

**PE1384/L**

Petitioner Letter of 9 May 2012

Dear Chris,

**AHP National Delivery Plan Consultation**

**RCSLT calls for a wider vision for AHP services, stronger national and local leadership, improved waiting times targets and a reality check**

Further to your helpful notification below of the Petitions Committee's last discussion on [PE1384](#) : Giving Voice - speech and language therapy transforms lives I thought members of the Petitions Committee may be interested in viewing the RCSLT submission on the AHP National Delivery Plan Consultation.

**The original petition** called on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to demonstrate how its policies and guidelines ensure local authorities and NHS boards protect provision of quality speech and language therapy services for all people with speech/language communication support needs and/or swallowing difficulties.

Given the RCSLT comments (below and in attached) on the draft AHP National Delivery Plan, the Petition Committee may wish to consider appropriate action at this stage of the production of the Plan.

**Summary of RCSLT comments on the AHP National Delivery Plan:**

Members will be aware that the consultation on the above policy, announced by the Public Health Minister in the Chamber on 09 /11/11 closed last week. (see <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=6650&i=60588&c=1255985&s=Rehabilitation> and Enablement).

RCSLT made a comprehensive response to the consultation reflecting the importance we attach to this policy for speech and language therapy (SLT) users in particular and AHP users generally. **Our "Headline" response is attached along with associated documents.** In these documents RCSLT make **numerous constructive suggestions** – some of them just tweaks – on how the NDP could be improved to better deliver for the people of Scotland.

Essentially RCSLT are of the opinion that;

***It is good to at least have an AHP National Delivery Plan; that the NDP sets targets for access to AHP and that the NDP promotes AHPs as natural leaders in rehabilitation.***

***However RCSLT, along with colleagues in other AHP professional bodies, think that the final NDP must improve a lot on the consultation document.***

That is it must;

**1. Have a wider, more inclusive vision of people's needs, independent living, the value of all AHPs and the AHP contribution to Scotland's performance**

The consultation document unfortunately narrowly defines the goals of rehabilitation and independent living; focuses almost exclusively on older people with one line on children's AHP services; says nothing on preventative or health inequalities work and largely fails to reflect the full range of AHPs impact on the full range of Scottish Governments strategic health, education, crime and economic outcomes.

**2. Commit to gradual improvement of access to essential AHP services**

In the consultation document the target for all AHPS is set at 18 weeks from referral to treatment. For many this is far too long already – and for everyone else it would seem un-ambitious when access to other vital services is as little as 9 weeks.

**3. Set desirable targets which are achievable because they are rooted in reality of current service**

The NDP consultation sets several desirable targets but provides no sense of the reality of current AHP services experiencing reducing budgets, workforce etc. To secure the step change sought – targets need to be based on reality.

**4. "Do as it says" and commit to stronger AHP leadership – from the Scottish Government's Health Department – to NHS and Integrated Health and Social Care Boards across Scotland.**

The NDP consultation document continues to encourage AHP leaders – with widely varying levels of "clout" - to influence locally on behalf of their service users but makes no commitment to empower them to do so practically - or to ensure AHP Service users needs (or professions) have the same "clout" as users of other services at national level.

I would be delighted to provide further information and to support any action you may decide to take on this matter.

Yours,

Kim Hartley