



Welsh Government consultation - *Allied health professionals: Looking forward together toward 2028*

Council of Deans of Health Wales response – May 2019

Cyngor Deoniaid Iechyd Cymru/The Council of Deans of Health Wales welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this consultation. The Council of Deans of Health represents the 84 UK university faculties engaged in education and research for nursing, midwifery and allied health professions. Our seven member institutions in Wales work together with policy makers to help shape the education and research of the future healthcare workforce in Wales.

Key messages

1. The Council is generally supportive of this ambitious strategy, but recommends it is augmented by a strong and robust educational framework to ensure the delivery of the future workforce to meet the strategy's ambitions.
2. Close and ongoing engagement with universities, employers, allied health professionals (AHPs), and service users across Wales is needed to enable the effective implementation of this Framework. This will entail that this work truly utilises a whole systems approach for the benefit of the public.
3. The Framework proposes a step change in the deployment of AHPs in a range of primary and community settings, this should be linked to increasing practice placement capacity. Alongside this, clear career pathways from support staff roles to consultant level posts need to be made more explicit to assist progression.

Responses

1. Do you believe that the AHP Framework is ambitious enough to drive transformation needed for service re-design for the next 10 years for AHPs to meet the future needs of citizens in Wales? If not, why not and what do you suggest is needed?

The AHP Framework is ambitious and has a robust foundation which maps to the Parliamentary Review and 'A Healthier Wales'. However, the Framework needs to ensure that due regard is given to both the

individual skillsets of registered professionals and opportunities for multi-professional working within the model of integrated care.

There also needs to be a concerted effort to adopt a consistent understanding of the role of advanced practitioner in Wales that enables AHPs to benefit from this career pathway. The Council has been collaborating with Health Education England (HEE) regarding advanced clinical practitioner work in England and looks forward to working in partnership with Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) to help shape this work and the workforce action plan more generally across Wales.

2. Do you think that the AHP Framework fosters sufficient cultural change amongst AHPs for them to identify as a collective workforce whilst also training their unique professional identity?

Some aspects of the Framework assist in fostering a cultural change, such as opportunities for mentoring and networking, which should be undertaken on an interprofessional basis.

3. What do you think of the aspiration to move Allied Health Professions towards greater engagement with the population health and wellbeing agenda and health promotion activity where citizens can directly access AHPs in a wider range of locations?

The Council is supportive of the aspiration towards greater engagement with the population health and wellbeing agenda and health promotion activity. This is crucial to the delivery of recommendations outlined in 'A Healthier Wales.' It is important to ensure that the Welsh Government invests in this to support AHPs to be at the forefront of patient care across a range of clinical settings. There also needs to be more emphasis on co-production of services, and education in the community in relation to wellbeing and health promotion agendas, and service user self-management.

4. Do you believe that the strategic direction outlined in the AHP Framework will enable AHPs in Wales to respond positively to the fast pace of change required to meet the future needs of the citizens of Wales?

Yes.

However, the AHP Framework needs to be supported by a strong and robust educational framework. This would assist in better enabling the education sector to prepare the future workforce to meet the needs of this strategy. Furthermore, to enable the AHP Framework to be more future proof, there should be a greater focus on the role of digital technologies in transforming healthcare over the next decade, as detailed in the Topol Review.

5. Do you believe that the four main elements of the AHP Framework articulate the strategic direction of AHPs in the future sufficiently?

Yes.

The Council believes the four main elements of the framework appropriately express the future direction of the work of AHPs in Wales. The focus on the Framework on wellbeing and public health is important, especially as the delivery of care in primary and community settings will become ever more necessary. The Framework also has the potential to develop new methods of multidisciplinary working for the benefit of service users.

6. Does the AHP Framework Action Plan articulate what needs to be done to achieve the aspirations of the AHP Framework?

Yes.

The Council welcomes the inclusion of the role of higher education institutions in the Action Plan. The Plan presents a great opportunity for sharing examples of best practice at local, regional and national levels and enacting substantive change. Universities, employers, the third sector and the public need to be fully involved in the Plan in order to successfully operationalise the Framework.

7. Does the AHP Framework have the correct balance in emphasis between Practice, Education, Research and Leadership?

The four areas should be strengthened, with a particular emphasis on research (both primary and secondary) and leadership. The Council would like to engage with Welsh Government on the development of these areas in the AHP Framework.

8. What do you believe are the overall strengths of the AHP Framework?

The Framework sets an ambitious way forward for AHPs in Wales. The Framework also presents a high level of cohesion and consistency with UK health policy and direction, for example it interfaces well with the All Our Health agenda from Public Health England.

9. What do you believe are the overall limitations of the AHP Framework and how do you believe they could be addressed?

In order for the AHP Framework to be truly successful universities, AHPs and the public will need to be fully engaged and made aware of the Framework and new developments. CPD for the existing workforce will also be essential in preparing staff to take on new roles in different settings and meeting future health challenges.

10. Do you have any other comments you wish to make?

The Framework conveys a positive message regarding the future direction of AHP policy in Wales. The Action Plan is highly aspirational but in parts needs further clarification. Although there is an underlying focus on collaboration to improve health outcomes, there is a need for the plan to have clearer timelines regarding fully costed and achievable outputs.

Transparent career pathways from support staff roles to consultant level posts and the place of education in career progression need to be made more explicit. The promotion of AHP successes in the Action Plan should be linked to opportunities to drive recruitment to AHP education programmes and the wider '#TrainWorkLive' campaign. The deployment of AHPs across more diverse practice settings may provide for increased practice placement opportunities, which would be extremely welcome, particularly for some of the vulnerable AHP professions.

For more information contact:

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