

RCSLT MANIFESTO BRIEFING HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE



HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE -
Ensure that allied health professionals are at the centre
of an integrated workforce planning process to deliver
'Transforming Your Care'.

WE ARE CALLING ON OUR POLITICAL PARTIES TO:

- Demonstrate and acknowledge the contribution of all healthcare professionals by referring to allied health professionals (AHPs), doctors and nurses at both public and policy level.
- Open up senior health and social care leadership posts to AHPs in Northern Ireland so that their unique insight can inform the integration of health and care around the needs of the patient.



THE BACKGROUND

Twelve diverse professions are listed under the allied health professions' umbrella, among these are occupational therapists; physiotherapists; speech and language therapists; orthoptists; dieticians and paramedics. AHPs perform essential roles within healthcare and across many other sectors, including social care and education and they work in primary care and acute settings as part of multi-disciplinary teams.

'AHPs are highly trained and professionally autonomous practitioners, yet too often their vital contribution is marginalised in a public discourse that tends to refer only to 'doctors and nurses'. This needs to change' (David Oliver, visiting fellow, Kings Fund, 2015). Services and systems are unlikely to achieve their financial goals in the long term without consideration of AHP (and social care) contributions' (Steve Tolan, December 2015).

IN NORTHERN IRELAND

- AHPs are the joint second largest professional group in the Northern Ireland workforce.
- As of March 2015 there were 5,611 AHPs employed by the health service and 4,138 doctors yet AHPs' expertise is still not equally utilised in the planning and commissioning of our health services. At policy-making level in the DHSSPS, this large workforce has just one lead professional officer, supported by one staff member, to advocate for all the allied health professions in Northern Ireland.
- There are still many senior positions in health and social care bodies in Northern Ireland which are not open to allied health professions.
- We are keen that the proposed reform under current consultation by Minister Hamilton will sufficiently engage the full range of professionals, which includes AHPs in the planning, and commissioning of services to meet the needs of users.



Afternoon tea with AHPs – allied health professionals giving advice on dementia at the 2015 Northern Ireland Confederation for Health and Social Care annual conference.

For further information and a full list of references please contact: