



Judith Paget CBE

Director General, Health and Social Services/ Chief Executive NHS Wales

Welsh Government

Cathays Park

Cardiff

CF10 3NQ

19 May 2023

Dear Judith,

RE: The Welsh Government Workforce Implementation Board

We are writing to you as a grouping of Allied Health Professional (AHP) bodies in your remit as chair of the Welsh Government Workforce Implementation Board to formally raise concerns about the urgency and prioritisation of the AHP actions currently included in the workforce implementation plan and seek a number of clarifications. This follows on from issues raised at the first board meeting on Wednesday 26th April.

We have previously written to the Minister for Health and Social Services with regards our concerns that initial actions within the National Workforce Implementation Plan did not include a commitment to develop an AHP workforce plan as proposed for other professions such as nursing and pharmacy. The response we have received from Emma Coles to this letter (dated 21st April) highlights a number of actions for AHPs within the plan noting;

'As you know, the plan does commit to a review of Allied Health Professions to understand the current position and future needs to deliver services in Wales; this will result in Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) creating an AHP retention plan.'

However from reviewing the update from HEIW on these action points within the meeting papers, we are very concerned that the actions for AHPs within the plan risk being watered down. For example,

Action 33: HEIW will review allied health professions to understand the current position and future needs to deliver our services, resulting in an AHP retention plan.

HEIW response: Generic Retention Guide will be available to this workforce

Action 74: HEIW will use the AHP workforce guidance to organise how AHPs work in integrated services, maximising their impact, wellbeing and professional governance and skill mix.

HEIW response: Clarification is needed on this recommendation. Workforce guidance was published by Primary Care so we have interpreted this as interaction between HBs and Primary. This will require starting with a review of the workforce

We raised the point at the April Workforce Implementation Board meeting that we were concerned that the change to action 33 was not reported as an exception. Rather it is noted as amber, classed as not started with an end date of 30th June. It is imperative that actions related to AHPs should not be lower down on the priority list for completion or reliant on other actions being completed.

As we know you are well-aware, AHPs are the third largest workforce within the NHS and similarly to other professions, we are facing significant challenges with regards workforce attraction and retention. We strongly believe that in order to fully realise the ambitions of the Welsh Government AHP Framework and deliver on the priority of care closer to home, we urgently need a specific focus on AHPs within the National Workforce Implementation Plan. As there are only two AHP specific actions, we believe strongly that these should not be watered down or be a secondary thought or dependent on the completion of other actions.

We continue to be of the view that a national AHP workforce plan would be the most appropriate action but in the absence of this, seek urgent clarification with regards how HEIW proposes to respond to action point 74 and our concerns with regards action point 33.

We will continue to engage proactively with the strategic workforce implementation board to hold organisations to account for delivery of key actions related to the AHP workforce. We look forward to having your support as chair of the board in delivering these key actions, and where appropriate, widening the scope of others to ensure the issues that AHPs face are addressed.'

Yours sincerely,

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Cc: Ruth Crowder, Chief Allied Health Professions Adviser, Welsh Government

Christine Morrell, Chair, Executive Directors of Therapies and Health Sciences peer group