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28<sup>th</sup> April 2022

Dear AHPf board members listed

- British Association for Music Therapy (BAMT)
- The British Association of Art Therapists (BAAT)
- The British Association of Drama therapists (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)

**RE: Reply to Letter from member of the AHPf dated 21st March 2022**

Thank you for your letter to the undersigned dated the 21st March 2022.

We have taken some time to consider the points and issues you have raised in the letter, along with recent discussions raised at the Project Steering group on 24th March and at the AHP advisory board meeting on 5th April, in which attendees presented the results of some recent surveys carried out by a number of the professional representative bodies, regarding the possible introduction of a single colour uniform.

It is clear and accepted that the professional bodies and their members have concerns with the approach we have taken in terms of adoption of a single uniform colour for all Allied Health Professions, and that the need to maintain professional image and identity is felt very strongly. We can assure you that we have not, and never will, ignore the opinions and feedback provided by all stakeholders involved in this project. We can only proceed on the basis of consensus and agreement. For this project to be successful all parties will need to support the final recommended design and associated colour scheme and we will not make any final recommendations without your support.



This project is of course very challenging. At the beginning, we set out five objectives:

1. Improve patient and visitor safety
2. Enhance the professional image of NHS professions
3. Meet the needs of a diverse NHS workforce
4. Introduce sustainable materials and improve resilience in supply chains
5. Ensure any such uniform delivers value for money.

It is not easy to meet these objectives, and there can be conflict between them, but we remain committed to do so, and we firmly believe that all members of all the professions will benefit if the right solution can be found.

We recognise the importance of getting the uniform design and materials absolutely right and we will not rush the launch of these garments until they are proven and fit for purpose. This will require further wearer trials and engagement across the NHS, including with patients, before the final design is fixed and agreed. This gives us time to develop and implement an engagement process with yourselves between now and the end of November this year, at which time, hopefully, we will have agreed a uniform design and colour schemes.

As discussed in our various meetings, the next stage of procurement involves asking bidders to submit a fully costed proposal based on a uniform specification which includes a national range of colourways. Having reviewed the recent feedback and understood the depth of feeling, we can confirm that a single colourway option for AHPs will not form a part of the specification for this process. The commitment is to continue to work together to find the viable solution that is acceptable to key stakeholders for the Allied Health Professions.

If acceptable, we propose undertaking a series of workshops, starting in June 2022, where we can consider all of the various options, and the implications each of those have in terms of their impact on patients, the professional image, equality & diversity, sustainability, and cost. The objective would be to reach an agreed design and colour scheme by the end of November 2022.

We hope and trust that the above approach would be agreeable to yourselves and will provide assurance that we have no intention of imposing an approach without reaching consensus across the whole profession.

Yours faithfully

Suzanne Rastrick, Chief Allied Health Professions Officer (England)  
Kevin Chidlow, Tower Director NHS Supply Chain  
Caroline Poole, Head of Allied Health Professions

