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**To:
Chief AHPs in England**

07 December 2020

Dear colleagues,

Supporting allied health professionals throughout the COVID-19

COVID-19 has been, and continues to be, a challenge for the entire UK population. Thank you for the remarkable work you have done, are doing and will continue to do. You were a testament to our professions during the first wave and we know you have been working tirelessly to improve COVID and non-COVID care since.

During this second wave of the pandemic, as a result of the actions taken by the whole population across all four nations, the initial peak of pressure has been significantly lower than it would have been. However, it may well be prolonged throughout the winter period, with wide local variation and fluctuation in cases, requiring a sustained and prolonged response from all healthcare professionals.

We are confident allied health professionals (AHPs) are responding rapidly and professionally and want to assure colleagues that we recognise this will once again require temporary changes to practice, and that regulators and others have taken this into account.

We recognise that some may find themselves working in unfamiliar circumstances or working in clinical areas outside their usual practice for the benefit of patients and the population as a whole.

We want AHPs, in partnership with patients, to use their professional judgement to assess risk and to make sure people receive safe care, informed by the values and principles set out in their professional standards. We expect you to follow your regulators' guidance and use your judgement in applying the principles, taking account of the realities of an emergency situation.

It is the responsibility of employers to ensure that clinicians working in their organisations are supported to do this. They must bear in mind that clinicians may need

to depart, possibly significantly, from established procedures to care for patients in these challenging but time-bound circumstances.

We expect employers, educational supervisors, professional bodies, national NHS and health and social care organisations to be flexible in terms of their approach and the expectations of routine requirements. Healthcare professional regulators including the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and the General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) have already committed to consider factors relevant to the environment in which the professional is working, and have already released a joint statement to explain this: <http://www.hcpc-uk.co.uk/news-and-events/news/2020/how-we-will-continue-to-regulate-in-light-of-novel-coronavirus/>

We are committed to ensuring the long-term prospects of AHPs in training and are working with the education bodies in the four nations to maintain as far as possible student education programmes. We urge you to support this and continue to offer student placement opportunities wherever possible.

We all need to support one another during this time: mutual support makes this easier to manage, personally as well as professionally.

Finally, we would like to thank you again. We are very proud of the response of the allied health professions to this challenge, and we hope you are as well. It has been exemplary.

Yours sincerely,



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