

21 March 2022

Sent by email:

Suzanne Rastrick: suzanne.rastrick@nhs.net

Caroline Poole: caroline.poole4@nhs.net

Kevin Chidlow: Kevin.Chidlow2@supplychain.nhs.uk

Dear Suzanne, Caroline and Kevin

We write with concern over the recent developments within the National Uniform Project. The data currently available to the AHPF is that 70% of occupational therapists and 70 % of physiotherapists (the two largest AHP professions) who completed a survey in mid-2021 are against this proposal. The surveys currently running indicate similar levels of dissatisfaction with this option. Neither NHS Supply Chain nor NHSE have consulted the wider AHP community on the choice of a single-colour uniform despite committing to this last year.

It was agreed on 29th September 2021, with the AHP stakeholder group, that NHS Supply Chain would co-create a consultation with all AHP professional bodies because the original NHS Supply Chain survey did not address the matter of a single colour uniform. This offer was subsequently retracted in favour of an internal options appraisal. The result of the options appraisal was the recommendation for a single colour uniform.

Furthermore, despite assurances that the project takes into account lessons learnt from the Scottish uniform initiative, the AHP stakeholder group is unaware of any robust mechanism through which Scottish views have been properly considered. BAPO, BIOS and CSP Scottish colleagues and members indicate that AHPs in a single colour uniform is confusing for both patients and staff, and loss of professional identity is the single biggest issue.

On 15th February 2022, some AHP stakeholders were informed by NHSE that RCSLT and BDA are supporting the single colour uniform option, however, these organisations have informed us that:

- RCSLT is supportive only because NHS Supply Chain has made it clear that individual colours for each profession is not viable. In the RCSLT 2021 uniform survey, 55% of respondents preferred individual colours as opposed to 34% in favour of a single colour AHP uniform
- The BDA position has not been to support one colour/one uniform and they feel that the information given was a misinterpretation

The SoR is supportive of a single colour uniform, but alongside the other members of the AHPF has voiced concern with the lack of consultation across the AHP community. It is also worth acknowledging that Art, Music and Drama Therapists do not generally wear uniforms.

The position as it stands is that all AHPF member organisations agree that NHSE/NHS Supply Chain have not carried out any meaningful consultation with the very people who will be most affected by the change. Furthermore, data collected by professional bodies demonstrating opposing AHP opinion has been consistently ignored. No data from Scotland has been made visible on the impact of a single colour uniform on patient safety or professional identity.

We would also point out that the option of the NHS supply chain moving forward with nurse uniform changes, whilst not doing so for AHP's was outlined as an option by Kevin, should the professional bodies' members not agree with the proposals made.

Finally, should the single colour option go ahead, the AHPF will communicate to their members that this decision has been fully endorsed by Suzanne as Chief Allied Health Professions Officer.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Langford
Chief Executive
British Association of Music
Therapy



Gary Fereday
Chief Executive
The British Association of Art
Therapists



Jane Lester Bourne
Chair
British Association of
Dramatherapists



Andy Burman
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Peter Iliff
Chair
British Association of Prosthetists
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Veronica Greenwood
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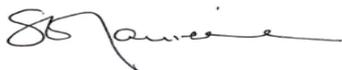
Steve Ford
Chief Executive
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Karen Middleton
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Tracy Nicholls
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Steve Jamieson
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Kamini Gadhok
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Language Therapists



Richard Evans
Chief Executive
Society and College of
Radiographers

AHPF Board:

- British Association for Music Therapy (BAMT)
- The British Association of Art Therapists (BAAT)
- The 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)
- College of Paramedics (CoP)
- Royal College of Podiatry (RCPoD)
- Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT)
- The Society and College of Radiographers (SCoR)