting practice at level 7	Medium
6. Identify the required generic and profession specific knowledge skills and behaviours	Medium
7. Collaboratively develop a co-ordinated and equitable approach to create a sustainable Scotland-wide advancing practice education structure that delivers best utilisation of all educational partners and resources	Medium
8. Ensure a contemporary and relevant educational provision for staff that delivers for our community aligned to changing workforce requirements	Medium
9. To facilitate advancing practice, opportunity for trainee roles should be agreed and role descriptors/job plans developed ensuring succession planning and improve retention of staff through creation of a clear career pathway	Medium

10. Budgets should support advancing practice and the education required to achieve this, to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the overall Health and Social Care System through maximising roles and benefit services to the people of Scotland

Medium/Long

11. Advancing Practice for AHPs through the development of co-ordinated career pathways and sustainable service and education framework is evaluated to ensure it offers value for money to the country and improves service user and workforce experience

Medium

5.6 Research, Innovation and Relationships

Recommendations

S/M/L Term

1. Create an active, collaborative, inclusive research strategy that addresses the capacity, capability, leadership and culture within all AHP services
Short
2. Extend, develop and co-ordinate collaborative relationships between HEIs, FEIs and all NHS Boards (and relevant social care and third sectors) to develop a culture that engages and facilitates AHPs in research and improvement activity
Short/Medium
3. Make this everyone's business: 'AHP leadership at all levels that will actively recognise, promote and implement research and improvement as a core part of service delivery'
Medium/Long
4. Embed structures that enable a culture that delivers value added impactful research and improvement as an essential part of practice. These structures will facilitate service benefits in terms of staff recruitment and retention; efficiency, effectiveness and quality of services and underpin patient safety
Short/Medium

6. Annex B

6.1 List of stakeholders

- Scottish Government
 - Directorate for Chief Nursing Officer
 - Directorate for Health Workforce
- Allied Health Professions Federation Scotland
 - British and Irish Orthoptic Society
 - Royal College of Podiatry
 - Royal College of Occupational Therapists
 - The Society and College of Radiographers
 - The British Association of Art Therapists
 - British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists
 - The British Dietetic Association
 - Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists
 - Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
 - College of Paramedics
- NHS Health Boards
- Scottish Ambulance Service
- NHS Education for Scotland
- Healthcare Improvement Scotland
- Scottish Directors of AHPs
- Council of Deans of Health Scotland
- AHP Academic Heads Scotland
- Higher education institutions
 - Queen Margaret University
 - Edinburgh Napier University
 - University of Stirling
 - Robert Gordon University
 - University of Strathclyde
 - Glasgow Caledonian University
 - Glasgow Clyde College
- Student representative focus group
- Newly Qualified Practitioners, Advanced Practitioners and Consultants, Board Practice Education Leads focus group
- Skills Development Scotland
- Scottish Funding Council
- Council for Allied Health Professions Research Scotland
- Health & Care Professions Council



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