



13<sup>th</sup> April 2021

To: Kevin Chidlow, Category Tower Director, NHS Supply Chain: Hotel Services  
NHS North of England Commercial Procurement Collaborative  
Sent via email: [kevin.chidlow2@supplychain.nhs.uk](mailto:kevin.chidlow2@supplychain.nhs.uk)

To: Caroline Poole, Head of Allied Health Professions,  
Office of the Chief Allied Health Professions Officer, National Medical Directorate  
NHS England & NHS Improvement  
Sent via email: [caroline.poole4@nhs.net](mailto:caroline.poole4@nhs.net)

Dear Kevin and Caroline

**Re: AHP Uniform Project**

The recent brief survey regarding AHP Uniform preferences has caused considerable concern for AHP Professional Bodies and our members. We remain committed to engaging positively with this agenda, but the lack of project communication and approach to us as stakeholders has made this difficult. Specifically, we would like to draw your attention to the following:

1. Some AHP professional bodies were not included when the work started in 2019 and were not represented at the workshop in early 2020. How will you ensure that their voices are heard and that they are engaged with going forward?
2. At the workshop in 2020, we all made it clear that we would need to properly engage with our membership to feed into this work but, despite requests, there has been no direction from the project team as to the specific questions that we need to put to members in order to contribute to this work.
3. The recent brief survey was inadequate in terms of providing a rationale for change as well as the response time, which was only seven days. In addition, AHP Professional Bodies did not receive this survey directly as stakeholders and were alerted to it by concerned members who had no prior knowledge of the project due to point 2.

4. The presentation attached to the recent survey appeared to lead respondents to select the four colourway option which feels disingenuous in respect of the conversation at the workshop in 2020 which closed with all options still on the table and with particular support for a model similar to Scotland. The fact that we were not directly sent the survey reinforces the feeling that AHP Professional Bodies were being circumvented to push through the four colourway option. How will you engage with us and meaningfully consult our members going forward to enable an open and honest dialogue about uniform options?
5. It should be remembered that our members have been working under sustained pressure for a considerable time and we are concerned about the timing of this coming when morale and resilience is at an all-time low. If this change cannot be postponed, then we urge NHSE and NHS Supply Chain to work with AHP Professional Bodies more positively in order to support our members through change.

We were going to suggest that prior to the full seven-week consultation, you consider holding a further meeting or workshop with us on professional groupings and colourways, as was your original intention. The outcome could be a range of options that we can test out with our members more widely, however we understand that you have launched a consultation before we could do so.

We look forward to your response to the points raised above and your view on the next steps.

Yours sincerely

Julie Dowdney  
Vice Chair  
British and Irish Orthoptic Society

Helen Sharma  
Head of Practice Improvement  
Chartered Society of Physiotherapy

and

Jim Fahie  
Assistant Director  
Employment Relations and Union Services  
Chartered Society of Physiotherapy

Royal College of Occupational Therapists

Judith Broll  
Director of Professional Development  
Royal College of Speech and Language  
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Annette Mansell-Green  
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Richard Evans OBE  
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The Society and College of Radiographers